

Shepherds Of The Flock



**A Study Of Elders
In The Lord's Church**

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Introduction To The Office

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Ac 14:21-23**, we read of Paul appointing elders while on his first missionary journey
2. Later, Paul instructed Titus to do the same thing on the island of Crete - **Ti 1:5**
3. The Bible reveals God intended for Christians to have the benefit of elders in each congregation...
 - a. Yet many congregations today do not enjoy this blessing
 - b. Reasons for why this is so vary, some scriptural and some unscriptural
3. Whatever the reason a church does not have elders...
 - a. It should be a temporary situation
 - b. The congregation should not be content without elders
 - c. The congregation should be prayerfully working toward the day when it has men qualified to serve as elders
4. This lesson is the first of several that will hopefully hasten the day when a congregation without elders will be blessed to have them

[For the benefit of those not familiar with the New Testament pattern of church organization...]

I. A REVIEW OF CHURCH ORGANIZATION

A. LOCAL CHURCHES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. Began wherever the gospel was preached and received
 - a. E.g., the church in Jerusalem - **Ac 2:36-47**
 - b. E.g., the church in Antioch of Syria - **Ac 11:19-26**
 - c. E.g., the churches in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia - **Ac 14:21-23**
 2. Consisted of disciples who assembled together frequently
 - a. E.g., the church in Jerusalem - **Ac 2:42**
 - b. E.g., the church in Troas - **Ac 20:7**
 - c. E.g., the admonition given to the Hebrew Christians - **He 10:24-25**
- **These congregations were independent and autonomous, each answering directly to Christ as their Head, through the word of His apostles**

B. WHEN COMPLETELY AND SCRIPTURALLY ORGANIZED...

1. A congregation had a plurality of specially qualified men serving as **elders** (also called by other terms as we will see, such as **bishops**) - e.g., **Ac 14:23; 20:17**
2. Elders (bishops) in the church were assisted by qualified men designated as **deacons**
3. A church might also have in their midst:
 - a. **Prophets** (though this work, like that of apostles, was temporary) - e.g., **Ac 13:1**

- b. **Teachers** (those specially gifted toward this task) - e.g., **Ac 13:1; 1 Co 12:28; Ja 3:1**
- c. **Evangelists** (preachers of the gospel) - e.g., **Ac 21:8; Ep 4:11; 2 Ti 4:5**
- 4. Filling out the congregation would be the rest of the disciples, called Christians or saints
- cf. **Ac 11:26; 1 Co 1:2**
- **An example of a scripturally organized church is found in Ph 1:1**

C. THERE WERE “SCRIPTURALLY UNORGANIZED” CHURCHES...

- 1. This was the condition of the churches in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch prior to the appointment of elders - **Ac 14:21-23**
- 2. It should be noted that such a condition was evidently **temporary**
- **No church should ever be satisfied to remain permanently in such a condition**

[To appreciate the need for qualified elders in each church, it helps to understand...]

II. DESCRIPTIVE TERMS IN REFERENCE TO ELDERS

A. THEY WERE CALLED ELDERS, OR PRESBYTERS...

- 1. As noted in **Ac 14:23; 20:17**
- 2. From the Greek word **presbuteros**, meaning “older”
- 3. Indicating “maturity of spiritual experience” - **Vine’s**
- 4. Note the qualification (“not a novice”) - **1 Ti 3:6**

B. THEY WERE ALSO CALLED BISHOPS, OR OVERSEERS...

- 1. Note that the elders were called “overseers” (bishops) - **Ac 20:17,28**
- 2. The elders were to serve as “overseers” (bishops) - **1 Pe 5:1-2**
- 3. From the Greek word **episkopos**, meaning “one who oversees, takes care of”
- 4. This is reference to the work they do (take care of the church of God) - cf. **1 Ti 3:4-5**

C. THEY WERE ALSO CALLED PASTORS, OR SHEPHERDS...

- 1. The English word “pastor” is found but once in the New Testament - **Ep 4:11**
- 2. It comes from the Greek word **poimen**, meaning “shepherd”
- 3. Elders were charged to “shepherd the church of God” - cf. **Ac 20:28; 1 Pe 5:1-2**

D. THESE TERMS ILLUSTRATE THE IMPORTANCE OF ELDERS...

- 1. As Christians try to live godly lives, it is a blessing to have:
 - a. Spiritually experienced men (**elders, presbyters**) to guide us along
 - b. Qualified men watching over us (**bishops, overseers**) to see that we grow
 - c. Capable men feeding us (**pastors, shepherds**), protecting us from “grievous wolves”
- 2. Without elders, Christians in a congregation:
 - a. Must grow without the guidance and leadership God intended for His flock
 - b. Fail to have the benefit of spiritual encouragement God intended for His church

[Why then, would any congregation be content without elders? Yet there are several reasons...]

III. WHY CHURCHES DON’T HAVE ELDERS

A. SOME DON'T BELIEVE THEY ARE FOR TODAY...

1. They believe this office or function was only for first century churches
2. Has the **need** provided for by elders changed?
3. Or could the real reason for believing this be what we consider next?

B. SOME DON'T WANT TO HAVE ELDERS...

1. Perhaps because of bad experiences with unqualified elders in the past
 - a. Should we throw away the blessing because someone abused it?
 - b. Shall we discard marriage and family, because of the many bad ones?
2. Perhaps because some want to have the preeminence - e.g., **3 Jn 9**
 - a. Without elders, it is easy for power hungry individuals to run a congregation
 - b. Many young men and unqualified older men like that kind of authority
 - c. Others have a problem submitting to elders (or to anyone, for that matter)

C. SOME DON'T MAKE THE EFFORT TO DEVELOP ELDERS...

1. Many men give little thought to one day serving as elders
2. Therefore they make little effort to develop their abilities
3. Is this not rather selfish?
 - a. God needs godly men to serve Him and His church in this capacity
 - b. But many are too busy in their jobs and planning their retirement
4. Certainly not all men have the potential to serve as elders
 - a. But how many did, but buried their talent under a pile of selfish interests in this life?
 - b. How might Christ judge them if such be the case? - cf. **Mt 25:14-30**

CONCLUSION

1. There is a crying need for qualified men to serve as elders in churches today!
 - a. Churches often struggle without the benefit of elders
 - b. Evangelists and preachers are often burdened with doing what elders should be doing
-- **In such cases, the growth of the gospel is hindered!**
2. Everyone needs to be involved in fulfilling this need..
 - a. Men need to examine themselves
 - 1) To see if they are qualified to serve
 - 2) To diligently work toward meeting the qualifications if the potential is there
 - 3) To encourage others who one day may be qualified, even if they themselves are not
 - b. All should be praying for this work
 - 1) That God raise up men who are qualified
 - 2) That men will be able to provide the leadership and care God desires for His children

-- **What are you doing to expedite the development of men qualified to serve?**

In our next study, we look more closely as the **work** of elders. For now, have we fully utilized the blessing of Jesus as the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls...? - cf. **1 Pe 2:24-25**

Shepherds Of The Flock

Their Work And Responsibility

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous study we...
 - a. Reviewed the New Testament pattern of church organization
 - b. Defined the words used to describe those who serve as elders
 - c. Emphasized the importance of developing and having elders in a local congregation
2. In this study, we direct our attention to the work and responsibility of elders...
 - a. That we might appreciate those who serve
 - b. That we might better understand the need for certain qualifications

[In **1 Ti 3:1**, we are told that the work of an elder (bishop) is “good”. What that work entails can be gleaned by turning to Paul’s comments to the Ephesian elders in **Ac 20:28-32...**]

I. TO BE SHEPHERDS OF THE CHURCH

A. TAKING HEED TO THEMSELVES...

1. Their example and faithfulness - **Ac 20:28a**
2. Elders need to be as concerned about their own spiritual development as they are for those under their care

