



VERSE BY VERSE MINISTRY
INTERNATIONAL

TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

Titus 1B

Chapter 1:5-9

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- This morning, we will explore verses 5-9 and discuss what are the qualifications for elders.
 - If you weren't with us for the first teaching of Titus in Titus 1:1-4, we discussed:
 - Paul's urgency in this letter regarding the importance of sound doctrine within the church.
 - The crazy Cretan culture that was ever resembled to our current culture.
 - How false teaching from Judaizers began to creep into the church teaching salvation came through circumcision rather than Christ.
 - Lastly, the urgent necessity to set right what remained.
 - Turn with me now to Titus 1:5-9

Titus 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,

Titus 1:6 namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.

Titus 1:7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,

Titus 1:8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,

Titus 1:9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

- Dr. Dan Allender, wrote a book entitled "Leading Character".
 - In this book he states something profound regarding character.
 - He says this:

The actual word in the Greek—charaktér—originally was used in connection with tools designed for engraving. And character is indeed a tool that marks us—that in one sense cuts us, shapes us, and engraves us. We are image-bearers who are intended by God to make him known in a fashion that no one else on the earth can do in the same way.

-Dan B. Allender, Leading Character

- Character is everything. You can earn jobs and lose jobs based upon the character of the individual.
 - The true character of a person can attempt to be hidden, but what comes out through pressure, with time, will be revealed.
 - One thing that you can't fake is character. It reveals the systems and beliefs by which one lives.

- Ultimately, your beliefs will be revealed in your behaviors.
- This morning we will see how the qualification of Elders, church structure and the structure of marriage and family life are intertwined in selecting elders.
 - We will see the following things in the text:
 - God’s structure of the family is essential to the body of Christ and the thriving of the family.
 - Leadership in the church must be carefully considered.
 - Positions/roles do not make the man of God, but God makes the man of God.
 - Leadership is to be patterned after the Great Shepherd, which is Christ.
 - Christ is the Head of the Church and we should look to Him for all things.
- Again, to briefly recap from the last lesson in Titus, Titus is given the instruction by Paul to “set in order what remains”.
 - Paul gives specific instructions of how to accomplish this task
 - He is to appoint elders in every city
 - As I mentioned before, the reasoning behind the need for organization in the Cretan churches was there was a chaotic culture in Crete.
 - Cretans, as mentioned by their own prophet Epimenides, were:
 - Always liars, evil beast, and lazy gluttons. (Titus 1:12)
- The task that Titus is given by Paul is not an easy task. One could assume based upon the size of Crete that Titus would need to appoint quite a few elders.
 - As I mention this, you might be asking yourself, how could one man know who to appoint as an elder within these home churches.
 - As we move throughout the text you will see that the qualifications for these elders required more than a casual awareness or familiarity.
 - This letter will outline for Titus as well as the church today, what the qualifications of the appointment of an elder was and is.
 - However, before we jump into the qualifications of an elder, I would like to establish a definition of what an elder is.
 - The word “elder” comes from the Greek word *presbuteros*.
 - It means an older man, a community leader that assists in making leadership decisions for the church body.
 - This appointment is not taken lightly and must be prayed about, observed by recommendation, and entrusted to God.
 - Acts 14:23 describes the appointment of elders this way:

Acts 14:23 When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

- As you can see, the appointment of elders was not unknown to the New Testament saints.

- Not only was it common for the New Testament churches, but it required much diligence and observation of the eligible prospect.
- As we dive further into Titus, it is my prayer that we see the significance of elder-led churches
 - Most importantly, how they guard against false teaching, serve as guardians for the body, and protectors of the flock.
- Let's dive into the text, picking up at verse 5

Titus 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,

- Titus was charged with the responsibility to set in order what remained and to appoint elders in every city.
 - The “what” that remains specifically deals with the existing Christian churches that were in Crete.
 - These churches heard the Gospel message but needed organization.
 - With anything new that has been established, there is a need to maintain the foundation and function of it.
 - When I think of healthy organizations, I think of Chick-fil-A
 - What is interesting about the Chick-fil-A organization is that although they have multiple franchises, their customer service is consistent.
 - I have never met a grumpy, inattentive waiter or waitress.
 - The reason their service is so consistent is because their services are set in order because each franchise follows the order of Chick-fil-A Headquarters.
 - The expectations are the same, the customer service is the same and the messaging throughout every Chick-fil-A is the same.
 - In this same way, Paul is looking for Titus to establish these elders as a means to both set the example of right living and sound teaching.
- We mentioned the term “set in order”. It is the Greek word *epidiorthoō*. It literally means to “set right”.
 - This word was used by medical writers regarding setting broken limbs or straightening crooked ones.
 - I am sure for those who have experienced broken bones before, it is a painful process to set the bones back in place.
 - The tools that are used to make that adjustment are set in place to provide guardrails and parameters by which healthy growth should occur.
 - The text makes it clear that the means by which things are to be set in order, is through the actions and role of the elders in the church.
 - Elders provide the guardrails and protection for the body to grow properly and they too submit themselves under the wisdom and sovereignty of God.
- The only question that arises from the text at this point is, how will Titus accomplish this challenging task?

