

FORWARD

This material is provided as a help in studying what the Bible teaches regarding the eldership. It was compiled for use as class material in not only helping present elders but also in teaching and encouraging young men (even teenagers) to begin early to prepare themselves for this great task. There can be no greater need in the Lord's church today than for every congregation to have a qualified eldership. It is the will of God.

There are also men, presently serving as elders, who are not qualified. Hopefully, this material will assist them to see this and encourage them to become qualified (if possible). Hopefully, this material will assist congregations in appointing elders.

All scripture quotations are from the King James Version (KJV). The words in brackets [] inside scripture quotes are the words which appear in italics in the KJV.

Many of the Greek words have the Strong's Reference number beside it, e.g. PATIENT, 1 Tim. 3:3, Gk. *EPIEIKES* (Strong's 1933). This Strong's number can be used in any reference work that uses such numbers. This will assist those who do not know or use Greek to look up the Greek words more quickly.

Garland M. Robinson
2020, 9th printing

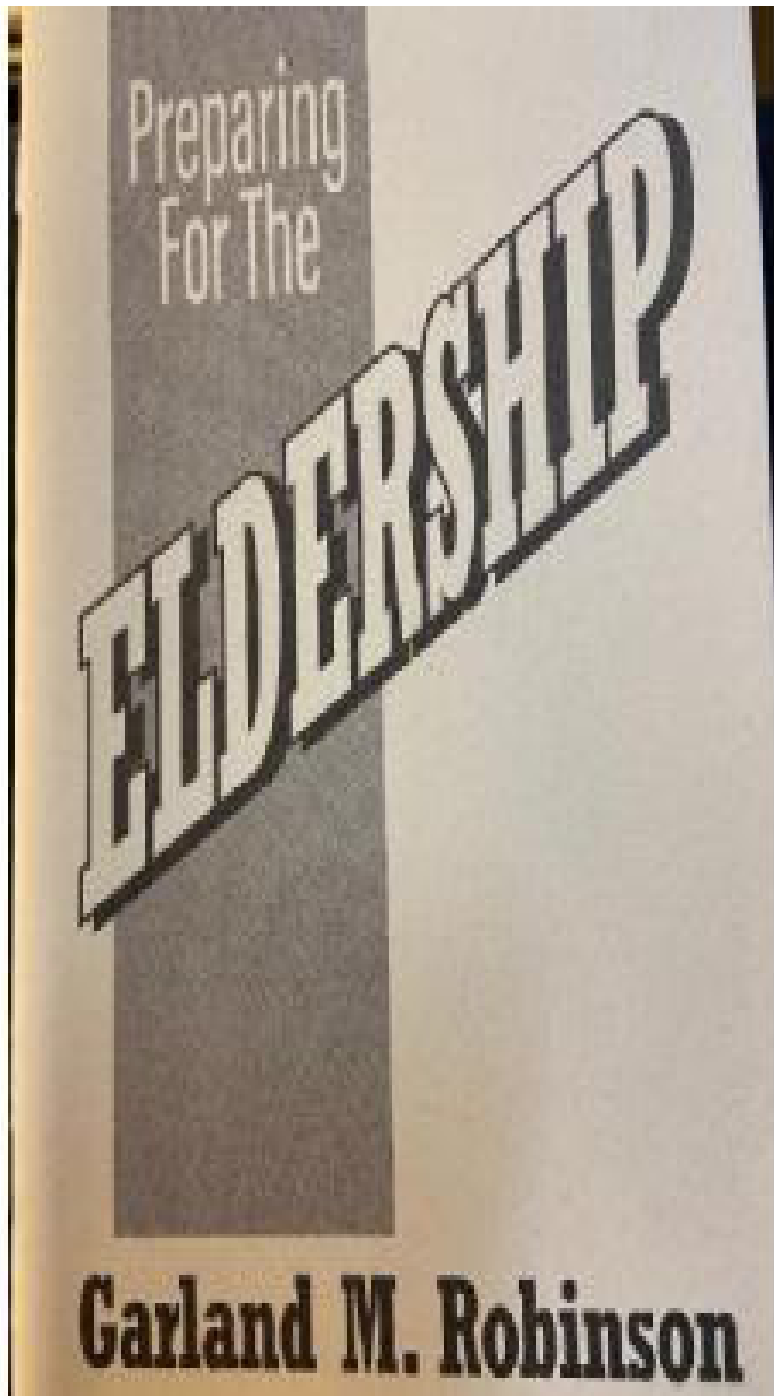


TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Need For An Eldership In Every Church	4
Preparing For The Eldership	10
Terms Applied To Elders In The New Testament	11
God Legislated How Many Elders There Should Be	13
Misconceptions Concerning The Eldership	14
How Is One “Made” An Elder?	22
How Is One “Unmade” An Elder?	24
Introducing the Qualifications of Elders	25
The Positive Qualifications Of Elders	28
Blameless	28
The husband of one wife	28
Vigilant	29
Sober	29
Of good behaviour	29
Given to hospitality	30
Apt to teach	30
Patient	31
Ruleth well his own house	32
Children in subjection (Faithful children)	32
A good report of them which are without	34
A lover of good men	35
Just	35
Holy	36
Temperate	36
Holding fast the faithful word	36
The Negative Qualifications Of Elders	37
Not given to wine	37
No striker	38
Not greedy of filthy lucre	39
Not a brawler	39
Not covetous	39
Not a novice	40
Not selfwilled	40
Not soon angry	40
Duties Of Elders To The Congregation	41
Duties Of Members To The Elders	45
Chart on the word “children”	50

THE NEED FOR AN ELDERSHIP IN EVERY CHURCH

What is the most pressing need of any congregation? A better meeting place? Better trained Bible teachers? A faithful Gospel preacher? Perhaps more money to support more work for the Lord. What if you were able to supply one or all of these. If you could do one thing for the church where you worship, what would it be?

Though these are pressing needs, there is a need far greater than any and all of these: **a faithful, qualified, godly eldership in every congregation!** [Men who are unqualified cannot be elders (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11).] With a good eldership, other needs will be taken care of.

Jesus did not intend to leave his church to be a formless, leaderless group of unguided people. God intended the church to be an “*ekklesia*.” His church will be a thoroughly ordered body of people, not a chaotic, self-willed sect. The church of Christ is made up of people who are obedient to God’s will.

Elders are the “key” men in the church. Their function is to oversee, superintend, harmonize, and integrate the work of evangelists, deacons, teachers — the whole membership. A strong faithful eldership in every congregation is one of the surest ways to stand before the Lord one day and hear him say, “*well done thou good and faithful servant.*” On the other hand, an unqualified eldership is a sure way to fail in God’s work and destroy the local congregation.

Why do so many congregations not have qualified overseers? Several questions must first be answered. How many churches really want elders? How many Christians really want elders? Would the average church’s membership tolerate real New Testament shepherds? It is sad, but many Christians are in such a state that it is doubtful they would tolerate someone watching for their souls. Will you submit your spiritual life to the care and keeping of the pastors?

ELDERS ARE NOT OPTIONAL

Every congregation must realize that a qualified eldership is not optional. We do not have the liberty to have elders or not have elders. We do not have the option of forming another system to oversee the flock on a permanent basis (such as a general men’s business meeting)! The men’s business meetings are attended by the faithful and unfaithful, the novice and experienced, the learned and the unlearned. Such meetings are often characterized by friction, strife and division. They are sometimes dominated by a small minority or sometimes a single individual who can maneuver and manipulate others to “vote” the way he desires. The work of the Lord is not carried on by popular (majority) vote! Nor is it carried on by minority vote! Nothing will ever work successfully when everyone is in charge, and yet no one is in charge!

However, in the absence of qualified elders, it seems only logical that the faithful men of the church see that things are done. The work of the church must be carried out. Decisions have to be made and someone has to make them. A newly established congregation starts without elders because no men meet the qualifications. A congregation exists without elders until such time that men are qualified to be appointed.

Some have argued that it is better to have unqualified elders than to have no elders at all. This is false! There is no hint of Bible authority for such. We do not have the liberty to make up our own rules. When we speak, we must speak as the oracles of God (cf. 1 Peter 4:11) — with Bible authority (Col. 3:17). We must do all things decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40). There is no order and approval with God when we act in the absence of Bible authority. When King Saul was facing the Philistines in battle, Samuel was not there to offer a sacrifice. In his desperation, Saul offered a sacrifice himself and sinned greatly by doing so (1 Sam. 13:1-14). He acted without authority. He changed God’s arrangement.

WHY SHOULD EVERY CONGREGATION WANT AND HAVE ELDERS?

Because it is the will of God! By inspiration, Paul wrote to Titus, *“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”* (Titus 1:5). Paul and Barnabas *“ordained elders in every church...and commended them to the Lord on whom they believed”* (Acts 14:23). No other individuals in the church have the obligation or responsibility of elders. A congregation will never be truly organized until the will of God is carried out in this area.

The number one reason why every congregation should have elders is because it is the will of God.

ELDERS HAVE THE OVERSIGHT

Elders have the responsibility of seeing to it that God’s word, his will, is obeyed. They do not make laws where God made none. They simply carry out the laws God has commanded! God has given them authority to do this.

Elders are to **“TAKE HEED”** to themselves and to the flock. *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood”* (Acts 20:28). The word “heed” means to “hold to...turn one’s attention to.” The Holy Spirit made them overseers and they have the right to turn their attention to every member and see to it that what they are doing is pleasing unto the Lord.

They are to **“TEND”** the flock. In First Peter 5:1-3 we read, *“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: ²Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by*

constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; ³Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." The word "tend" or "feed" means "to shepherd, to nourish, promote the interest of, direct, superintend, to rule."

Elders have the "**RULE**" over the congregation. "*Obey them that have the **rule** over you, and **submit yourselves** for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief*" (Heb. 13:17). "Rule" means "to go before, to be a leader, to rule, command, to have authority over, leading in respect to influence, controlling in counsel." They must give the congregation organization and direction. They must communicate with them, evaluate the work, and always be alert for ways to use every member to the fullest of their ability.