B. TAKING HEED TO THE FLOCK...

1. By watching over them (as overseers, i.e., bishops) - **Ac 20:28b**
 - a. The flock is precious in God’s sight
 - b. Having been purchased by the blood of His Son!
2. By feeding them (as shepherds, i.e., pastors) - **Ac 20:28c**
 - a. To shepherd means to feed, to nourish
 - b. Thus the qualification to be able to teach - **1 Ti 3:2**
3. By watching out for trouble - **Ac 20:29-31**
 - a. Trouble from without (“savage wolves”)
 - b. Trouble from within (“among yourselves”)

C. DEPENDING UPON GOD AND HIS WORD...

1. The first implies much prayer - **Ac 20:32**
2. The latter implies much study - **Ac 20:32**

[We turn next to Paul’s instructions to the church at Thessalonica in **1 Th 5:12-14...**]

II. TO BE IN CHARGE AND GIVE INSTRUCTION

A. THEIR LABOR INVOLVES AUTHORITY...

1. Though not mentioned by name, elders are the only ones who are “over” us (serving as overseers) - **Ac 20:28**
2. Their authority is limited to that which is “in the Lord” - **1 Th 5:12a**
3. Their authority pertains to the Lord’s will and work
 - a. Contrast with the “discipling” concept of some
 - b. Where the “discipler” assumes authority in **all** matters

B. THEIR LABOR INVOLVES ADMONITION...

1. Warning those who are unruly - **1 Th 5:12b,14**
2. Comforting the fainthearted, upholding the weak, with patience - **1 Th 5:14**
3. Such labor requires knowledge of God’s will, and wisdom to use it properly!

[Then we note what Paul wrote to Timothy...]

III. TO BE A TEACHER AND RULER

A. ABLE TO TEACH...

1. One of the qualifications of a bishop (elder) - **1 Ti 3:2**
2. Such is necessary if he is going to be able to fulfill his tasks
3. This may not require eloquence, but certainly knowledge - cf. **2 Co 11:6**

B. ABLE TO RULE OTHERS WELL...

1. Not just to rule, but to rule well - **1 Ti 3:4-5; 5:17**
2. To rule in a way that others submit with reverence
 - a. Implies an example inspiring others to follow
 - b. Implies an example which instills confidence in others

[To Titus, another evangelist, we find Paul requiring elders...]

IV. TO BE A STUDENT AND TEACHER

A. A DILIGENT STUDENT...

1. He “holds fast” what he has been taught - **Ti 1:9**
2. He retains it, does not forget it, and properly applies it
3. Not possible, unless he continues with diligent study

B. AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER...

1. Able to use the Word to exhort and encourage the brethren - **Ti 1:9**
2. Able to use the Word to convict those who contradict, to show the error where it exists

[We find similar responsibilities described in the epistle to the Hebrews...]

V. TO BE A RULER AND SOUL WATCHER

A. ONE WHO RULES OVER OTHERS...

1. Though elders are not mentioned by name, they are the ones who rule - **He 13:17**; cf. **1 Ti**

3:4-5; 5:17

2. They must do so properly, as we shall see shortly

B. ONE WHO WATCHES OUT FOR OUR SOULS...

1. A clear reference to the elders who oversee the flock - cf. **Ac 20:28**
2. An awesome responsibility, for they must give an account - **He 13:17**
 - a. This may shy some men away from serving as elders
 - b. But don't forget the parable of the talents!

[Finally, we note what Peter, himself an elder, had to say about the work and responsibility of elders...]

VI. TO BE A SHEPHERD WHO OVERSEES AND LEADS

A. SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK...

1. By overseeing - **1 Pe 5:2**
2. Doing so willingly, eagerly - **1 Pe 5:2**

B. LEADING BY EXAMPLE...

1. Not as "lords", i.e., lording their authority over the flock - **1 Pe 5:3**
2. But by being examples that inspire those they lead and feed - **1 Pe 5:3**

CONCLUSION

1. We might summarize by concluding...
 - a. The responsibility of elders is to oversee the flock, both leading and guarding the sheep
 - b. The work of elders is accomplished by teaching and providing examples for the sheep to follow
2. Hopefully, this helps us to understand...
 - a. Why Paul calls it "a good work"
 - b. Why the qualifications in **1 Ti 3:1-7** and **Ti 1:5-9** are what they are
 - c. Why we should highly esteem those who serve as elders

Our next study will begin examining the **qualifications** of elders...

Shepherds Of The Flock

Their Qualifications - Preliminary Considerations

INTRODUCTION

1. In this study we have considered...
 - a. The terms used to describe elders (presbyters, bishops, overseers, pastors, shepherds)
 - b. The importance of having elders, or working toward having them
 - c. The work and responsibility of elders
2. We now begin to examine the qualifications for elders (bishops)...
 - a. As Paul instructed Timothy - **1 Ti 3:1-6**
 - b. As Paul commanded Titus - **Ti 1:5-9**

[Let's start with some preliminary considerations regarding their qualifications...]

I. MUST ONE DESIRE THE POSITION?

A. MANY UNDERSTAND ONE MUST DESIRE THE POSITION...

1. So they understand Paul's beginning words - cf. **1 Ti 3:1**
2. Yet the passage simply states:
 - a. "If a man desires the position of a bishop..."
 - b. "...he desires a good work."
3. Note that Paul says "if a man...", not "a man must..."
4. There is certainly nothing wrong with having such a desire
5. But to say this passage **requires** a man to **desire** the office **prior** to becoming an elder is to read into the passage something that is not there

B. CERTAINLY ONE MUST SERVE WILLINGLY AND EAGERLY...

1. This we learn from **1 Pe 5:1-2**
2. But the following scenario is possible:
 - a. A man might not seek ("desire") the position, perhaps because of humility
 - b. Yet having met the qualifications, is selected and duly appointed
 - c. Humbly accepting the position as God's will, then serves willingly and eagerly
3. Having the "desire" is fine, but what one "must be"...
 - a. Before they are selected and appointed
 - b. Begins in verse 2, not verse 1!

[Another preliminary consideration, one that will help answer many difficult questions later on...]

II. MUST ONE BE, OR HAVE BEEN?

A. THE CRITERIA IS FOR WHAT AN ELDER MUST BE...

1. What we shall consider are criteria for what an elder must be (not have been)

2. Note the present tense (“must be”, “is”) - **1 Ti 3:2; Ti 1:6-7**
 - a. I.e., to **be** an elder, not just to **become** one
 - b. I.e., what an **elder** must be, not just what a **man** must have been to become one

B. THE QUALIFICATIONS MUST EVER BE PRESENT...

1. They are **present** requirements, not **past** requirements
2. When one ceases to meet any of these criteria, he no longer meets the requirement of what an elder “must be”
3. An extreme illustration to prove the point:
 - a. What if an elder has a sex-change operation?
 - b. According to reasoning applied by some to other questions often raised, this would not disqualify him
 - c. But if the qualifications are what an elder “must be”, the answer is simple (the person no longer meets the requirements)

[An important consideration, in the light of cultural trends, is this one...]

III. MUST ONE BE A MAN?

A. YES, BASED ON CONTEXT...

1. In the context, Paul is clearly talking about a **man** serving as an elder - **1 Ti 3:1; Ti 1:6**
2. Also evident from the fact that one must be a **husband** - **1 Ti 3:2; Ti 1:6**

B. YES, BASED ON REMOTE TEXT...

1. Elsewhere, Paul limits the role of women related to teaching - **1 Ti 2:11-12**
2. Elsewhere, Paul limits the conduct of women in the assembly - **1 Co 14:34-35**

[This is not the view of a misogynist, but a commandment of the Lord (cf. **1 Co 14:37**). Those who respect the authority of the Lord will not appoint women as elders (bishops, pastors, etc.).