- More specifically, the question you might want to know is “what was the number of churches present on the island of Crete?”
 - One scholar documented that Homer, who lived in the ninth century, referred to the island of Crete in a hyperbolic way as “Crete of the hundred cities”
 - This apostolic responsibility was given to Titus by Paul to accomplish the work that had to be completed.
- This assignment Paul gave Titus required that Titus travel throughout all of Crete to identify these men, within these churches, as elders or overseers.
 - Paul, in verse 6 would then give the qualifications for these men that would be selected.
- Here is what verse 6 says:

Titus 1:6 namely, if any man is beyond reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of indecent behavior or rebellion.

- Paul outlines a description and function of who an elder is and how that elder should behave.
 - Paul mentions the elder’s societal and domestic expectations.
 - Most evident in the text is Paul’s qualification for public and private purview regarding leadership in the church
 - While at the same time being interwoven with the structure of marriage and family life.
 - He mentions that the elder must be a man “above reproach”.
 - The word “above reproach” in the Greek is *anenkletos*.
 - It literally means without reproach or blameless.
 - This man’s life was observed and inspected to bear witness to his life’s consistency with what he believed.
 - Let’s pause and recognize this does not mean they were perfect. (Romans 3:10)
 - However there is an expectation for these men both in public and in private according to their relationship with Christ.

1 Tim. 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching, 1 Tim. 3:3 not overindulging in wine, not a bully, but gentle, not contentious, free from the love of money.

- The fact that Paul begins with an Elder needing to be above reproach is first indicating the frame of lens by which everything else follows.
 - If I were to put it plainly, the leadership of this man must be clearly evident even if no one is looking.
 - Your uprightness is not simply turned on when you come into the church and

when you leave you turn it off. It's not a light switch!

- The text allows us to see that any leader in leadership whether in public or at home requires authenticity.
 - Paul jumps out the gate with the standard that this man is to be married. A one woman man.
- It shouldn't surprise you that when being considered for the role of elder in a church, that the apostle Paul compares that responsibility to that of the husband and his family.
 - Remember the men in Crete were NOT known for fidelity. It was not foreign for other men to sleep with their neighbors' wives.
 - What the text makes extremely clear throughout all of this is that the Elders are countercultural.
 - These men are held to a higher standard and their lives are to reflect that of the one in whom saved them. Christ Alone!

2 Cor. 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

- Something that may strike you as odd in reading verse 6 is Paul mentioning the Elders “having children who believe”
 - Why would the scriptures have this as a qualifier for an elder?
 - On one hand being able to raise children to be faithful, trustworthy, and obedient demonstrated proper training and control of one's children.
 - Raising solid children is a parental responsibility.
 - On the other hand the scripture mentions that the Elder's children are “believing”
 - Does this mean that all of the Elder's children are to be believers in Christ?
 - This would be a truly remarkable thing, for sure. All of his children have become followers of Jesus.
 - However, salvation does not come through men it comes through the Father selecting whom He has foreknown.
 - We first must recognize that if we do not grasp the original language here, this scripture can be misinterpreted.
 - The word for “believe”, in this case, is the Greek word *pistos*. It is not to be confused with the word *pistis*.
 - *Pistos* means proven to be firm, reliable, or trustworthy. 1 Timothy 3:4-5 confirms this position.
 - *Pistis* is always a gift from God and is not something that is produced by human beings. *Pistis* is a Divine persuasion.
 - We come to faith in Christ alone, not by any means of men.
 - So what is Paul saying here?
 - The way in which a man raises his children and is faithful to his wife is

indicative of his home management.

- His parental/marital and familial relationship is a window view to his ability to steward the church.
- This is witnessed not just at home, but also in the public sphere.
- Paul wraps up verse 6 by saying that these men are to not be accused of dissipation or rebellion.
 - In other words, they should not drink excessively to the point of being drunk.