Elders have the duty of keeping the church "**PURE.**" In doing so, they teach the word of God (1 Tim. 3:2). They are able by sound doctrine to "*convict the gainsayers*" (Titus 1:9). "Convict" means to "bring to light, expose, demonstrate, convince, reprove, and correct those who speak against or contradict the truth." They are to "*warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all*" (1 Thess. 5:14). They take the lead in church discipline (2 Thess. 3:6).

Though they are responsible for each of the souls entrusted to their care and have authority from God in carrying out their task, they are not to be lord's over God's heritage (1 Peter 5:3). This means to rule with an "iron hand" or "dictatorial spirit." They do not run "rough-shod" over the congregation. They are not to love the pre-eminence as Diotrephes (3 John 9). They are to be gentle, not self-willed.

WHAT WILL FAITHFUL ELDERS DO?

1) *They will be diligent students of the Bible.* It's hard to be a coach if you do not know the rules of the game. Therefore,

elders will keep themselves informed of false doctrines and take seriously their responsibility to guard the church.

2) *They will know the needs of the membership* and strive to meet those needs according to the Word.

3) *They will know the Bible teachers and be assured of their soundness and faithfulness.* This will also involve making sure the literature used is true to the Bible.

4) *They are men who will hold fast the faithful word* and be able "*by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince [convict] the gainsayers*" (Titus 1:9). They are men who have the courage and willingness to meet error head on. They will inoculate the membership against the errors that run rampant both in and out of the church!

5) *They will close the pulpit to false teachers.* When there are no elders, it's difficult to stop false teachers. Some will have objections of one sort or another. People will become upset and division occurs. With elders, they can put a stop to it and the faithful will stand behind them. Some may voice objection, but soon see they cannot have their way.

6) *They will uphold the hands of those who preach the word.* This is extremely important! They will let the congregation know what was preached is the will of God and if anyone has an objection, see the eldership about it, not the preacher.

7) *They will take the church out of the secular education, entertainment and recreation business.* There is no Bible authority for the church support of such things. "*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*" (Col. 3:17). The home supplies these needs.

8) *They will make every effort to restore the church to her ancient simplicity and purity as authorized by the Scriptures.* An appeal to the "old paths" will be foremost in their minds.

9) *They will see to it that God's word is obeyed in all things.* They will show the way by example.

CONCLUSION

If you work under good elders, be thankful and hold up their hands. Never be a worry to them. Pray for them. Work with them.

If you do not have elders where you worship, let it be foremost in your mind that as soon as there are qualified men, they will be appointed. Working under faithful men will stir your soul unto a greater zeal for the Lord. Work for the day when there will be godly elders, not only among you, but in every congregation of the Lord's church!

Preparing For The ELDERSHIP

1. The church of Christ has a greater work to do than all the institutions of men, whether they be religious or secular.
2. The church is the greatest institution this world has ever known, or will ever know. It is God's eternal kingdom.
Eph. 3:10-11, *"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly [places] might be **known by the church** the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
Eph. 1:22-23, *"And hath put all [things] under his feet, and gave him [to be] the head over all [things] to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."*
3. The function of the church is to preach and teach the Gospel of Christ to every creature.
 - a. It is to this end that the church carries on its work.
 - b. The work of the church consists of:
 - 1) **Evangelism** —
Mark 16:15, *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."*
 - 2) **Benevolence** —
James 1:27, *"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep himself unspotted from the world."*
 - 3) **Edifying the saints** —
Col. 2:7, *"Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."*
4. In order for the church to carry out its work in God's assigned way, and to keep the church "sound in the faith," God designates there be an eldership in (over) every congregation.
 - a. The function of the elders is two-fold:
 - 1) To provide all that is necessary for the spiritual welfare of the church.
 - 2) To protect against all that would destroy the church, whether from within or without.

- b. The function of the eldership is to see to it that whatever the Lord commanded the church (and individual Christians) to do, gets done.
- 1) They have the responsibility of carrying out the Lord's will without *addition, subtraction, modification or substitution*.
 - 2) Part of the work they do themselves (with their own hands) and part of the work is delegated to others (such as deacons and other members); yet all the while, the entire activity and work of the local congregation is performed under their oversight — “oversheership.”

DISCUSSION:**I. AT LEAST FIVE WORDS (TERMS) ARE USED THAT APPLY TO THE LEADERS OF THE CHURCH:**

The number in [brackets] is Strong's number.

- A. **ELDERS:** *presbuteros* [Strong's 4245], **elder** (English).
Titus 1:5, “*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.*”
1. Elders: one(s) “older” in contrast to “younger.”
 2. The word suggests an elder's **qualities**:
 - a. Age
 - b. Wisdom
 - c. Experience
 - d. Qualifications
 - e. Dignity
 - f. One who has gained experience, maturity and wisdom that only comes with age.
- B. **PRESBYTERY:** *presbyterion* [Strong's 4244]. Greek/English word indicates the eldership collectively.
1 Tim. 4:14, “*Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.*”
1. The Greek word is found three times in the New Testament. Translated “elders” in Luke 22:66 and Acts 22:5 and “presbytery” in 1 Tim. 4:14 (the word is not translated, it is transliterated).
 2. It's root word is *presbuteros* [4245]. (See “A” above)
 3. It is the same meaning as “elders.”

- C. **BISHOPS:** *episkopos* (Greek) [1985], **bishop** (Latin), **overseer** (English).
1 Tim. 3:1, “*...If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.*”
Titus 1:7, “*For a bishop must be blameless....*”
1. Equivalent to our English word “overseer.” Conveys the idea of “oversight.” “Overseers” in Acts 20:28.
 2. This word describes **WHAT** elders are to do:
 - a. Take charge
 - b. Control of
 - c. Superintend
 - d. Oversee
- D. **OVERSEERS:** [1985] (same as **bishops** above).
Acts 20:28, “*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*”
1. Taking charge of, control of.
 2. To superintend.
- E. **PASTORS:** *poimen* (Greek) [4166], **pastor** (Latin), **shepherd** (English).
Eph. 4:11, “*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.*” (pastors and teachers are the same men)
1. The word describes **WHAT** they are to do:
 - a. Tend
 - b. Care for
 - c. Watch
 - d. Supervise
 2. Shepherds are those who guide as well as feed and protect the flock.
 3. They “tend” the flock — doing all that is necessary.
- F. The words **elders, bishops, pastors, shepherds, overseers**, all apply to the same individuals. They oversee, superintend, care for, watch over the church.
1. Each term identifies a different aspect of their work.
 2. The words “father,” “husband,” and “son” describe different relationships and works of a man.
 3. The words “teachers,” “stewards” and “watchmen” identify different aspects of the work of elders.

- G. Some have suggested that in the absence of elders, the preacher has authority.
1. They call this “evangelistic authority.”
 2. They say the church functions quite well under this arrangement so they say they don’t need elders.
 3. There is no such authority in the New Testament.

II. GOD HAS LEGISLATED HOW MANY ELDERS THERE ARE TO BE IN A CONGREGATION.

- A. You NEVER read of just one elder (singular) in a local congregation/church.
- B. We ALWAYS read of a plurality of elders in a congregation.
- Acts 14:23, *“And when they had ordained them **elders** in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.”*
- Acts 20:17, *“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the **elders** of the church.”*
- Phil. 1:1, *“Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the **bishops** and deacons.”*
- Titus 1:5, *“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.”*
- C. We NEVER read of just one elder or even group of elders over anything other than the local congregation of which they are members.
- 1 Peter 5:1-2, *“The elders which are **among you** I exhort, who am also an elder, ... ²Feed the flock of God **which is among you**, taking the oversight [thereof], not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.”*
1. Some have taught that an eldership can have charge over all the congregations in a city — certain area.
 2. There is no hint of such an arrangement in the New Testament. Elders only oversee the congregation of which they are members.

III. THERE ARE MANY MISCONCEPTIONS CONCERNING THE ELDERSHIP.

- A. **To “vote” men into the eldership does not make them elders.**
1. To simply “call a man an elder” doesn’t make him an elder.
 2. To be an elder is not simply by “popular vote.”
 3. The eldership is not an “honorary position.”
 4. One must meet the qualifications of an elder.
 5. One must do the work of an elder.
- B. **Just because a man may be successful in business does not mean he is qualified to be an elder or would make a good elder.**
1. Being successful in business is not one of the qualifications to be an elder (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1).
 2. One may have a good head for business affairs but this will not qualify him.
 3. A “good elder” is one who is “qualified.” One who is qualified is a good elder.
 - a. The “only way” to be qualified is to be so according to the Scriptures!
 - b. This point cannot be over-emphasized.
- C. **Because a man is wealthy and/or has a lot of influence in the church and/or community does not mean he would be a good elder.**
1. Being wealthy is not a qualification.
 2. Riches often bring the wrong attitude toward money.
 - 1 Tim. 6:9-10 *“...They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and [into] many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”*
 - Matt. 6:24 *“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”*
 - Mark 4:19 *“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, ... choke the word....”*

D. Because a man may be a “charter member” of the congregation does not qualify him.

1. Some think that a man who has been at a congregation from the beginning or many years should be an elder.
2. Some say he has “earned” it. He’s a leader, they say.
3. Such a man may meet or not meet the qualifications.

E. The eldership is not a “lifetime” appointment.

1. Being an elder is a “work,” not a “position.”
2. The concept of “once an elder always an elder” is not scriptural.
 - a. When a man ceases to meet the qualifications of an elder, he can no longer serve as an elder.
 - b. When he ceases to do the work of an elder, he can no longer serve as an elder.
 - c. He must consider what is best for the congregation, not what he deems good for himself or his family.
 - d. There is no such thing as an “honorary elder” or elder “emeritus” (retired) whose name continues on the roster as one of the elders.

F. Elders AND Deacons do not oversee the church.

1. Sometimes a well-intentioned brother will pray, “be with the elders and deacons as they lead and oversee the church here.”
2. Elders oversee the church — not deacons.
 - a. Paul was speaking to the elders (not elders and deacons) of the church at Ephesus when he said, Acts 20:28, *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”*
3. Deacons do not oversee the church.
 - a. They are special servants of the church who have their own qualifications and work (1 Tim. 3:8-13).
 - b. They “serve” the congregation — carrying out tasks assigned them by the elders.
 - c. Elders are **over** deacons and deacons are **under** elders (as are all members of the congregation).
 - d. While having no authority equal to the elders, they do have the authority that is necessary in carrying out the work assigned them by the elders.