Finally, we note this preliminary consideration...]

IV. MUST ONE BE BLAMELESS?

A. THE REQUIREMENT...

1. “A bishop then must be blameless (anepileptos) - **1 Ti 3:2**
 - a. Lit., not apprehended, that cannot be laid hold of; that cannot be reprehended, not open to censure, irreproachable - **Thayer**
 - b. One against whom no evil charge can be **sustained**
 - c. One who is above an **established** charge of evil
2. “For a bishop must be blameless (anegkletos) - **Ti 1:7**
 - a. Lit., that cannot be called into account, unprovable, unaccused - **Thayer**
 - b. That which cannot **rightfully** be caused to answer evil and criminal action

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. To be blameless means:

- a. To live in such a way that no charge of guilt can be proved against one
- b. Not free from accusation, but accusations that can be rightly proven - cf. **1 Ti 5:19-20**
2. To be blameless does not mean:
 - a. One has led a perfect life
 - b. One has never sinned publicly
 - 1) Consider Peter
 - a) He denied Christ, yet was restored
 - b) He sinned publicly in **Ga 2:11-13**
 - c) Yet he later served as an elder - **1 Pe 5:1**
 - 2) Even if guilty of a charge that can be proven
 - a) True repentance would render such a person “blameless”
 - b) Therefore suitable to serve as an elder as far as “blameless” is concerned
3. Remember, that an elder must **be** (not have been) blameless
 - a. I.e., presently free from any provable charge
 - b. Having repented of any sin brought to his attention in the past

CONCLUSION

1. In succeeding lessons we will examine qualifications related to...
 - a. Marriage and family
 - b. Personal conduct
 - c. Church and community
2. With the aid of the preliminary considerations in this lesson, hopefully we are in position...
 - a. To understand what an elder must be
 - b. To see how the qualifications render one “blameless”

Speaking of being blameless, do not forget that this is God’s desire for us all, for which we should diligently strive - **Ph 2:14-15; 2 Pe 3:14**

Shepherds Of The Flock

Their Qualifications - Familial Qualities

INTRODUCTION

1. In examining the qualifications of elders, we began with some **preliminary considerations** ...
 - a. Whether a desire for the office is a necessary qualification
 - b. The qualifications describe what an elder must be, not have been
 - c. An elder (i.e., bishop, pastor) must be a man, not a woman
 - d. An elder must be blameless; not perfect, but free from any provable charge

2. A quick perusal of the qualifications (cf. **1 Ti 3:1-7; Ti 1:5-9**), reveal that elders must possess certain qualities related to several areas...
 - a. Marriage and family
 - b. Personal conduct
 - c. Church and community

[In this lesson, we'll examine an elder's "**Familial Qualities**", qualifications that pertain to his family...]

I. THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE

A. THE REQUIREMENT...

1. He "**must be**" the husband of one wife - **1 Ti 3:2; Ti 1:6**
 - a. This rules out a polygamist
 - b. It also rules out a single man
2. Some interpret Paul to say "**if** one is married, he must be husband of one wife"
 - a. Yet Paul does not say "if"
 - b. He says an elder "**must be**" - **1 Ti 3:2**
3. Disregard what Paul says, and we can teach anything
 - a. Some say the bishop **must** be single (e.g., Roman Catholicism)
 - b. Some say the bishop (pastor) **can** be single (e.g., many Protestant churches)
4. Yet the scriptures say the bishop (pastor, elder) must be the husband of one wife!
 - a. Shall we follow the commandments of God, or the traditions of men?
 - b. Consider carefully the warnings of **Mk 7:6-13; 2 Jn 9**

B. SOME QUESTIONS...

1. **What about a widower?**
 - a. If his wife passes while he serves as an elder, should he resign?
 - b. Remember that Paul describes what an elder "must be" (not have been)
 - c. If a man is no longer the husband of one wife...
 - 1) He does not meet the qualifications laid down to become an elder
 - 2) If an elder, he no longer meets the qualifications of what an elder "must be"
2. **What about a digamist (a widower who has remarried)?**
 - a. He is certainly not a bigamist (husband of two wives)

- b. He has a right to remarry - cf. **Ro 7:1-3**
- c. He is presently the husband of one wife, which is what an elder must be
- 3. **What about one divorced and remarried?**
 - a. Presuming that he has been scripturally divorced and remarried - cf. **Mt 19:9**
 - b. He is presently the husband of one wife, which is what an elder must be

[Such questions might not be answerable with certainty. If one is to error, then let it be on the side of **literalness**, rather than **looseness**, when it comes to handling the Scriptures. Now let's consider...]

II. THE ELDER AND HIS CHILDREN

A. THE REQUIREMENTS...

1. **Ruling his own house well - 1 Ti 3:4-5**
 - a. What this means
 - 1) "having his children in submission with all reverence"
 - 2) His children submit to his rule with respect
 - b. Why this is necessary
 - 1) "if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?"
 - 2) It is indicative of one's potential to rule as an elder - cf. **1 Ti 5:17; He 13:17**
2. **Having faithful children - Ti 1:6**
 - a. What this means
 - 1) Either children who believe, or children who are faithful (trustworthy)
 - 2) Whether it means they must be Christians is discussed below
 - b. Why this is necessary
 - 1) It reflects his ability to rule the house of God
 - 2) It reflects his fitness to oversee the children of God
3. **Not accused of dissipation or insubordination - Ti 1:6**
 - a. What this means
 - 1) **dissipation** (Gr., asotia) - an abandoned, dissolute life; profligacy, prodigality; indulgence in sensual pleasure
 - 2) **insubordination** (Gr., anupotaktos) - disobedient, unruly
 - b. Why this is necessary
 - 1) Children so accused brings shame on their father - cf. **Pro 28:7**
 - 2) Such children bring doubt on a father's ability to rule his house - cf. **1 Ti 3:5**

B. SOME QUESTIONS...

1. **Must the children be Christians?**
 - a. Consider the following **translations**:
 - 1) "having children that believe" (**ASV**)
 - 2) "whose children are believers" (**NRSV**)
 - 3) "having children who believe" (**NASB**)
 - 4) "whose children believe" (**NIV**)
 - 5) "whose children are well-trained and believers" (**Amplified New Testament**)
 - 6) "having children who are believers" (**Wuest's Expanded Translation**)
 - 7) "with children who believe" (**Moffat**)

- b. Consider the following **Greek authorities**:
- 1) “one who has become convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and the author of salvation (a believer)” - **Thayer**
 - 2) “believing (in Christ), a (Christian) believer” - **Arndt & Gingrich**
 - 3) “believing children, or children that believe” - **Vincent**
 - 4) “believing children, or children who are believers” - **Wuest**
 - 5) “a believer, Christian” - **Robinson**
- c. Consider the following **commentators**:
- 1) “brought up in the true Christian faith” - **Henry**
 - 2) “Believers, adorning the doctrine of the gospel by purity and obedience. There must be evidence that they have been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” - **Croskey, Pulpit Commentary**
 - 3) “Paul wants only men who believing children, not men whose sons and whose daughters are still pagans. A handicap such as that would be too great for an elder.” - **Lenski**
 - 4) “The apostle required that the children of him who was to be ordained a bishop should be Christians, and of a sober behavior; because the infidelity and vices of children, at least in the eyes of the vulgar, bring some blame on their parents. And therefore it is added, in the next verse, ‘for a bishop must be blameless.’” - **MacKnight**
 - 5) “having children who share the Christian faith of their fathers and who adorn that faith with a godly conduct. A man whose children are still pagans or behave as pagans must not be appointed elder.” - **Hendriksen**
 - 6) “It is not right or healthy for the elder to have pagan children. If the prospective elder accepted Christ late in life, he might not be at fault for the belief of his children, but he cannot ignore his relationship to them. If his children are pagan in their attitude and conduct, it will reflect on him and his service to Christ.” - **Dewelt**
 - 7) “If an officer should have unbelieving children, it might indicate that he was either careless as a Christian, or a recent convert; and if his children were insubordinate, it might indicate that the ‘elder’ lacked the ability to rule the ‘household of God’, the congregation of believers.” - **Erdman**
- d. **In summary**, here are reasons to hold that “faithful children” means Christians:
- 1) The testimony of translations, scholars, and commentators overwhelmingly favor it
 - 2) When a man’s children are faithful Christians, there is good reason to believe that he has experience in...
 - a) Raising others in the training and admonition of the Lord - cf. **Ep 6:4**
 - b) Ruling in such a way that inspires both obedience and emulation
 - 3) When a man’s children are not faithful Christians, there are lingering questions...
 - a) Is he at fault, not having been careful to watch over his children?
 - b) Has he had experience in raising others in the faith?
 - c) Has he had experience in inspiring others to follow his example?
2. **Must there be a plurality of children?**
- a. “Children” (Gr., tekna) literally means more than one child
 - b. The plural (children) can sometimes be used to refer to the singular (child)
 - 1) This is known as plural of class, or the plural containing the singular
 - 2) Examples of this include **Lk 20:28; 1 Ti 5:4**

- 3) Paul appears to use it this way in **1 Ti 5:10; Ti 2:4**
- 4) Leading some to conclude that an elder can have only one child
- c. Yet there are clear advantages to having more than one child
 - 1) Children are different, to which parents with multiple children can attest
 - 2) Raising multiple children requires dealing with diverse personalities, with challenging relationships and conflicts between them
 - 3) Having a plurality of children better qualifies a man for the challenge of leading a plurality of members in the church
 - 4) Having more than one child certainly removes any doubt that one has met the qualification of having “children”
3. **Must all of the children be Christians?**
 - a. Some argue an elder must have faithful children, but not all have to be Christians
 - 1) Literally, you could still say that he has “faithful children”
 - 2) Yet questions may remain as to why there are unfaithful children
 - b. Some scenarios might be less troubling; for example:
 - 1) A man has four children
 - 2) The two older children are Christians
 - 3) The two younger haven’t attained the age of accountability, but do have a childlike faith in God and Jesus
 - 4) To the degree the latter are accountable , are they not “faithful” as well (though not yet Christians)?
4. **What if a child becomes unfaithful away from home?**
 - a. To be consistent with the premise that the qualifications are those which must be present in an elder, an unfaithful child would disqualify an elder
 - b. Can one reason that the father is no longer accountable when the child no longer lives under the same roof? My own thoughts:
 - 1) Does not the father-child relationship continue through life?
 - a) I must still honor my parents - **Ep 6:4**
 - b) I still bear responsibilities toward my parents - cf. **1 Ti 5:4,8**
 - 2) There would be the problem of demonstrating one’s ability to watch over souls
 - a) How do we know he is able, if his children are not faithful?
 - b) The father may not be at fault, but who can know for sure?
 - 3) The only way an elder can serve free from distracting questions is if he continues to have “faithful children”

CONCLUSION

1. Some questions may not be answerable to the degree of certainty; yet let it be clear...
 - a. An elder must be the husband of one wife
 - b. An elder must have faithful children
 - c. An elder must rule his own house well, with children under subjection
2. Where questions linger and doubts remain...
 - a. Each congregation should strive resolve the issues to the satisfaction of all its members
 - b. It does not hurt to err on the side of safety
 - c. If possible, elders should be free from any doubts that would hinder their ability to serve

Shepherds Of The Flock

Their Qualifications - Positive Qualities

INTRODUCTION

1. In our study of the qualifications of elders, we have seen so far that one must be...
 - a. Blameless
 - b. The husband of one wife
 - c. One who rules his own house well, having children in submission with all reverence
 - d. One with faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination
2. In the two lists provided by Paul (**1 Ti 3:1-7; Ti 1:5-9**), the qualifications contain both...
 - a. Positive qualities (what an elder must be)
 - b. Negative qualities (what an elder must not be)

[We now turn our attention to “**Positive Qualities**” we have to yet to consider, beginning with...]

I. TEMPERATE (1 Ti 3:2)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **nephaleos** - “it means, properly, sober, temperate, abstinent, especially in respect to wine; then sober-minded, watchful, circumspect” - **Robinson**
2. Translated as:
 - a. Vigilant (KJV)
 - b. Temperate (NKJV, NASB)
3. Used elsewhere:
 - a. To describe women - **1 Ti 3:11**
 - b. To describe what older men should be - **Ti 2:2**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. Elders are to be “ever on the watch, as sober men alone can be; keenly alive, so as to foresee what ought to be done” - **Jamieson, Fausset, Brown**
2. “Watchful; for as one who drinks is apt to sleep, so he who abstains from it is more likely to keep awake, and attend to his work and charge. A bishop has to watch over the Church, and watch for it; and this will require all his care and circumspection.” - **Clarke**

II. SOBER-MINDED (1 Ti 3:2; Ti 1:8)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **sophrona** - “prudent or, according to the etymology of the word, from **sos**, sound, and **phren**, mind, a man of a sound mind; lit., a sound mind” - **Clarke**
2. Translated as:
 - a. Sober (KJV), sober-minded (NKJV, ASV)
 - b. Prudent (NASB), sensible (NRSV)

3. Used elsewhere:
 - a. To describe what older men should be - **Ti 2:2**
 - b. To describe what young women should be - **Ti 2:5** (discreet, NKJV)

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. “The idea is, that he should have his desires and passions well regulated. Perhaps the word ‘prudent’ would come nearer to the meaning of the apostle than any single word which we have.” - **Barnes**
2. “a man of a sound mind; having a good understanding, and the complete government of all his passions. A bishop should be a man of learning, of an extensive and well cultivated mind, dispassionate, prudent, and sedate.” - **Clarke**

III. OF GOOD BEHAVIOR (1 Ti 3:2)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **kosmion** - “Seemly, decent conduct” - **Robertson’s Word Pictures**
2. Translated as:
 - a. Of good behavior (KJV, NKJV)
 - b. Orderly (ASV), respectable (NASB, NRSV)
3. Used elsewhere:
 - a. Of women regarding their apparel - **1 Ti 2:9**
 - b. Where it is translated “modest” (orderly)

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. “The preceding term, **sophrona**, refers to the mind; this latter, **kosmion**, to the external manners. A clownish, rude, or boorish man should never have the rule of the Church of God; the sour, the sullen, and the boisterous should never be invested with a dignity which they would most infallibly disgrace.” - **Clarke**
2. “The most correct rendering, according to the modern use of language, would be, that he should be ‘a gentleman.’ He should not be slovenly in his appearance, or rough and boorish in his manners.” - **Barnes**

IV. HOSPITABLE (1 Ti 3:2; Ti 1:8)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **philoxenos** - “literally, a lover of strangers; one who is ready to receive into his house and relieve every necessitous stranger.” - **Clarke**
2. Translated as:
 - a. Given to hospitality (KJV)
 - b. Hospitable (NKJV, NASB)
3. Used elsewhere:
 - a. Proscribed for all Christians to practice - **Ro 12:13; He 13:2**
 - b. Even toward one another - **1 Pe 4:9**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. “Ancient inns were usually of ill repute. Then, too, Christian travelers were often poor, and

hesitated to place themselves under obligation to unbelievers. Thus, by entertaining such travelers, particularly such as were missionaries of the cross, the influence of the church could be extended, while at the same time the spirit of love and sympathy could be shown.”