- 1) This is delegated authority. For example:
 - a) The elders assign a deacon(s) the task of taking care of the building. The deacon(s) has the authority to make the decisions that are necessary to get the job done — buying nails, lumber, fixtures, workers, etc.
 - b) The elders give a deacon(s) charge of the worship assemblies. He has authority to choose men to lead singing, pray, wait on the table, etc.
 - c) Examples of delegated authority is found in Exodus 17:9, 18:13-26, Acts 6:1-7.
- 2) The “elders” oversee the entire work of the church (including the deacons and preacher), even though they have assigned specific duties to the deacons and other members.

G. Deacons are not junior elders.

1. One does not first have to be a deacon before he can become an elder.
2. Being a deacon is not a step in “climbing the ladder” to leadership in the church.
3. However, serving as a deacon can provide valuable training and discipline that would aid a man in becoming an elder some day.

H. It is not true that elders oversee the *spiritual* and deacons oversee the *physical*.

1. The eldership oversees the **entire work** of the church.
 - a. This is true regardless of the work involved.
 - b. Deacons assist them in whatever areas the elders need assistance. They are servants.
2. Elders do not have to do all the work themselves, they can and will designate others to perform certain tasks under their leadership — authority.
 - a. They appoint deacons to take care of benevolent works, mission works, building and grounds, etc.
 - b. They appoint members to take care of preparing the Lord’s supper, food, clothes for the needy, etc.
3. The work of elders is that they see to it that God’s work is carried out within the guidelines of Bible authority.

4. The eldership makes sure the preacher, deacons, Bible teachers and members are each doing the work best suited for them.

I. It is a misconception that elders have no authority at all. Some say they lead only by example.

1. The fact that elders are “**overseers**” demands they have authority (Acts 20:28; 1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:7, 17,24).
 - a. “Oversee” means: “an overseer, a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian, or super-intendent.”
 - b. Does a foreman, manager, supervisor, superintendent, director, have authority on his job, or does he do his work simply by example?
2. The fact that they are to “**feed**” the flock demands they have authority (1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28).
 - a. “Feed” means: “to tend a flock, keep sheep...to rule, govern.”
 - b. Do shepherds tending their flock have authority to direct the flock to grass, water, shelter, protection? Yes!
 - c. Do shepherds in the church have authority to tend, guide, protect the flock from dangers? Yes!
3. The fact that elders are to “**watch**” demands they have authority (Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:28-32).
 - a. “Watch” means: “to be attentive, vigilant, circumspect.”
 - b. Elders watch so they may sound an alarm when error is present and take care of the needs at hand. A smoke detector warns us of hidden danger.
 - c. Members must understand this and allow the elders to watch for their souls.
4. If elders (overseers) have no authority, then their function and role in the church is useless.

1 Thess. 5:12, “*And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are **over you** in the Lord, and admonish you.*”

Heb. 13:7, “*Remember them which have the **rule over you**, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of [their] conversation.*”

Heb. 13:17, “*Obey them that have the **rule over you**, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that [is] unprofitable for you.*”

Heb. 13:24, “*Salute all them that have the **rule over you**, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.*”

1 Peter 5:2-3, “*Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking **the oversight** [thereof], not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over [God’s] heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*”

5. An eldership’s judgment (decision) is to be respected.
 - a. Sometimes someone says their opinion (judgment) is just as good as the elders.
 - b. The fact is, God gives the eldership the right to make their judgments and enforce them.
 - 1) Their judgment rules! Not the members.
 - 2) The membership must abide by their decision.

IV. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE ELDERSHIP.

A. Elders do not have ultimate, complete authority.

1. Christ is the only authority in matters of faith/doctrine (Matt. 28:18; 7:29; cf. Mark 16:19; John 3:35; 5:22,27; Acts 5:31; 10:36; 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:20-23; Phil. 2:9-11; Col. 1:16-19; Heb. 1:2; 2:8; 1 Peter 3:22; 2 Peter 1:16-18; Rev. 5:11-12; 19:16).
 - a. All, including the elders, must submit to Christ’s authority. He is the chief shepherd (1 Peter 5:4).
 - b. They do not legislate in matters of doctrine.
 - c. When elders “rule over” the congregation, it is in matters of “judgment” in carrying out God’s word. God gives the eldership the right to enforce their judgment (opinion), not church members.
2. The eldership’s authority is not within themselves, it comes from God.
 - a. It is delegated authority. God gives it to them.
 - b. They cannot make rules and laws where God has not legislated (spoken), nor can they dismiss rules and laws which God has demanded (authorized).

- c. They have no authority to lead the church in any direction that is contrary to God's Will.
- d. They are authorized to see to it that God's Word is obeyed in the congregation over which they are overseers.
 - 1) In teaching all things commanded of God (Acts 20:26-27; cf. 10:33).
 - 2) In rebuking error (Heb. 13:17).
 - 3) In stopping the mouths of the gainsayers (Titus 1:9-11).
 - 4) In general, their job is to see to it that the things that are done, are done correctly — according to the Lord's authority.
- 3. They have authority over the preacher in optional matters, BUT they have no authority over him (or any teacher) to prevent him from teaching the Truth.
 - a. In their "oversheership," they may ask the preacher to preach a certain lesson(s).
 - b. Or, they may ask the preacher to "wait" on preaching a certain lesson while they work on a situation themselves.
- 4. They must not be "lords over God's heritage," taking advantage of their position and abusing it.
 - 1 Peter 5:3, *"Neither as being lords over [God's] heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."*
- 5. An elder(s) must not be a Diotrephes, ruling roughshod over the church.
 - 3 John 9, *"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not."*
 - a. There is no such thing as a "chief" elder who rules over the other elders.
 - b. Decisions are made by the "eldership" (all the elders), not a single elder.
 - c. It is wrong to stir up strife and division among the eldership when one does not get his way.
 - 1) One must never leave an eldership meeting and tell others "they were for it but I was against it" or "I was for it but they were against it."
 - 2) When an elder(s) leaves a meeting of the eldership, he ought to say, "the elders decided" this or that. Don't play one against the other.

- 3) As an elder, don't let church members demand who you tell them who was for or against a thing. That causes division.
- 4) In these points, we're speaking about matters of judgment (optional matters), not matters of doctrine. No one has the right to make a decision contrary to the Scriptures.

B. Some think that "no man" can attain the high and lofty qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1; therefore, we cannot have elders today as they did in the first century.

- 1. The qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-14 are attainable. Elders meet them NOW.
- 2. God does not require something of us and then place it beyond our reach.
- 3. Basically, the qualities in these passages are required of every Christian in other passages (with but few exceptions). Such as:
 - a. Being the husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:2).
 - b. Having faithful children (Titus 1:6).
 - c. Not a novice (1 Tim. 3:6, temporary situation).
- 4. Every Christian is to exhibit these qualities — grow to obtain and maintain these qualities:
 - a. Blameless (Phil. 2:14-15). [Strong's 273, 483]
 - b. Vigilant (1 Peter 5:8). [3524]
 - c. Sober (1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Peter 5:8). [4998]
 - d. Good behavior (1 Peter 2:12; Matt. 5:16). [2887]
 - e. Given to hospitality (1 Peter 4:9; Rom. 12:13). [5382]
 - f. Apt to teach (Heb. 5:12). [1317]
 - g. Not given to wine (Eph. 5:18; Rom. 13:13). [3943]
 - h. No stricker (Titus 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24). [4131]
 - i. Not greedy of filthy lucre (1 Tim. 6:9-10). [148, 866]
 - j. Patient (1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Tim. 2:24). [1933]
 - k. Not a brawler (Titus 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:3-10). [269]
 - l. Not covetous (Eph. 5:5; Luke 12:15; Col. 3:5). [866]
 - m. Ruleth well his own house having children in subjection with all gravity (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21). [4291]
 - n. Good report of them which are without (2 Cor. 8:21; Rom. 12:17-18; 1 Thess. 4:12; Titus 2:7-8). [3141]
 - o. Not selfwilled (Phil. 2:3-4; Rom. 12:9-21). [829]
 - p. Not soon angry (Eph. 4:26,31-32; Rom. 12:19-21). [3711]

- q. Just (Rom. 12:17; Heb. 10:38-39). [1342]
- r. Holy (1 Peter 1:15-16; Heb. 12:14). [3741]
- s. Hold the faithful word (Rev. 2:10; Jude 3). [472]
- t. Temperate (1 Cor. 9:25). [1467, 1468]

C. Some expect and require that elders be perfect, never making a mistake.

1. Elders are human! They will make mistakes. We all make mistakes.
 - a. Their wives are not perfect.
 - b. Their children are not perfect.
2. They are to be treated as any other Christian when they sin.

1 Tim. 5:19-20, *“Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. ²⁰Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”*

Gal. 6:1, *“...If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”*

D. It is not true that one can be an elder “at large” or at a “distance.”

1. Some have thought a man can be an elder while living far away — in another state or even another country.
 - a. It is said he could keep in touch by letter, phone, fax, email, video conferencing, etc.
 - b. This point is not speaking of one on vacation, on a trip to visit a missionary, etc.
 - c. We’re speaking of one who lives far enough away that he cannot attend services of the congregation of which he is an elder.
2. The Scriptures do not teach that one can live away.
 - a. 1 Peter 5:1-2, *“The elders **which are among you** I exhort, ... ²Feed the flock of God **which is among you**, taking the oversight [thereof], not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.”*
 - 1) How can he “know” the flock at home when he lives somewhere else?
 - 2) There will be new members, children growing up, sick that need attention, members who need attention, situations that must be handled, etc.

- 3) How can he “tend” the flock when he is not there?
- b. 1 Thess. 5:12, *“...We beseech you, brethren, to **know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you.”***
 - 1) Members are to “know” the elders. To “know” means to perceive, see, be sure, understand.
 - 2) How can they “know” them when they are not there?

E. Elders are not just administrators in that they sit in the “office” and make decisions to be handed down.

1. Being an elder is a “work” that is performed, not an “office” that is held.
2. Sometimes elders think they just make the decisions and everyone else jumps at their orders.
 - a. Such is not true!
 - b. Elders “get their hands dirty” too. They “lead” the flock from the front, not give orders from behind.
 - c. Elders do the “work” God has assigned them to do.

V. HOW ARE MEN SELECTED AND APPOINTED AS ELDERS?

- A. There is no specific process or procedure outlined in the Scriptures as to how men are selected and appointed to serve as elders. Therefore, we use:
 1. Our good judgment in the steps taken in ordaining (appointing) men into the eldership.
 2. The principles of Scripture. Consider Acts 6:3.
 3. The membership selects certain men from among their number to be considered.
- B. Individuals must first meet the qualifications given by the Holy Spirit in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-14.
 1. The qualifications are both natural and attained.
 2. There must always be two or more men to serve as elders. (always plural, never singular)
 - a. If the church does not have elders, two or more men (who meet the qualifications) are selected from among the membership of the congregation.

- b. If the church already has elders, one or more men is selected from among the membership to be added to the present eldership.
- C. It is considered expedient that the names of those selected be placed before the entire membership of the church.
 - 1. Elders are men who “lead.” This provides the membership with the opportunity to show they will follow their lead — that they are worthy of following.
 - 2. If anyone knows of a Scriptural reason why an individual is not qualified, there should be a reasonable amount of time allotted for such reason(s) to be made known. Perhaps two or three weeks.
 - a. It is regarded appropriate that such objection(s) be made in writing or personal appearance (with scriptural support for the objection).
 - b. This approach will put to rest any trivial objection or personal grievance that might be made.
 - 3. A certain Sunday is chosen to make their appointment (ordination, installation) official.
 - a. This obviously would be done when the whole church is assembled.
 - b. From that day forward, it is recognized they are elders (overseers, shepherds, pastors) of the congregation.
- D. The Holy Spirit has a part (indirectly, not directly).
 - 1. Acts 20:28, “*the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.*”
 - 2. The Holy Spirit’s part consists in outlining the qualifications and thereby showing (authorizing) the “office” (work) to be God-ordained. It is not a position conceived of by man. It is heaven’s directive.
- E. Elders are appointed.

Acts 14:23, “*And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*”

Titus 1:5, “*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.*”

- VI. HOW IS ONE “UNMADE” AN ELDER? WHEN CAN AN ELDER NO LONGER SERVE AS AN ELDER?
- A. When there are only two elders and one dies, then the eldership is dissolved. There must be a plurality. (Once an elder, always an elder, is not a Bible concept)
 - B. By no longer desiring the “office” (work) of the eldership.

1 Tim. 3:1, “*This [is] a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.*”
 - C. By no longer meeting the qualifications of an elder.
 - 1. 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-14. “*A bishop must be...*” (v.2)
 - 2. Would it not be the case that since one must meet qualifications to be made an elder that one must maintain/continue those qualifications to continue an elder?
 - D. Any number of situations may arise that necessitates him no longer being an elder, and he resigns.
 - 1. It may be that his work schedule changes or perhaps some other responsibility may involve so much of his time and energy that he cannot give the eldership the attention it demands and deserves.
 - 2. An extended illness (of himself or wife) hinders (or prevents) his ability to serve effectively as an elder.
 - 3. It could be that he loses his influence with members.
 - E. The congregation removes him from the eldership.
 - 1. This would be the least desirable of all possibilities because it will likely cause hard feelings and disruption of families. It ought not cause division, but often does because people, so many times, “love their own” more than they love the Lord and His church.
 - a. An elder should step down (resign) himself before the congregation has to take such action.
 - b. However, if he does not step down himself, the congregation has the responsibility to remove him.
 - c. His lack of qualifications and/or his behavior make it necessary. Members see the problem(s) and are greatly concerned.
 - 2. Since the congregation appointed him an elder, they also have the right to remove him from being an elder.

- a. Such action must not be because the membership does not get their way.
- b. It must not be because of ungodliness on the part of the membership.
- c. It must not be because of selfishness, pride, etc.
- 3. A congregation removes a man from being an elder when he has become unqualified (according to the Scriptures) and has not removed himself.
 - a. An elder may “lord it over the charge” (1 Peter 5:3).
 - b. An elder may be lifted up with pride (1 Tim. 3:6).
 - c. An elder may fall into sin and reproach and must be removed. *“Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear”* (1 Tim. 5:20).
 - d. It is never a pleasant task for the congregation to do and many times, in itself, causes disruption.
 - e. Sin or toleration of sin must not be allowed to go unchecked, whether by an elder(s) or any other member.

VII. FIRST TIMOTHY 3:1-2: INTRODUCES THE QUALIFICATIONS OF AN ELDER.

- A. The work of an eldership is an important, essential work.
 - 1. It is God’s arrangement, not man’s.
 - 2. Elders must realize and understand the magnitude of their work.
 - 3. Members must also realize and understand the magnitude of the work of elders.
 - 4. A congregation will never rise above its leaders.
 - 5. It is a work that relates to the eternal destiny of the souls of men.
 - a. The eldership is not a game.
 - b. It is not a position of prestige.
 - c. It is not for those who are merely “office seekers.”
 - d. It is not for those who seek power and control.
- B. 1 Tim. 3:1, *“This is a true saying, If a **MAN** desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.”*
 - 1. Only a man can be an elder — never a woman.
 - a. 1 Tim. 3:2, *“A bishop then must be...the husband of one wife...”*
 - b. Titus 1:6, *“The husband of one wife...”*
 - c. Only a man can be the husband of a wife.

- 2. The pronouns used in reference to an elder(s) are masculine: he, his. 1 Tim. 3:1,4-7; Titus 1:9
- C. 1 Tim 3:1, *“This is a true saying, If a man **DESIRE** the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.”*
 - 1. The word **desire** means “desire earnestly.” Stretches forward to, seeks, covets. The word is used in:
 - Heb. 11:16, *“But now they **desire** a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”*
 - 1 Tim. 6:10, *“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some **coveted** after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”*
 - 2. The proper desire is basic to one being an elder.
 - 3. This is not a selfish, prideful desire.
 - a. The desire is not rooted in power, prestige, honor or glory.
 - b. It is a humble desire to carry out God’s wishes, to serve the Lord, and the membership.
 - 4. To desire the office necessitates a desire to do the work of that office. Thus, those who do not desire to do the work, whatever the work, do not scripturally desire the office.
- D. 1 Tim. 3:1, *“This is a true saying, If a man desire the **OFFICE** of a bishop, he desireth a good work.”*
 - 1. There is no exact corresponding Greek word for “office” in this verse.
 - a. However, the phrase “office of a bishop,” does convey the meaning of the Greek word for bishop.
 - b. The idea of the Greek word is “oversership.”
 - c. Therefore, the concept of the word “office” is implied since it conveys the idea of authority, rule, responsibility.
 - d. It can rightly be said that those who hold a position of authority, hold an “office” to carry out authority.
 - 2. Bishops (elders) are the “oversers” (superintendents) of the flock.
 - a. In that capacity, they have a “work” to perform.
 - b. Their job, obligation, office, is to see to it that God’s Word is taught and obeyed.

3. We should think of the eldership more of a **work** than of an **office**.
- E. 1 Tim. 3:2, “A bishop then **MUST** be...”
1. The word “must” means: “It is binding, it is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right and proper.”
Acts 9:6, “*And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou **must** do.*”
John 4:24, “*God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him **must** worship [him] in spirit and in truth.*”
 2. Each and every individual man in the eldership is to meet the qualifications. “A bishop...” Singular.
 - a. Some have the idea that the qualifications are to be met within the eldership as a whole and not that each individual must meet them. This is False!
 - b. Some have the idea that the qualifications are only basic “guidelines.” This is a false concept!
 - 1) Some suggest that IF a man be married, he is to be the husband of one wife.
 - 2) IF he has children, they are to be believers.
 - 3) Every man, in order to qualify for the “overship,” must meet every qualification!
 3. When an elder ceases to meet any of the qualifications, then he is no longer qualified to be an elder.
 - a. He **MUST** meet the qualifications — qualities!
 - b. If he can continue being an elder when no longer meeting the qualifications, then which one(s) can he no longer possess and still be qualified?
 - c. By what logic **MUST** a man meet the qualifications in becoming an elder, but he does not have to maintain them after becoming an elder?
 4. **The time to begin preparing for the eldership is in your youth.** Being an elder is a monumental task.
 - a. It takes a lifetime to train for it.
 - b. Young men should set the eldership as a goal to be accomplished in life. Will you work to that end?

VIII. THE POSITIVE QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS.

- A. **BLAMELESS**, 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6 — Gk. *anepileptos* (Strong's 423, not apprehended, that cannot be laid hold of, not open to censure, irreproachable.
1. It means, above reproach, one in whom no cause of shame can be found.
 2. **Thayer**: “*not apprehended, that cannot be laid hold of; hence that cannot be reprehended, not open to censure, irreproachable.... That cannot be called to account, unreprouvable, unaccused, blameless.*”
 3. **E. R. Harper**: “*This does not mean that he can't make a mistake and that his judgment could not be wrong, but it does imply that he is to be a man who is morally fit; not dishonest, but dependable, upright in his dealings with his fellow man. This needs to be heeded carefully.*”
 4. This does not mean that no blame will ever be brought against him, but that no “valid,” “satisfactory” or “justified” accusation can be brought against him. No evil can be “proved” or “sustained” concerning him.
 5. This quality provides that one’s character is unimpeachable and unreprouvable.
 6. It does not mean he is perfect — never making a mistake, or that he is without sin.
Rom. 3:23, “*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*”
Rom. 3:10, “*...There is none righteous, no, not one.*”
1 John 1:8-10, “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*”
- B. **THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE**, 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6 — Gk. *aner* [husband] (Strong's 435, a man, husband, sir). Gk. *mia* [one] (Strong's 3391, one or first). Gk. *gune* [wife] (Strong's 1135, a woman, spec. a wife).
1. Literally a “one woman man.”
 2. This makes it clear that a woman can never serve as an elder for a woman can never be the husband of a wife.