- **Erdman**

2. “Often saints by persecution were made homeless. The bishops must set the example of receiving such.” - **B. W. Johnson**

V. ABLE TO TEACH, EXHORT, CONVICT (1 Ti 3:2; Ti 1:9)

A. THE WORDS...

1. Gr., **didaktikos** - “one qualified to teach” - **Robertson’s Word Pictures**
 - a. Translated as:
 - 1) Apt to teach (KJV, ASV)
 - 2) Able to teach (NKJV, NASB), an apt teacher (NRSV)
 - b. Used elsewhere:
 - 1) Of servants of the Lord - **2 Ti 2:24**
 - 2) Such would include preachers, evangelists, as well as elders
2. Gr., **parakaleo** - “to address, speak to, (call to, call upon), which may be done in the way of exhortation, entreaty, comfort, instruction, etc.” - **Thayer**
 - a. Translated as:
 - 1) “exhort” (NKJV, KJV, NASB), “preach” (NRSV)
 - 2) “give instruction” (RSV), “comfort” (New Testament In Basic English)
 - b. Used elsewhere:
 - 1) Paul exhorting the Thessalonians - **1 Th 4:10; 5:14**
 - 2) What Paul instructed Titus to do - **Ti 2:6,15**
3. Gr., **elegcho** - “to convict, refute, confute; generally with a suggestion of shame of the person convicted; to find fault with, correct” - **Thayer**
 - a. Translated as:
 - 1) “convince” (KJV), “refute” (NASB, NRSV)
 - 2) “convict” (NKJV, ASV)
 - b. Used elsewhere:
 - 1) When confronting a brother who has sinned against you - **Mt 18:15**
 - 2) When rebuking an elder who has sinned - **1 Ti 5:20**
 - 3) What Timothy was to do when he preached the Word - **2 Ti 4:2**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. “A shepherd must feed his flock; a pastor must break the bread of life for his people and must rightly divide the word of truth. Ability for this sacred task is the supreme requirement for those to whom is entrusted the care of souls.” - **Erdman**
2. “The true ‘elder’ must also be a guardian of the faith. He must hold fast the sacred tradition, according to the gospel as taught by the apostles, and he must be thus qualified because of his twofold duty as a teacher, first, to encourage and instruct believers, ‘to exhort in the sound doctrine,’ and second, ‘to convict the gainsayers,’ that is, to withstand unbelieving opponents, to reply to them successfully, to ‘convict’ them of fault.” - **Erdman**

VI. GENTLE (1 Ti 3:3)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **epieikes** - “equitable, fair, mild, gentle” - **Thayer**
2. Translated as:
 - a. “patient” (KJV)
 - b. “gentle” (NKJV, ASV, NASB)
3. As used elsewhere:
 - a. Of moderation to be shown by all - **Ph 4:5**
 - b. Of which Titus was to remind all - **Ti 3:1-2**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. An elder is “one who patiently bears all reproaches and injuries, puts up with affronts, and gives up what is his right and due, rather than contend, quarrel, and strike; who is patient towards all men, and does not bear hard on those that have offended, but is moderate and mild, and gentle in his censures, reproofs, and admonitions” - **Gill**
2. “A Christian minister must be ‘gentle,’ sweetly reasonable, eager to show forbearance and kindly consideration;” - **Erdman**

VII. GOOD TESTIMONY FROM WITHOUT (1 Ti 3:7)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **marturia** - “record, report, testimony, witness” - **Strong**
2. Translated as:
 - a. “testimony” (NKJV, ASV), “report” (KJV)
 - b. “reputation” (NASB), “well thought of” (NRSV)
3. As used elsewhere:
 - a. What was reported of the Cretans - **Ti 1:12-13**
 - b. What was said about Demetrius - **3 Jn 12**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. An elder must “have an established character which speaks well for the church among the unconverted” - **B. W. Johnson**
2. “He must not only be favorably known by his fellow Christians, but he must also have a good reputation in the community where the church is located; otherwise his ill repute may bring obloquy (a state of disgrace, a malicious attack) upon the church, and the very fact that he is under suspicion and reproach may prove a temptation to recklessness and sin;”
- **Erdman**

VIII. LOVER OF WHAT IS GOOD (Ti 1:8)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **philagathos** - “fond of good, that is, a promoter of virtue” - **Strong**
2. Translated as:
 - a. “a lover of what is good” (NKJV), “a lover of good men” (KJV)
 - b. “loving what is good” (NASB), “a lover of goodness” (NRSV)
3. Not used anywhere else in the Scriptures - yet cf. **Ph 4:8**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. “of good things; as prayer, preaching, reading, meditation, spiritual conversation, and every religious exercise: or of good men; for such an elder or bishop has chiefly to do and converse with; and if he is not a lover of them, their company will be disagreeable to him, and he will be of no advantage to them; and if he does not love the souls of men, he will not naturally care for their state, or be concerned for their good.” - **Gill**
2. “The appellation points here to that large heart which finds room for sympathy with all that is good and noble and generous.” - **J. W. Shepherd**

IX. JUST (Ti 1:8)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **dikaïos** - “in a wide sense, upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God; 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” - **Thayer**
2. Translated as:
 - a. “just” (KJV, ASV, NKJV, NASB)
 - b. “upright” (NRSV)
3. As used elsewhere:
 - a. Of Joseph, husband of Mary - **Mt 1:19**
 - b. Of Zacharias and Elizabeth, parents of John the Baptist - **Lk 1:6**
 - c. Of Simeon, who waited for the consolation of Israel - **Lk 2:25**
 - d. Of Joseph of Arimathea - **Lk 23:50**
 - e. Of Cornelius the centurion - **Ac 10:32**
 - f. Of Jesus Christ, our advocate - **1 Jn 2:1**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. An elder must be “righteous in his dealings with men, giving to everyone their due; upright and sincere in his conversation with the saints; and faithful in his counsel, admonitions, and reproofs.” - **Gill**
2. “The one who is just is one who tries strictly to perform his duties toward men - the duties which integrity and justice seem imperatively to ask of him in his relation with his neighbor.” - **Lipscomb**

X. HOLY (Ti 1:8)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **hosios** - “undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure, holy, pious” - **Thayer**
2. Translated as:
 - a. “holy” (KJV, ASV, NKJV)
 - b. “devout” (NASB, NRSV)
3. As used elsewhere:
 - a. Pertaining to hands lifted in prayer - **1 Ti 2:8**

- b. Applied to Jesus, our High Priest - **He 7:26**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. An elder must be “devout towards God, constant in all religious exercises in the closet, family, and church; and living soberly, righteously, and godly in the world.” - **Gill**
2. He must be “one who reverences and worships God, and is of a spiritual and heavenly conversation.” - **Henry**

XI. SELF-CONTROLLED (Ti 1:8)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **egkrates** - “Originally, having power over; possessed of; hence, controlling, keeping in hand.” - **Vincent**
2. Translated as:
 - a. “self-controlled” (NKJV, ASV, NASB)
 - b. “temperate” (KJV)
3. Not used anywhere else in the Scriptures, though a similar word (egkrateia) is enjoined:
 - a. As part of the fruit of the Spirit - **Ga 5:21-22**
 - b. As necessary to growing in the knowledge of Christ - **2 Pe 1:5-8**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. Temperate “in eating and drinking; continent from the lusts of the flesh; and even abstaining from those things which might be lawfully used, though inexpedient, for the sake of the weak, the peace of the church, and the glory of God.” - **Gill**
2. “Holding all his desires and appetites in restraint so moderate in their gratification. The bishop not only must be able to control his tongue, his eyes, and his hands, but must show a just and wise moderation.” - **Lipscomb**

CONCLUSION

1. Too often, people focus on a man’s **family life** when selecting an elder...
 - a. Is he the husband of one wife?
 - b. Does he have faithful children?
2. Just as important is that we consider his **personality** and **abilities**...
 - a. What kind of person is he?
 - b. Will he be able to fulfill the task of shepherding the flock?