3. It is clear that an elder must be a married man. Have you ever seen a married man that did not have a wife?
 - a. No single man (or bachelor) can be an elder.
 - b. A man whose wife has died is not the husband of one wife. He has been the husband of a wife, but is not now the husband of a wife.
 - c. A man whose wife has died and has scripturally married again is the husband of “one wife.”
 - d. A man who is scripturally divorced and remarried is the husband of one wife.
 - 1) For such a man to serve as an elder may not be expedient.
 - 2) One’s example (influence) can be so hindered or limited that others are not content to follow.
 - e. No bigamist or polygamist can be an elder.
- C. **VIGILANT**, 1 Tim. 3:2 — Gk. *nephaleos* (Strong’s 3524, circumspect, sober vigilant).
1. **Thayer**: “sober, temperate, abstaining from wine”
 2. **Webster**: “to keep watch, stay awake, alertly watchful esp. to avoid danger”
 3. **Roy J. Hearn**: “Keen, courageous, wary watchfulness, especially in sense of right.” (Wary: “on one’s guard, characterized by caution, cautious”)
- D. **SOBER**, 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8 — Gk. *sophron* (Strong’s 4998, safe (sound) in mind, i.e. self-controlled (moderate as to opinion or passion), discreet, sober, temperate).
1. **Thayer**: “of sound mind, sane, in one’s senses”
 2. **Webster**: “marked by temperance, moderation, or seriousness, well balanced”
 3. He must be able to make sound and mature judgments that are not affected by excitable, passionate circumstances, group pressure, decreasing attendance and/or contribution, etc. He steadies the course, leads the flock, because it’s the right thing to do. Eph. 4:14
- E. **OF GOOD BEHAVIOUR**, I Tim. 3:2 — Gk. *kosmios* (Strong’s 2887, orderly, i.e. decorous: of good behaviour, modest).
1. **Thayer**: “well-arranged, seemly, modest”
 2. **Roy Deaver**: “...neat in appearance, gentle in manner, studious in habit and systematic in work.”

3. He is one who is well-behaved, well-mannered, orderly and upright in his manner of living.
- F. **GIVEN TO HOSPITALITY**, 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8 — Gk. *philoxenos* (Strong’s 5382, fond of guests, i.e. hospitable: given to (lover of, use) hospitality).
1. **Thayer**: “hospitable, generous to guests, [given to hospitality]”
 2. **Roy Deaver**: “An elder must have a genuine and sincere interest in helping others. He must lead the church to be hospitable — to be concerned about the needy, the widows and the orphans.”
 3. An elder is one who is ready and eager to entertain others. He is one who enjoys such association and fellowship. He is a “people person.”
 Heb. 13:2, “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”
 3 John 5-8, “Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; ⁶Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: ⁷Because that for his name’s sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. ⁸We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth.”
 Acts 15:3-4; 21:5; Rom. 15:24; 1 Cor. 16:6,11; Titus 3:13
- G. **APT TO TEACH**, 1 Tim. 3:2 — Gk. *didaktikos* [apt, teach] (Strong’s 1317, instructive, apt to teach).
1. **Thayer**: “Apt and skillful in teaching.”
 2. **Roy Deaver**: “And elder must be willing to teach, but more than this. He must have the ability to teach, and be qualified to teach.”
 3. Elders are to “feed” (tend) the flock which involves teaching (Acts 20:28, feed; 1 Peter 5:2, feed).
 4. Titus 1:9, “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”
 - a. Gainsayers — Gk. *antilego* (Strong’s 483, to dispute, refuse-answer again, contradict, deny, gainsay(er), speak against). They bring havoc upon the church.
 - b. Elders need to know what’s going on in the brotherhood — know the “buzz words” of the day.

Titus 1:11-13, “*Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. ¹²One of themselves, [even] a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians [are] always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. ¹³Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.*”

5. There are at least two reasons why an elder is to be “apt to teach.”
 - a. Elders are to exhort the brethren [apt or able to exhort] (Titus 1:9) through teaching/instructing.
 - b. Elders are to convince (convict) [apt or able to convict] the “*gainsayers*” and those who teach error (Titus 1:9-11). He is to “*hold fast the faithful word.*”
 - 1) This necessitates the fact that they can identify and know error when they hear it.
 - 2) Sadly, many are lacking in the knowledge of the Truth to be able to refute error.
6. This quality is often overlooked in seeking out men for the eldership!
 - a. The direction and destiny of the local congregation depends, to a large degree, upon this qualification.
 - b. His aptness to teach enables him to stop those who speak against the Truth.
 - c. They must defend the church against emotionalism, denominationalism, modernism, atheism, premillennialism, materialism, and any other “ism.”
7. Being “apt to teach” does not mean he “must” teach a class in every assembly, but that he is certainly able/capable of doing so.

H. **PATIENT**, 1 Tim. 3:3 — Gk. *epieikes* (Strong’s 1933, mild: gentle, moderation, patient).

1. **Thayer:** “*Equitable, fair, mild, gentle.*”
2. **Roy J. Hearn:** “*Undisturbed by obstacles, delays. Enduring sufferings and persecutions (James 1:3; 1 Peter 2:19-20). Able to bear up under strain.*”
3. With all the stress and strain that elders meet, it takes patience to work through problems and bear up under adverse circumstances. Godly elders are often not appreciated for the great and good work they do in putting up with immaturity among some members.

- I. **RULETH WELL HIS OWN HOUSE**, 1 Tim. 3:4 — Gk. *proistemi* [ruleth] (Strong’s 4291, to stand before, i.e. (in rank) to preside, or (by impl.) to practice: maintain, be over, rule). Superintend, protector, guardian, care for.
 1. Gk. *kalos* [well] (Strong’s 2573, well: (in a) good (place), honestly, + recover, (full) well).
 2. Gk. *idios* [own] (Strong’s 2398, pertaining to self, i.e. one’s own).
 3. Gk. *oikos* [house] (Strong’s 3624, a dwelling, by impl. a family (more or less related)).
 4. He is the head of the house (family). He takes charge and performs his duties. He takes his responsibility seriously.
 5. He is not one ruled over by his wife. A bossy, domineering, unruly wife disqualifies a man from being an elder.
- J. **CHILDREN IN SUBJECTION WITH ALL GRAVITY, 1 Tim. 3:4 — FAITHFUL CHILDREN NOT ACCUSED OF RIOT OR UNRULY**, Titus 1:6 —
 1. Gk. *teknon* [children] (Strong’s 5043, a child, daughter, son).
 2. **Thayer:** “*Offspring; plur. children; ...without regard to sex, child.*”
 3. The word “children” (*teknon*) includes “one or more.”
 - a. The word is found 100 times in the New Testament.
 - 1) It is translated using both plural and singular words: “children” (72 times), “daughters” (1), “sons” (6), “child” (5), “son” (15) and “dieth” (1).
 - 2) “Child-” Matt. 10:21; Luke 1:7; Rev. 12:4-5
 - 3) “Son-” Matt. 9:2; 21:28; Luke 2:48; 15:31; 16:25; 1 Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:22; Titus 1:4; Philemon 1:10
 - b. Eph. 6:1, “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord.*” The word “children” includes a single child. If not, then must a “single child” in the family obey his/her parents? Yes. See also Eph. 6:4
 - c. Gen. 21:7, Sarah “*...said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born [him] a son in his old age.*” Sarah never had but one child (Isaac), yet she had “children.”
 - d. 1 Tim. 5:9-10, “*Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the*

- wife of one man, Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children...” What if she had brought up only one child?
- e. We commonly use the word children to indicate both singular and plural. For example, state law requires that all families with children enroll them in school by age 6. Does the law apply to those families with only one child? Yes.
 - f. The words “sheep” and “deer” are used to indicate both singular and plural.
 - g. More information on “children” and “child” can be found on page 50 of this book.
4. Gk. *hupotage* [subjection] 1 Tim. 3:4. (Strong’s 5292, subordination, subjection).
 5. Gk. *semnotes* [gravity] 1 Tim. 3:4. (Strong’s 4587, venerableness, honesty). Entitles to reverence, respect.
 6. Gk. *pistos* [faithful] Titus 1:6. (Strong’s 4103, trustworthy, trustful:-believe(ing), faithful, sure, true).
 - a. **Thayer:** “In the New Testament, one who trusts in God’s promises, Gal. iii. 9; is convinced that Jesus has been raised from the dead...one who has become convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and the author of salvation...a believer.”
 - b. Acts 16:1, “Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and **believed**; but his father [was] a Greek.”
 - c. 2 Cor. 6:15, “And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that **believeth** with an infidel?”
 - d. Acts 16:15, “And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought [us], saying, If ye have judged me to be **faithful** to the Lord, come into my house, and abide [there]. And she constrained us.”
 7. Gk. *asotia* [riot] Titus 1:6. (Strong’s 810, excess, riot).
 8. Gk. *anupotaktos* [unruly] Titus 1:6. (Strong’s 506, unsubdued, i.e. insubordinate (in fact or temper):-disobedient, that is not put under, unruly).
 9. 1 Tim. 3:5, “(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)”

Noel Merideth: “The conduct of a man’s household is evidence of his ability for directing the affairs of the

- church; but, if he does not do well with his household, he will not do well with the members of the church. The elder should have his children in subjection. Unruly children will prevent any man from serving successfully as an elder in the church. ... Any man who is unable to govern his children correctly by maintaining good discipline, is no man for oversight in the church.”
10. How many of his children must “believe” or be “faithful?” Must they “all” be Christians?

Roy Deaver: “As a family man he must have children. Two things are specifically said about these children: (1) they must be children who believe — children who are Christians; and (2) they must be children who are not accused of riot and who are not unruly.”

“...It seems to me that the answer has to be: all his children who are accountable. (2) Of how many of his children must it be true that they are not to be accused of riot? Answer: all of them. (3) Of how many of his children must it be true that they are not to be unruly? Answer: all of them.”
 11. What about his children once they leave home?
 - a. One of the greatest tests of a man who has trained his children is their conduct once they leave home.
 - b. His children are a reflection of his training.
 - c. Are they a blessing and commendation to him or a hindrance and reproach? Is their conduct an embarrassment to him and the church? Does it hinder the church if he continues to serve when his children are unfaithful?
- K. A GOOD REPORT OF THEM WHICH ARE WITHOUT,** 1 Tim. 3:7 — Gk. *kalos* [good] (Strong’s 2570, beautiful...valuable or virtuous...better, honest...well, worthy, noble, honorable). Gk. *marturia* [report] (Strong’s 3141, evidence given (judicially or gen.)::-record, report, testimony, witness). Gk. *exother* [without] (Strong’s 1855, external, outside, outward, from without).
1. He is a man whose character is good and honorable.
 2. The quality of having a “good report” comes from those who are not Christians, those outside of the church.
 - a. Such a report would come from those who are upstanding themselves. Those whose report is worthy of consideration — their judgment is fair.

- b. There will always be those who are not worthy of consideration. They despise what is good and right and certainly lend no support to such.
 - c. An elder is to have a good reputation among those outside the church as well as inside the church.
 - d. **H. E. Phillips**, *“The man who has the reputation of being self-willed, arrogant, contentious, whose word is no good, who cheats and steals in business, a drunkard, etc., can not qualify for this work.”*
3. **“...Lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil”** (1 Tim. 3:7).
- a. An excellent tool of the devil is to aid an elder in falling into reproach with the church.
 - b. This would cause, as quickly as anything, for an elder to lose his influence among the membership.
 - c. When an elder loses his respect, influence, example and admiration among the members, he can no longer effectively serve until such time that confidence is restored in him and his influence is regained.
- L. **A LOVER OF GOOD MEN**, Titus 1:8 — Gk. *philagathos* (Strongs 5358, fond to good, i.e., a promoter of virtue:-love of good men).
- 1. The entire phrase, “a lover of good men,” is just one word in Greek.
Literally, “a lover of good.” All that is good and right and holy.
 - 2. **Thayer**: *“loving goodness.”*
 - 3. **Roy Hearn**: *“Appreciation for all that is good, noble and benevolent. Helpful to all in the congregation to develop as Christians in their efforts to qualify as ‘good.’ Individuals may differ, as Peter and Paul, in nature, but there must be mutual love and respect.”*
- M. **JUST**, Titus 1:8 — Gk. *dikaios* (Strongs 1342, equitable (in character or act); by impli. innocent, holy, just, meet, right(eous)).
- 1. **Thayer**: *“righteous, observing divine and human laws; one who is such as he ought to be. 1. upright, virtuous, keeping the commands of God. b. the negative idea predominating: innocent, faultless, guiltless. 2. In a narrower sense, rendering to each his due; and that in*

- a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in words or shown by the manner of dealing with them.”*
 - 2. He is one who deals fairly without respect of persons or showing partiality (Rom. 2:11; 1 Tim. 5:21).
- N. **HOLY**, Titus 1:8 — Gk. *hosios* (Strongs 3741, hallowed (pious, sacred, sure):-holy, mercy, shalt be.)
- 1. **Thayer**: *“Undefined by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure, holy, pious.”*
 - 2. Titus 2:11-12, *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”*
 - 3. 2 Cor. 6:17,18; 7:1, *“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean [thing]; and I will receive you, ¹⁸And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. ^{7:1}...Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”*
- O. **TEMPERATE**, Titus 1:8 — Gk. *egkrates* (Strongs 1468, strong in a thing (masterful), self-controlled (in appetite)).
- 1. **Thayer**: *“2. having power over, possessed of (a thing). 3. mastering, controlling, curbing, restraining: controlling one’s self, temperate, continent.”*
 - 2. One who has control of his passions, temper, tongue.
- P. **HOLDING FAST THE FAITHFUL WORD**, Titus 1:9 —
- 1. Gk. *antechomai* [holding fast] (Strongs 472, to hold oneself opposite to, i.e. (by implication) adhere to, to care for, hold fast, hold to, support).
 - a. **Thayer**: *“to hold before or against, hold back, withstand, endure; to keep one’s self directly opposite to any one, hold to firmly, cleave to.”*
 - 2. Gk. *pistos* (Strongs 4103, trustworthy, trustful, believe, faithful, sure, true).
 - 3. Gk. *logos* (Strongs 3056, something said, etc.)
 - 4. This quality is a **MUST** to be a faithful elder. Without it, he is a failure!

- a. “...As he hath been taught that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9).
- b. Shepherds protect from danger without and within.
- c. It takes men of courage, conviction and ability to stop the mouths of those who wreck and make havoc of the church.
- d. 2 Thess. 2:15, “Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.”
- e. Titus 2:7-8, “In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine [shewing] uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.”

IX. THE NEGATIVE QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS.

- A. **NOT GIVEN TO WINE**, 1 Tim. 3:3 — Gk. *me* [not] (Strongs 3361, particle of qualified negation, not). Gk. *paroinos* [given to wine] (Strongs 3943, staying near wine, i.e. tippling (a toper):-given to wine).
 1. **Thayer:** “one who sits long at his wine, given to wine, drunken: [al. give it the secondary sense, ‘quarrelsome over wine;’ hence, brawling, abusive].”
 2. The significance of the phrase “given to wine” conveys the idea of the disposition, character, or trait one displays when under the influence of alcohol.
 - a. The ASV translates the word *paroinos* as “brawler.”
 - b. This has to do with the “attitude” or “actions” one displays while under its influence.
 - c. His judgment is hindered and he becomes one “ready to quarrel” and/or “fight.”
 3. The fact that deacons are not to be “given to much wine” (1 Tim. 3:8) adds another warning concerning the drinking of alcohol.
 - a. This does not at all imply that elders cannot have “any” wine while deacons can have a “little.”
 - b. The idea conveyed concerning “much wine” is the addicting qualities of alcohol.
 - c. It refers to the “hold” (addiction) wine (alcohol) has on a person.

- d. An individual who would be an elder or deacon must not be one who is “enslaved (addicted) to” or controlled by any person or thing. He is not an individual who acts rashly or carelessly as though intoxicated with alcohol.
 - e. The use of the word “much” does not imply that a “little” is acceptable.

Eccl. 7:17, “Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish....” Does this mean you can be a “little wicked” as long as you do not do too much?

Rom. 6:12, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.” Would a little sin be all right as long as it did not reign in us?

Can one commit fornication or adultery moderately? Is a “little” adultery okay?
 4. 1 Tim. 3:3 (not given to wine) and 3:8 (not much wine) gives a double warning concerning alcohol.
 - a. Verse 3 — the quarrelsome attitude and disposition of one influenced by it.
 - b. Verse 8 — the addicting qualities inherent in it.
 - c. An elder will not be fooled or deceived by either!
 5. Old Testament priests, under penalty of death, were forbidden to drink wine or strong drink when they ministered in the tabernacle (Lev. 10:8-11).
- B. **NO STRIKER**, 1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7 — Gk. *plektes* (Strongs 4131, a smiter, i.e., pugnacious, quarrelsome:striker).
 1. **Thayer:** “bruise, ready with a blow; a pugnacious, contentious, quarrelsome person.”
 2. **H. E. Phillips:** Striker — “One who hits with force, either with the hand or an instrument.” Pugnacious: “disposed to fight; inclined to fighting; quarrelsome; fighting.” Brawler: “a noisy fellow; a wrangler.”
 3. **Roy Deaver** — “He is not to be quick-tempered. He is not to be one who ‘carries a chip on his shoulder.’ He is not to be a violent person.”
 4. A striker is one who is easily provoked to anger and ready to fight or strike back. He lets his temper get the best of him. An elder is not such a person.

- C. **NOT GREEDY OF FILTHY LUCRE**, 1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7 — Gk. *aischrokerdes* [greedy lucre] (Strongs 146, gain, sordid, given to (greedy of) filthy lucre). Gk. *aischrologia* [filthy] (Strongs 148, vile conversation, vile communication).
1. **Thayer:** (greedy lucre) “*eager for base gain*”
 2. **Thayer:** (filthy) “*foul speaking, low and obscene speech*”
 3. He is not a person whose aim is money and material possessions.
 4. He is not one who seeks gain and is ready to obtain it by whatever means.
 - a. He would not engage in an illegal (drugs, insurance fraud) or immoral business (sell or trade in alcohol, pornography, etc.).
 - b. He is not interested in taking advantage of others for his gain.
 5. He is more concerned about spiritual wealth than he is material wealth.
- D. **NOT A BRAWLER**, I Tim. 3:3 — Gk. *amachos* (Strongs 269, peaceable).
1. **Thayer:** “*...abstaining from fighting.*”
 2. **Roy Hearn:** “*Not a wrangler, but quiet and peaceable. Not a loud, noisy quarreler.*”
 3. A brawler is one who loses control of emotions, to go wild.
 - a. He may be angry with “righteous indignation.” Jesus looked with anger on those who would accuse him (Mark 3:1-5). He was angry when he cleansed the temple (John 2:13-17; Matt. 21:12-13).
 - b. “*Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath*” (Eph. 4:26).
- E. **NOT COVETOUS**, 1 Tim. 3:3 — Gk. *aphilarguros* (Strongs 866, without covetousness).
1. **Thayer:** “*not loving money*”
 2. He loves God, his Word and the souls of men more than great riches.
 3. He is not persuaded by gain. He is not so “covetous” that he can be bought!
 4. He does not so wish for gain that he will compromise the Truth to get it.