Noting the **positive** qualifications help us do that, as do the **negative** qualifications which we shall examine in the next lesson...

Shepherds Of The Flock

Their Qualifications - Negative Qualities

INTRODUCTION

1. This is our sixth lesson on the subject of elders...
 - a. We began with an **introduction** to the office, focusing on **terms** used to describe them
 - b. We considered their **work** and **responsibility** as ordained by God
 - c. We noted some **preliminary considerations** regarding their qualifications
 - d. We examined the **familial qualifications** of an elder
 - e. We canvassed the **positive qualifications** of an elder
2. Remember that in the two lists (**1 Ti 3:1-7; Ti 1:5-9**), the qualifications contain both...
 - a. Positive qualities (what an elder must be)
 - b. Negative qualities (what an elder must not be)

[We now turn our attention to the “**Negative Qualities**” required of elders, the first being...]

I. NOT GIVEN TO WINE (1 Ti 3:3; Ti 1:7)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **paroinos** - “This word not only signifies one who is inordinately attached to wine, a winebibber or tippler, but also one who is imperious, abusive, insolent, whether through wine or otherwise.” - **Clarke**
2. Translated as:
 - a. “not given to wine” (KJV, NKJV)
 - b. “not addicted to wine” (NASB)
 - c. “no brawler” (ASV)
 - d. “not a drunkard” (NRSV)
 - e. “who does not transgress over wine” (Syriac version)
 - f. “not insolent through wine” (Arabic version)
3. Used elsewhere:
 - a. The word is found only in these two lists - **1 Ti 3:3; Ti 1:7**
 - b. Though the same idea is expressed in regards to deacons - cf. **1 Ti 3:8**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. “No more dangerous and hurtful practice is known to man that the use of strong drink. An elder must set a good example in all things.” - **Lipscomb**
2. “The same inspired author who advises Timothy to use a little wine for the sake of his stomach and frequent illnesses (**1 Ti 5:23**), also clearly declares that one who fails to practice moderation has no right to a place in the presbytery. A wine-bibber, tippler, or drunkard cannot be a worthy overseer.” - **Hendriksen**

II. NOT VIOLENT (1 Ti 3:3; Ti 1:7)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **plektes** - “bruiser, ready for a blow; a pugnacious, contentious, quarrelsome person” - **Thayer**
2. Translated as:
 - a. “not violent” (NKJV, NRSV)
 - b. “no striker” (KJV, ASV)
 - c. “not pugnacious” (NASB)
3. Used elsewhere:
 - a. The word is found only in these two lists - **1 Ti 3:3; Ti 1:7**
 - b. Its close connection to the abuse of wine is akin to that found in **Pro 23:29-30**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. An elder must not be “ungoverned in temper, ready to resent insult or wrong, real or imaginary, quarrelsome, or ready to fight.” - **Lipscomb**
2. “He must be no striker; not quarrelsome; not ready to strike a person who may displease him; no persecutor of those who may differ from him; not prone, as one wittily said, ‘To prove his doctrine orthodox By apostolic blows and knocks’.” - **Clarke**

III. NOT GREEDY FOR MONEY (1 Ti 3:3; Ti 1:7)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **aischrokerdes** - “eager for base gain, greedy for money” - **Thayer**
2. Translated as:
 - a. “not greedy for money” (NKJV)
 - b. “not greedy of filthy lucre” (KJV)
 - c. Omitted in **1 Ti 3:3** (ASV, NASB, NRSV) - see reason why below
 - d. “not greedy of filthy lucre” (ASV, **Ti 1:7**)
 - e. “not fond of sordid gain” (NASB, **Ti 1:7**)
 - f. “not greedy for gain” (NRSV, **Ti 1:7**)
3. Used elsewhere:
 - a. In reference to deacons - **1 Ti 3:8**
 - b. A similar word used by Peter regarding elders - **1 Pe 5:2**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. “not covetous of getting money, of amassing wealth and riches together; or desirous of popular applause and glory from men.” - **Gill**
2. “This clause is not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in five of Beza’s manuscripts and other copies, nor is it in the Vulgate Latin version, nor in any of the Oriental versions; it seems to be transcribed from **Ti 1:7**. And indeed it is unnecessary here; since the same is expressed by the word ‘covetous’, at the end of the verse, and makes that a tautology; and moreover, by leaving out this clause, the opposition appears more manifest, between ‘no striker’ and what follows (‘but patient’).” - **Gill**

IV. NOT QUARRELSOME (1 Ti 3:3)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **amachos** - “not contentious; abstaining from fighting” - **Thayer**
2. Translated as:
 - a. “not quarrelsome” (NKJV, NRSV)
 - b. “not a brawler” (KJV)
 - c. “not contentious” (ASV)
 - d. “peaceable” (NASB)
3. Used elsewhere:
 - a. Required of all Christians - **Ti 3:2**
 - b. A similar word used of servants of the Lord - cf. **2 Ti 2:24**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. The elder “should not be a man given to contention, or apt to take up a quarrel. The Greek is, literally, ‘Not disposed to fight.’ - **Barnes**
2. “This does not mean that one is not to stand and contend for the truth, but many are ready to contend over unimportant matters. Such always live in foment and strife. Even truth and right should not be maintained in a contentious spirit.” - **Lipscomb**

V. NOT COVETOUS (1 Ti 3:3)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **philarguros** - not loving money, not avaricious - **Thayer**
2. Translated as:
 - a. “not covetous” (NKJV, KJV)
 - b. “no lover of money” (ASV)
 - c. “free from the love of money” (NASB)
 - d. “not a lover of money” (NRSV)
3. Used elsewhere:
 - a. A virtue expected of all Christians - **He 13:5**
 - b. The vice of covetousness condemned as idolatry - **Ep 5:5; Co 3:5**
 - c. The love of money (**philarguria**) is a root of all kinds of evil - **1 Ti 6:10**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. “Not only must the overseer be a man who is far removed from the Judas-like attitude (**Jn 12:6**) of trying to enrich himself by dishonest means...but he must also be far removed from making the acquisition of earthly treasure his chief goal in life even though the means employed should be honest.” - **Hendriksen**
2. “A man should not be put into the ministry who is characteristically a lover of money. Such a one, no matter what his talents may be, has no proper qualification for the office, and will do more harm than good.” - **Barnes**

VI. NOT A NOVICE (1 Ti 3:6)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **neophutos** - “newly planted; a new convert, neophyte (one who has recently become a Christian)” - **Thayer**

2. Translated as:
 - a. “not a novice” (NKJV, KJV, ASV)
 - b. “not a new convert” (NASB)
 - c. “must not be a recent convert” (NRSV)
3. Not used anywhere else in the Scriptures - yet cf. **1 Co 3:1; He 5:12-13** (“babes”)

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. Paul explains why this qualification is necessary (“lest being puffed up pride he fall...”)
2. “The particular peril of a young convert who is placed in a position of prominence and power is that of pride...a ‘novice’ might be puffed up with self-conceit and vanity, and so fall under the doom incurred by devil, and ceasing to be a minister of light, he might become a instrument of darkness.” - **Erdman**

VII. NOT SELF-WILLED (Ti 1:7)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **authades** - “self-pleasing, self-willed, arrogant” - **Thayer**
2. Translated as:
 - a. “not self-willed” (NKJV, KJV, ASV, NASB)
 - b. “must not be arrogant” (NRSV)
3. Used elsewhere: in regards to those who despise authority - **2 Pe 2:10**

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. “Not doing things in the worship and house of God, in the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances, according to his own will, but according to the will of God, revealed in his word; otherwise what he does will come under the name of will worship.”
- **Gill**
2. “...he must not be of such a stubborn spirit that he clings to his own will and refuses to listen to reason or facts. One in such a position must have the sincere desire to fully investigate all sides, to know the full truth, and then be guided by it, and not by the self-will of his own.”
- **Lipscomb**