5. He is not persuaded by a falling contribution. Col. 3:5 “*...covetousness, which is idolatry.*” Luke 12:15, “*...Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*”
- F. **NOT A NOVICE**, 1 Tim. 3:6 — Gk. *neophutos* (Strongs 3504, newly planted, a young convert).
1. **Thayer:** “*one who has recently become a Christian.*”
 2. **Roy Hearn:** “*Incapable of responsibility. Cf. An engineer on a railroad, pilot of a ship; baby over a household, green lumber in a house. Moral and spiritual qualities, aptitude, studiousness, in addition to age determine eldership.*”
 3. v.6 “**...Lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.**”
 - a. The devil suffered condemnation because he was lifted up with pride.
 - b. The authority, power, position, prestige of being an elder would likely cause a novice to be lifted up with pride and conceit which must not be found within an eldership. Pride seeks personal goals instead of the good of the congregation.
- G. **NOT SELFWILLED**, Titus 1:7 — Gk. *authades* (Strongs 829, self-pleasing, i.e. arrogant;-self-willed).
1. **Roy Hearn:** “*Hence, obstinate; governed by own will; no respect for wishes or judgment of others. Not to be dogged, stubborn, mulish, pigheaded (impenetrable to argument); bull-headed (headstrong determination).*”
 2. He is not a person that is so head-strong that he will not listen to reason and the sound judgment of the other elders.
 - a. Jude 3, “*Earnestly contend for the faith...*”
 - b. There’s a big difference in “*contending for the faith*” and contending for one’s own opinion or idea.
- H. **NOT SOON ANGRY**, Titus 1:7 — *orgilos* [soon angry] (Strongs 3711, irascible, soon angry). Irascible: “prone to outbursts of temper, easily angered.”
1. **Thayer:** “*prone to anger, irascible, soon angry*”
 2. He is not one easily insulted and ready to take offence.
 3. He is not “touchy” and easily irritated.

4. It is obvious why God will not allow such a disposition in the eldership.
5. Compare Eph. 4:26. *“Be ye angry and sin not.”* Anger is not necessarily sinful.
6. **David Lipscomb:** “Oftentimes the Christian is brought face to face with sin, corruption and crime so iniquitous that it would be a sin not to manifest deep indignation — a holy indignation.”

X. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELDERS TO THE CONGREGATION.

(Edited from a lesson by Sidney White)

A. Take heed to himself.

1. Acts 20:28, *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers....”*
2. Every man’s obligation is to first make sure his own life is in order.
3. If elders do not watch their own lives carefully, they will not be in a position to fulfill the requirements that demand they keep the church pure.
4. 1 Tim. 4:16, *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”* (This is said to Timothy but the principle is the same.)

B. Exhibit Watchfulness (care) over the congregation.

Acts 20:28, *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers....”*

1 Peter 5:2-3, *“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight [thereof], not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over [God’s] heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.”*

1. Comparison to the oriental shepherd (John 10:1-14).
 - a. Knows the sheep by name (v.3), Leads them (v.3), Companion to them (v.4),
 - b. Protect the sheep from wolves.
2. Watchful care involves:
 - a. Protecting the congregation from false teachers. Knowledge is a MUST.

- b. Guard against the influence of division in the congregation. (Sometimes elders themselves create the division or take sides in division.)
- c. Be ready to act at the first appearance of danger.
- d. John 10:12-13, Some are “hirelings” when they do not do as they should.
3. Elders Must KNOW the flock (members).
 - a. They know who they are, how many, their spiritual condition, their need, where they live.
 - b. Are they weak, worldly, careless, hobbyists? Are they sound in the faith? Can they be depended on?
4. Elders must give an account of the members’ souls. Heb. 13:7,17
 - a. Vigilance is a qualification (1 Tim. 3:2).
 - b. Slackness allows apostasy (1 Peter 5:8-9).
 - c. What about those who wander away and leave the 99 (Luke 15:3-7)?

C. Teach the Word of God.

1. “Apt to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2). They do not have to do “all” the teaching, but they must be able to teach and they do teach as needed.
2. Must have knowledge (2 Tim. 2:15).
3. Men who can’t or won’t teach, fail in this qualification.
4. They must exhort and convince the gainsayers (Titus 1:9; Acts 20:28-31).
5. Encourage the preaching of the Gospel (Acts 16:4-5).

D. Take the oversight of the congregation (1 Pet. 5:2-3).

1. An elder is a ruler, a leader, not a “lord” or “boss.”
2. *Episkopeo*: “to look upon, inspect, oversee, look after.”
3. The “eldership” takes charge in overseeing the affairs of the church so the greatest good can be done.
4. Rule and rule well (1 Tim. 5:17-18).

E. Watch for grievous wolves (Acts 20:29-31).

1. “Wolves” are false teachers (Matt. 7:15).
2. Elders must know enough to recognize false doctrine.
 - a. Know the Word.
 - b. Know the brotherhood.
 - c. Be informed concerning those who are leading the way into error.
3. Keep the church pure (Eph. 5:27).

- F. Support the weak and needy** (Acts 20:35).
1. Help those in need (Acts 11:27-30).
 - a. This work is not to be done by the elders alone. Every Christian (Matt. 25:34-36; 1 Thess. 5:14).
 2. Pray for the sick (James 5:14).
- G. Admonish the church** (1 Thess. 5:12).
1. “To warn of a fault; to reprove gently and kindly, but seriously; to exhort; to put one in mind of something forgotten” (Webster).
 2. No respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).
 3. Uphold truth and right regardless of whom, when and where.
- H. Consider and decide on church problems** (Acts 15:6-32).
1. Settle difficulties. Give direction wisely. Can’t make new laws. He (they) must honor the laws God made.
 2. Elders sometimes equivocate (hedge, dodge) concerning problems that arise.
 - a. Sometimes they attempt to make everyone happy. But there are times when they can’t do so.
 - b. Sometimes they must make the “right decision” (based on scripture) and follow through with it even when some may become upset. That’s why they are overseers! They must make difficult/hard decisions to keep the church on track.
 3. Sometimes it calls for prompt and immediate action.
 - a. Might have to get away from the “once a month” business meeting.
 - b. If a man is unwilling to do this, he needs to get out of the eldership (or not become an elder).
 - c. “Indecision” or “no decision” regarding a matter is “no leadership.”
 - d. One’s inability or unwillingness to make a decision shows he is not elder material.
 4. The church is not run by majority rule (vote of the membership). Nor is it run by minority rule.
- I. Be examples to the flock.**
1. Heb. 13:7, “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose

- faith follow, considering the end of [their] conversation.*” (manner of life)
- a. “Follow” (*mimeomai*, g3401) means to *imitate*.
 - b. Their lives are a pattern to be imitated.
2. Their examples must be worthy of imitation.
- a. Phil. 3:17-18, “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, [that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ:”
 - b. 1 Cor. 11:1, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also [am] of Christ.”
3. Examples in what? Word, Faith, Charity, Life, Service, Liberality, Discipline, etc.
- J. Take the lead in exercising discipline.**
1. Discipline defined: “To educate, to train, to develop members. To correct evil, punish.”
 2. Discipline is needed in the home, school, state, church.
 3. The subjects of disciplinary action are:
 - a. Matt. 18:15-17, The one who sins against you and won’t repent. (We are told to work it out)
 - b. Matt. 5:23-24, When you sin against another and don’t repent. (We are told to work it out)
 - c. 2 Thess. 3:6, Those who sin and walk disorderly. “Disorderly” is a military term meaning “out of step or out of order.”
 - d. 2 Thess. 3:1-15, Busybodies (v.11).
 - e. 1 Cor. 5, Immoral (fornication)
 - f. Rom. 16:17; 2 John 9-11, Those who cause division.
 - g. Any sin, all sin, for which one will lose their soul.
 4. Design of disciplinary action:
 - a. 2 Thess. 3:14; 1 Cor. 5:5, Save the erring soul.
 - b. 1 Cor. 5:1-8, Save the souls of the other members.
 - c. Phil. 2:15-16; Matt. 5:16, Save the souls of the world.
 - d. 1 Tim. 5:20, To cause the rest to examine their own lives (elders, deacons, preachers, members).
 - e. 2 Cor. 2:9, To show the church is subject to Christ in all things.
 5. “Let it be observed here, that the duty of withdrawing from the disorderly is enjoined, not upon the overseers, but upon the church at large, and the overseers become

connected with it, as leading actors, only by virtue of their official relation to the church.” (McGarvey, “The Eldership” p.40)

- a. Withdrawal of fellowship is not simply and only an eldership action. It is a congregational action.
- b. The membership are active participants not only with elders, but in the absence of elders.

XI. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS TO THE ELDER. (Edited from a lesson by Sidney White)

A. Know the elders and appreciate them.

1. 1 Thess. 5:12, “*And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;*”
 - a. “Know” — to acknowledge, to respect, duly regard.
 - b. (*eidō*, 1492) “to know fully, get to know them, be aware.”
2. Know who they are. You can’t ignore scriptural elders without being contrary to the scriptures.

B. Esteem them.

1. 1 Thess. 5:13, “*And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. [And] be at peace among yourselves.*”
 - a. Esteem (*hegeomai*, 2233) “Consider them, know their instructions, honor their leadership, love and respect them.”
 - b. Phil. 2:3, “[*Let*] nothing [*be done*] through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”
 - c. Heb. 11:26, “*Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt...*”
 - d. Highly (Gk. *ek*, 1537) “Very high, exceedingly high”
 - e. “*In love*”
2. “*For their works sake*”
 - a. They are willing to take my soul into their care (individually).
 - b. They are willing to take the church into their care (collectively).
 - c. Hours of prayer for wayward members.
 - d. Heartbreaking sessions to preserve families.

- e. Hours of talking with lost souls and wayward members.
 - f. Hours of planing to help the church be most effective.
3. Honor them because...
 - a. They meet the qualifications.
 - b. Of their willingness to serve in a thankless task.
 - c. Of the worthy and weighty work they do.
 - d. They feed us and tend to our spiritual needs.
 - e. They watch for our souls.
 - f. They are over us in the Lord.
 - g. Of their work of faith, labor of love and patience of hope (cf. 1 Thess. 1:3).
 - h. Of their delegated authority given to them by God to see that things are done correctly.

C. Be in submission to and obey the elders.

1. Heb. 13:17, “*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that [is] unprofitable for you.*”
 - a. Submit (*hupeiko*, 5226) “To surrender, give way to, resist no longer”
 - b. Why? For they watch for your souls.
2. Each member has a duty to submit:
 - a. Not just when you agree with their decisions.
 - b. When they admonish, we must hear them.
 - c. If they rebuke, we must heed.
 - d. Whatever their decision (as long as it’s in harmony with the Bible) must be respected and followed with love.
3. There are various ways some respond to elders and their decisions. Some...
 - a. Agree and submit.
 - b. Do not agree but submit and do not cause trouble.
 - c. Do not agree and cause trouble.
 - d. Do not agree and leave.
 - e. With indifference, ignore.
 - f. Which one(s) of the above has Bible authority? Number 1, and in some cases number 2.
4. “Unprofitable for YOU” — did not say it was unprofitable for the elders.