VIII. NOT QUICK-TEMPERED (Ti 1:7)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., **orgilos** - “prone to anger, irascible” - **Thayer**
2. Translated as:
 - a. “not quick-tempered” (NKJV, NASB, NRSV)
 - b. “not soon angry” (KJV, ASV)
3. Not used anywhere else in the Scriptures - yet cf. **Ja 1:19-20** (“slow to wrath”)

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. An elder must not be “soon and easily provoked and inflamed. How unfit are those to govern a church who cannot govern themselves, or their own turbulent and unruly passions! The minister must be meek and gentle, and patient towards all men.” - **Henry**
2. An elder must be “one who can restrain and govern himself [He should not be one ever

ready with an angry, hasty word, remembering always his Master, 'who, when he was reviled, reviled not again.'].” - **Lipscomb [J. W. Shepherd]**

CONCLUSION

1. The list of **negative qualities** can be revealing about the work of elders...
 - a. It can test one's patience (e.g., when there is murmuring, discontent, or apathy among brethren)
 - b. It can place one in volatile situations (e.g., that faced by the apostles, cf. **Ac 6:1-2**)
 - c. It can be tempting for those attracted by money (e.g., Judas, the Pharisees)

2. For the flock of God to be **well-fed** and **well-led**, it requires men who meet both...
 - a. The **positive qualities** (what an elder must be)
 - b. The **negative qualities** (what an elder must not be)

Our next study will review the duties of the sheep toward their shepherds...

Shepherds Of The Flock

Our Duties Toward Them

INTRODUCTION

1. In this series of studies we have considered...
 - a. The **terms** used to describe elders
 - b. The **work** of elders as ordained by God
 - c. The **qualifications** of those serve in this capacity
2. In this lesson we will “turn the tables”...
 - a. Instead of examining the elders, we shall examine ourselves
 - b. By considering our duties toward those who are elders

[We begin by noting what should be true regarding...]

I. OUR ATTITUDES TOWARD ELDERS

A. WE ARE TO RECOGNIZE THEM...

1. This charge is found in **1 Th 5:12**
 - a. Though elders are not mentioned by name
 - b. They are the ones who are “over you” - cf. **Ac 20:28**
 - c. The same word (proistemi) is used in **1 Ti 3:3,4; 5:17**
2. To recognize (appreciate, NASB) them
 - a. Gr., **eidennai** - to have regard for one, cherish, pay attention to (1 Th 5:12) - **Thayer**
 - b. “To have a regard and respect for. Recognize their office, and treat them accordingly with reverence and with liberality in supplying their needs (1 Ti 5:17).” - **JFB**

B. WE ARE TO ESTEEM THEM HIGHLY IN LOVE...

1. This command found in **1 Th 5:13**
 - a. The Ethiopic version renders it “honor them abundantly”
 - b. This high esteem is to be accompanied with love
2. “This esteem is due them on account of their work.” - **B. W. Johnson**

C. WE ARE TO ENTREAT THEM AS FATHERS...

1. This duty is found in **1 Ti 5:1**
 - a. The word “elder” (KJV, ASV) likely means any “older man” (NKJV)
 - b. But would certainly apply to those serving as elders
2. Elders should be approached with love and respect, as a child should his or her father
3. The charge to “not rebuke” does not preclude proper correction
 - a. Gr., **epiplesso** - to strike upon, beat upon; to chastise with words, to chide, upbraid, rebuke - **Thayer**
 - b. “the Arabic version renders it, ‘do not strike an elder’; meaning not with the hand, but with the tongue, giving hard words, which are as heavy blows;” - **Gill**

- c. Yet notice what is said about erring elders in **1 Ti 5:20**

D. WE ARE TO COUNT SOME WORTHY OF DOUBLE HONOR...

1. This instruction is given in **1 Ti 5:17-18**
2. Regarding elders who:
 - a. “rule well” - manage their oversight effectively
 - b. “labor in the word and doctrine” - through study and teaching
3. Considered worthy of “double honor”
 - a. “Of double respect; that is, of a high degree of respect; of a degree of respect becoming their age and office;” - **Barnes**
 - b. “From the quotation which is made in **1 Ti 5:18**, in relation to this subject, it would seem probable that the apostle had some reference also to their support, or to what was necessary for their maintenance.” - **ibid.**

E. WE ARE TO RECEIVE NO ACCUSATION WITHOUT PROOF...

1. This warning is given in **1 Ti 5:19**
2. “No accusation of wrong or ill-doing is to be entertained against an elder, save before two or three witnesses.” - **Lipscomb**
3. The testimony of two or more is similar to that required in the Law - cf. **Deu 19:15**

[With such attitudes as respect, love and kindness toward elders, proper conduct should follow. What that conduct entails we now consider...]

II. OUR CONDUCT TOWARD ELDERS

A. WE ARE TO BE AT PEACE...

1. A charge given in **1 Th 5:13**
2. This will certainly make the elders’ work of overseeing the flock easier
3. If we make their job difficult through envy, strife, and divisions, we will be held accountable - cf. **He 13:17**

B. WE ARE TO OBEY THEM...

1. This command is found in **He 13:17**
 - a. Though elders are not mentioned by name
 - b. They are the ones who “rule over you” - cf. **1 Ti 3:4-5; 5:17**
2. To “obey”
 - a. Gr., **peitho** - “to listen to, obey, yield to, comply with” - **Thayer**
 - b. “by constantly tending upon the word preached by them, and hearkening to it; by receiving it with faith and love, as it appears agreeable to the Scriptures; for a contrary behavior is pernicious to souls, and highly resented by God; and by being present at, and joining with them in the ordinances of Christ, as administered by them; and by regarding their admonitions, counsels, and advice:” - **Gill**

C. WE ARE TO BE SUBMISSIVE...

1. This command is also found in **He 13:17**
 - a. Though again, elders are not mentioned by name

- b. Yet they are the ones who “watch over your souls” - cf. **Ac 20:28; 1 Pe 5:12**
2. To be submissive (submit to them, NASB)
 - a. Gr., **hupēiko** - “to resist no longer, but to give way, yield (of combatants); metaphorically to yield to authority and admonition, to submit” - **Thayer**
 - b. “not only obey in cases where no sacrifice of self is required, and where you are persuaded they are right (so the Greek, for ‘obey’), but ‘submit yourselves’ as a matter of dutiful yielding, when your judgment and natural will incline you in an opposite direction.” - **JFB**

D. WE ARE TO IMITATE THEM...

1. This admonition is given in **He 13:7**
 - a. Again, it is presumed that elders being referenced to
 - b. For they have the “rule”, and also “speak the Word” - cf. **1 Ti 3:2,4,5; Ti 1:9**
2. “Whose faith follow” (NKJV)
 - a. “imitate their faith” (KJV, NASB, NRSV)
 - b. “try to have faith like theirs” (CEV)
3. This passage may have reference to elders who have died
 - a. “Remember...considering the outcome of their conduct”
 - b. “They lived to get good and do good; they were faithful to their God and his cause; they suffered persecution; and for the testimony of Jesus died a violent death. God never left them; no, he never forsook them; so that they were happy in their afflictions, and glorious in their death. Carefully consider this; act as they did; keep the faith, and God will keep you.” - **Clarke**
4. Yet we certainly do well to imitate those who are mature in the faith - cf. **Ph 3:17**

E. WE ARE TO CALL THEM WHEN IN NEED...

1. Instructions found in **Ja 5:14**
 - a. Given to those who are sick
 - b. To call for the elders, who will pray for them
2. Note where the responsibility to call is placed
 - a. Those who are sick are to call (not wait to be called)
 - b. While elders are watching over the souls, they can’t always know every need
3. Whether our needs are physical or spiritual, don’t wait for the elders - call them!

CONCLUSION

1. The work of elders is great, and their responsibility is grave: “they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account” - **He 13:17**
2. We have a serious responsibility as well, in regards to elders who watch over us: “Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you” - **He 13:17**

May our **attitudes** and **conduct** toward those who serve as overseers and shepherds of the flock be such that they do their duty with joy...!

Shepherds Of The Flock

Their Selection And Appointment

INTRODUCTION

1. At the start of our study, we noted the following...
 - a. Paul appointed elders while on his first missionary journey - **Ac 14:21-23**
 - b. He later instructed Titus to appoint elders on the island of Crete - **Ti 1:5**
 - **The Lord certainly desires that His congregations have elders where possible**

2. The Bible says little about the process of appointing elders per se...
 - a. Who selected the men to be appointed?
 - b. By what procedure were they appointed?
 - **We know evangelists (e.g., Titus) were involved, but did the congregation play a role?**

3. I found the following statements insightful...
 - a. "It has long been a question whether church officers should be selected by the congregation at large, or by the evangelist charged with effecting the organization of the church."
 - b. "There is but little said on the subject in the Scriptures, but those who are willing to be guided by the slightest indications of the will of God in preference to their own judgment, will find sufficient to satisfy them." - **J. W. McGarvey, A Treatise On The Eldership**

4. We do have one example where the selection and appointment of those who serve the church in some capacity is described...
 - a. What part was taken by the congregation
 - b. What role was fulfilled by the ordaining officers
 - **This is the case of the seven selected to serve the church in Jerusalem - cf. Ac 6:1-6**

[With this case as a guide, we can glean that the process of installing elders involves two steps: **selection** and **appointment**...]

I. THE SELECTION OF ELDERS

A. IN THE CASE OF THE SEVEN...

1. The congregation was to "seek out" (or select) - **Ac 6:3**
2. They were to use guidelines provided by the apostles - **Ac 6:3**
 - a. Men of good reputation
 - b. Men full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom
- **Following the guidelines, the congregation made the selection and set them before the apostles - Ac 6:5-6**

B. IN THE CASE OF ELDERS...

1. The congregation has the right to select those they deem qualified
2. Yet they must use the qualifications as provided by the apostles

- a. Such as those given to Timothy - **1 Ti 3:1-7**
- b. Such as those given to Titus - **Ti 1:5-9**
3. The following procedure would accommodate **the process of selection:**
 - a. The congregation should carefully study the qualifications required of elders
 - 1) Perhaps through a series of sermons by an evangelist or another elder
 - 2) Perhaps through a series of classes conducted by the congregation
 - b. The congregation should “seek out” and select men who are qualified
 - 1) Names of men could be proposed by those in the congregation
 - 2) Opportunity should be given to allow any expression of concern as to whether those proposed truly meet the qualifications
 - 3) Discussions should be frank and open
 - 4) “No secret balloting should be used because too many evil things can be covered up.” - **H. E. Phillips, Scriptural Elders And Deacons**
 - 5) The goal is to please all the members (“the whole multitude”) - cf. **Ac 6:5**; also **1 Co 1:10; Ph 2:1-5**
- **When a congregation has selected men they deem qualified to serve as elders, they are ready for the “next step”**

[The “next step” is that of appointment...]

II. THE APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS

A. IN THE CASE OF THE SEVEN...

1. They were presented (“set before”) by the congregation to the apostles - **Ac 6:6**
2. The apostles then proceeded to “appoint” them - cf. **Ac 6:3**
 - a. It involved prayer - **Ac 6:6**
 - b. It involved the laying on of hands - **Ac 6:6**
 - 1) “The object of the imposition of hands, on this occasion, has been a subject of some dispute; some contending that it was merely to impart miraculous gifts to the seven, and others, that it was the ceremony of their induction into office.”
 - 2) “Miraculous gifts were often conferred by the apostles in this way, and there is much probability, to say the least, that they were now conferred upon the seven; but the context forbids us to suppose that this was the only object of the ceremony.”
 - 3) “The apostles had commanded the disciples to do one thing, and they themselves proposed to do another. The multitude were to ‘look out’ the men, ‘whom,’ say the apostles, ‘we may appoint over this business.’ The part performed by the apostles was their appointment to office.”
 - 4) “But all the apostles did was to pray and lay on their hands; hence, this was the ceremony of their appointment.”
 - 5) “It stands upon record as a precedent, and should be complied with in similar cases. The fact that men can not now confer a miraculous gift by laying on hands, does not relieve them from the obligation to impose hands as a ceremony of appointment to office. “ - **J. W. McGarvey, Commentary on Acts (Ac 6:6)**
- **While the congregation made the selection, the apostles made the appointment**

B. IN THE CASE OF ELDERS...

1. The congregation should make known (“set before”) those they deem qualified as elders
 2. The appointment should include the following elements:
 - a. **Prayer**
 - 1) As was done in the appointment of elders - **Ac 14:23**
 - 2) An appropriate action whenever God’s blessings are desired
 - b. **Fasting**
 - 1) This was done in every church (i.e., not just a Jewish custom) - **Ac 14:23**
 - 2) It also accompanied the sending out of Paul and Barnabas - **Ac 13:1-3**
 - c. **Laying on of hands**
 - 1) The laying on of hands was utilized in several cases
 - a) The appointment of the seven in Jerusalem - **Ac 6:6**
 - b) The sending out of Barnabas and Saul - **Ac 13:2-3**
 - 2) In discussing elders, Paul cautions Timothy - cf. **1 Ti 5:17-22**
 - a) Not to lay hands on anyone hastily
 - b) “All the old commentators, and the great majority of modern ones, applies this to ordination. The meaning is that no man must be ordained to office until his fitness is surely known.” - **B. W. Johnson**
 - 3) The purpose may be that of “commendation” to the Lord
 - a) Which is why Timothy was to be cautious
 - b) Which Paul and Barnabas did in the process of appointing elders - cf. **Ac 14:23**
 3. The appointment to be done by **preachers** or **evangelists**
 - a. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in churches where they preached - **Ac 14:23**
 - b. Paul left Titus in Crete to appoint elders - **Ti 1:5**
 - c. May elders appoint others to be elders? I wonder...
 - 1) There is no example
 - 2) There might there be a conflict of interest
 - 3) The Lord may have intended there be “separation of powers” (e.g., such as we see in the US government)
 4. The following procedure would accommodate **the process of appointment**:
 - a. Prior to the actual appointment, some time spent by all in prayer and fasting
 - b. In an assembly of the congregation...
 - 1) The men selected by the congregation are presented (“set before”)
 - 2) An evangelist or preacher reviews the qualifications required by Scripture
 - 3) The evangelist or preacher lays hands on those being appointed, illustrating his own approval and commendation as men duly qualified to serve
 - 4) The congregation commends the new elders to the Lord with prayer
- The actual procedure of appointment may vary, but it should respect the principles and examples found in the New Testament**

CONCLUSION

1. The Lord has made His will known that He desires His sheep to have shepherds...
 - a. Through examples of elders being appointed in the churches
 - b. Through precepts written by His inspired apostles as to their qualifications and work
 - c. Through exhortations given to His sheep as to their duty toward their shepherds

2. He has also provided sufficient guidance as to their selection and appointment...
 - a. The congregation select based on the apostles' doctrine
 - b. The evangelists or preachers appoint those duly qualified

3. My prayer is that study will encourage..
 - a. Men to grow in grace and knowledge to one day serve faithfully as elders
 - b. Congregations to prayerfully work toward having elders and fulfilling their duties toward them
 - c. Evangelists and preachers to appoint elders where the men are qualified

And so we close, with the words of the apostle Paul to the elders of the church at Ephesus:

“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” (Ac 20:32)