- a. Sometimes members say, “They are not going to tell me what to do!” Maybe not, but you can be lost just the same.
- b. “My opinion is just as good as theirs.” Maybe so, but God gave them authority to exercise their opinion and commanded you to submit your opinion to theirs. That’s why they are the shepherds.

D. Imitate the elders.

Heb. 13:7, “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.”

1. Mimic, act like.
2. Continuous, habitual action.
3. Conditional action. 1 Cor. 11:1, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”
4. Implies their faithfulness and actions that will lead the flock to heaven.
5. We are to follow their love, faith, liberality, attendance, work, hospitality, etc.

E. Receive not accusation against an elder without witnesses.

1. 1 Tim. 5:19, “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.”
 - a. “Receive” — to receive or admit with approval, accept.
 - b. This accusation is an accusation of sin with witnesses provided.
 - c. The accusation must be well founded.
2. Easy to pick flaws and be “mote hunters.” Matt. 7:1-5
3. Elders can, and do, make mistakes; but be careful not to receive every report concerning them.
 - a. The Old Testament demanded two or three witnesses (Deut. 17:6).
 - b. The New Testament also (2 Cor. 13:1; John 8:17).
 - c. They must be reliable, reputable witnesses.
4. Those proven to be in sin are to be rebuked.
 - 1 Tim. 5:20, “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.”

F. Commend the elders for good things they do.

1. 2 Cor. 12:11, “...I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.”
2. All need encouragement and commendation.
3. Are we as quick to commend as we are to condemn?
 - 1 Cor. 13:5b-7, Charity “...is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.”

G. Count them worthy of double honor, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine (1 Tim. 5:17-18).

1. They are of great value and precious price when they manage the needs of the church well.
2. Those laboring “in the word and doctrine” may have also been preachers.
 - a. Peter was an apostle (1 Peter 1:1), preacher (Acts 2:14-40) and elder (1 Peter 5:1).
 - b. Those preaching/teaching (preachers and elders) are often financially compensated so they can devote more time to the Lord’s work.
3. The laborer is worthy of his hire (cf. Luke 10:7).
 - 2 Cor. 11:8 “I robbed other churches, taking wages [of them], to do you service.”
 - Phil. 4:14-16, “ye sent...unto my necessity.”
 - 1 Cor. 9:3-16, “have not we power to forbear working?” Paul had a right to be financially supported.

H. Call for the elders when in need.

1. James 5:14, “Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:”
2. This places the responsibility on the members.
3. Let elders know when and why you are absent from services.

I. Elders are men just like every member of the church. He/they are due common courtesy and respectful behavior just like everyone else.

1. They have families like everyone else.
2. They have the same responsibilities like everyone else.
3. Hold up their hands. Pray for them. Support them. Encourage them. Do not be a cause of concern to them.

CONCLUSION:

1. We must respect and follow God’s instructions regarding all areas of study.
2. To fail or rebel against God’s designated leadership is to rebel against God, not men (cf. 1 Sam. 8:5-7).

The word “children” translated from the Greek word “*teknon*” in the New Testament

This chart shows the appearances of the Greek word *teknon* in the New Testament. It is found 100 times in 92 verses. The word is translated by seven different English words. (Strong’s number 5043). The head of each column shows the English word and how many times it’s used to translate the Greek word *teknon*.

child, 5	children, 70	children’s, 2
Matt 10:21 Luke 1:7 Acts 7:5 Rev 12:4, the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her <u>child</u> < <i>teknon</i> > as soon as it was born. Re 12:5, And she brought forth a man < <i>arrhen</i> > <u>child</u> < <i>huios</i> >, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron and her <u>child</u> < <i>teknon</i> > was caught up unto God and to his throne.	almost without exception, speaking of one or more (can be both) Mt 10:21 Mt 15:26 Mt 18:25 Mt 19:29 Mt 22:24, Mk 12:19 Mark 13:12 (son) Acts 21:5 Acts 21:21 2Co 12:14 1Tim 3:4 1Tim 3:12 children & houses (<i>oikos</i>) Titus 1:6	Mt 15:26 Mk 7:27

Reading these verses in their context, reveals that the instances where it is translated in the singular is warranted (such as “child,” “son”). Notice especially the word “child” (*teknon*) in Rev. 12:4 & 5 where it is obviously only referring to one child (Jesus) and not children. In the verses where it is translated “son” 15 times, it’s obvious a single person is referred to and not more than one (plural).

(continued on the next page)

daughters, 1	dieth, 1	son, 15	sons, 6
1Pt 3:6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, whose daughters <teknon> ye are...	Mrk 9:46 Where their worm dieth <teknon> not and the fire is not quenched.	Mt 9:2 Mt 21:28 Mk 2:5 Mk 13:12 Lk 2:48 Lk 15:31 Lk 16:25 1Co 4:17 Phil 2:22 1Ti 1:2 1Ti 1:18 2Ti 1:2 2Ti 2:1 Tit 1:4 Phm 1:10	Mt 21:28 refers to 2&1 Joh 1:12 1Cor 4:14 Phil 2:15 1Joh 3:1 1Joh 3:2

Even when the word is translated “children” (70 times), it includes a single child. I could only find one exception (Gal. 4:27) where the word obviously demands the plural. The other 69 times, the word includes one or more, but it uses the plural because it includes ALL individuals.

I’m not trying to make a point or to start a crusade. I’m simply looking at the Greek word *teknon* that is translated “children” in 1 Tim. 3:4 & Titus 1:6.

ALL 66 VERSES WHERE *TEKNONIS* TRANSLATED “CHILDREN” 70 TIMES

Greek 5043 “teknon,” tek'-non; a child (as produced): -child, daughter, son.

Matt. 2:18, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping [for] her <children>, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

Matt. 3:9, And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to [our] father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up <children> unto Abraham.

Matt. 7:11, If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your <children>, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Matt. 10:21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the <children> shall rise up against [their] parents, and cause them to be put to death.

Matt. 11:19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her <children>.

Matt. 18:25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and <children>, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

Matt. 19:29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or <children>, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

Matt. 22:24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no <children>, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

Matt. 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, [thou] that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy <children> together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under [her] wings, and ye would not!

Matt. 27:25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood [be] on us, and on our <children>.

Mark 7:27, But Jesus said unto her, Let the <children> first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast [it] unto the dogs.

Mark 10:24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, <children>, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

Mark 10:29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or <children>, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s,

Mark 10:30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and <children>, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

Mark 12:19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave [his] wife [behind him], and leave no <children>, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

Mark 13:12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and <children> shall rise up against [their] parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

Luke 1:17, And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the <children>, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Luke 3:8, Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to [our] father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up <children> unto Abraham.

Luke 7:35, But wisdom is justified of all her <children>.

Luke 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your <children>: how much more shall [your] heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Luke 13:34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy <children> together, as a hen [doth gather] her brood under [her] wings, and ye would not!

Luke 14:26 If any [man] come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and <children>, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Luke 18:29 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or <children>, for the kingdom of God's sake,

Luke 19:44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy <children> within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Luke 20:31 And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no <children>, and died.

Luke 23:28 But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your <children>.

John 8:39, They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's <children>, ye would do the works of Abraham.

John 11:52 And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the <children> of God that were scattered abroad.

Acts 2:39, For the promise is unto you, and to your <children>, and to all that are afar off, [even] as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Acts 13:33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their <children>, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

Acts 21:5, And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and <children>, till [we were] out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

Acts 21:21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise [their] <children>, neither to walk after the customs.

Rom. 8:16, The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the <children> of God:

Rom. 8:17, And if <children>, then heirs; heirs of God, and jointheirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with [him], that we may be also glorified together.

Rom. 8:21, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the <children> of God.

Rom. 9:7, Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, [are they] all <children>: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

Rom. 9:8, That is, They which are the <children> of the flesh, these [are] not the <children> of God: but the <children> of the promise are counted for the seed.

1 Cor. 7:14, For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your <children> unclean; but now are they holy.

2 Cor. 6:13, Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto [my] <children>,) be ye also enlarged.

2 Cor. 12:14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the <children> ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the <children>.

Gal. 4:25, For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her <children>.

Gal. 4:27, For it is written, Rejoice, [thou] barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more <children> than she which hath an husband.

Gal. 4:28, Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the <children> of promise.

Gal. 4:31, So then, brethren, we are not <children> of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Eph. 2:3, Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the <children> of wrath, even as others.

Eph. 5:1, Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear <children>;

Eph. 5:8, For ye were sometimes darkness, but now [are ye] light in the Lord: walk as <children> of light:

Eph. 6:1, <children>, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

Eph. 6:4, And, ye fathers, provoke not your <children> to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Col. 3:20, <children>, obey [your] parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

Col. 3:21, Fathers, provoke not your <children> [to anger], lest they be discouraged.

1 Thess. 2:7, But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her <children>:

1 Thess. 2:11, As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father [doth] his <children>,

1 Tim. 3:4, One that ruleth well his own house, having his <children> in subjection with all gravity;

1 Tim. 3:12, Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their <children> and their own houses well.

1 Tim. 5:4, But if any widow have <children> or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.

Titus 1:6, If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful <children> not accused of riot or unruly.

1 Peter 1:14, As obedient <children>, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

2 Peter 2:14, Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed <children>:

1 John 3:10, In this the <children> of God are manifest, and the <children> of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

1 John 5:2, By this we know that we love the <children> of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

2 John 1:1, The elder unto the elect lady and her <children>, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;

2 John 1:4, I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy <children> walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

2 John 1:13, The <children> of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

3 John 1:4, I have no greater joy than to hear that my <children> walk in truth.

Rev. 2:23, And I will kill her <children> with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Other Greek words translated “children.”

PAIDION, 3813 — child, young child — the reference is to “young”, infant, little, Matt 2:13-14

TEKNION: 5040, little children (9 verses)

TEKNOGONEO: 5041, bear children (1 time, 1 Tim 5:14), fear (6 times in 5 verses)

TEKNOTROPHEO: 5044, brought up children (1 time), 1 Tim 5:10