Ephesians 5:18 And do not get drunk with wine, in which there is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

- These men’s influence is based upon God’s Spirit and not by secular satisfactions.
 - Not only should they not be accused of dissipation or drunkenness, but they should not be accused of rebellion.
 - Titus 1:10 states it this way:

Titus 1:10 For there are many rebellious people, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision,

- These are the men who Titus was told to get rid of out of the church.
 - For many of these home churches, these false teachers had begun to creep into leadership positions.
 - So you could imagine as Titus is reading this letter aloud to this gathering of churches, the false teachers would have been frantic.
 - Paul’s urgency in this letter places huge emphasis on the protection of the body of Christ just as a father protects his own family.
 - Titus’ assignment was to find fitting, fatherly, but above all, godly men to guard, shepherd, and protect the flock.
 - Clearly these men Titus would find would stick out like sore thumbs.
 - These men would be men seeking to imitate the one in whom called them to new life.
 - The character of these men would easily be blameless and un-accused because their lives were reflective of what they believed.
 - They should also be marked by sound teaching and not enticed to believe in false teachings because they know what sound doctrine looks like.
- As an application to this particular context, you and I here at Verse By Verse Fellowship can rest assured that whoever God sends as the new Senior Pastor, will be a man of sound teaching.
 - The reason being is the Elders know what the expectation is in teaching and exposition because they too were under sound doctrine by Pastor Stephen Armstrong.
- Let’s move on to verse 7.

Titus 1:7 For the overseer must be beyond reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not overindulging in wine, not a bully, not greedy for money,

- Paul outlines what we will call the 5 Must Nots.
 - They are the following:
 - Not arrogant
 - Not quick-tempered
 - Not a drunkard
 - Not violent
 - Not greedy for gain (Love of money)
 - If these men were to be godly stewards of the church their personal stewardship had to be well taken care of.
 - These qualifications are evident of the fact that God is to make these men, and not these men make themselves for the position.
- Let's dive into the first of the “Must Nots”
- The first Must Not is the elder must not be arrogant.
 - Simply put, the elder should not be a prideful man. Someone who boasts about themselves.
 - Peter spoke of these types of men who are self-indulged in this way.

2 Peter 2:10 and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt passion, and despise authority. Reckless, self-centered, they speak abusively of angelic majesties without trembling,

- Elders must be men marked by humility.
- Next, elders must not be quick-tempered
 - This man is not easily taken to violence or anger. In other words there is much patience that is demonstrated.
 - The reason quick-tempered men are not suitable for being an elder is that responding quickly in frustration results in foolish behavior – which is unwise.
 - Proverbs 14:7 says it this way:

Proverbs 14:17

**A quick-tempered person acts foolishly,
And a person of evil devices is hated.**

- Thirdly, elders are not to be drunkards.
 - In some translations it may read “addicted to wine”. The bottle is not where this man chooses to drink from for sustenance or nutrition.

- In other words it is the bible and not the bottle that this man is led by. It is the bible that leads the man to proper behavior.
 - This particular Must Not is interesting because of the drunken behavior and violence that is noted by some scholars regarding drunken worship of Dionysus.
 - Dionysus was known as the Greek god of wine and ecstatic experience. It became a cult during the early Roman civilization that Rome quickly tried to address.
 - This cult was marked by drunken behavior, coupled with orgies and violent outburst.
 - There was a grave need for these elders to be men that stood whole-heartedly on Christ and not the culture.
- Fourthly, the elder is not to be a violent man.
 - This word in the Greek means striker or brawler. This person is ready to fight if the wind blows the wrong way.
 - This type of man was commonly found in Crete which was known for violent men.
 - Surly the elder will come across many situations in the church that must cause him to respond in love not violence.
 - Jesus even confronts Peter regarding Peter's response to Jesus being arrested in Matthew 26:51-52:

Matt. 26:51 And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear.

Matt. 26:52 Then Jesus *said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword will perish by the sword.

- There is a different way of living for people of God and we are a people that are to be known by the way in which we love and live among others.
- Lastly, the elder was not to be a lover of money.
 - The motivation for this man was not money or influence, but rather it was Christ being proclaimed in the hearts of all men.
 - Paul makes mention of this love for money in 1 Timothy 6:10 where he states:

1 Tim. 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

- If an elder possesses these qualities, Paul makes it clear that it will not only be bad for the body, it will be bad for that person.
 - The position will not make you humble, patient, kind, or sound in teaching. It will simply amplify what is in you.
 - The position does not make you – Christ by His Spirit makes you and conforms you.

- Let's keep pushing on to verse 8.

Titus 1:8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,

- Right after Paul lays out the must haves, he directly contrasts them with the “Must Haves”.
 - Here are the 6 Must Haves: Some of your translations may use a different word in replacement of what I may say, but know they are synonymous.
 - Be hospitable
 - Lover of good
 - Self-controlled
 - Upright
 - Holy
 - Disciplined
 - Hospitable is our first must have. It literally means loving strangers.
 - No matter who you are or where you come from you are welcomed. This person has a welcoming hospitable spirit.
 - Next is a “lover of good”.
 - These men are to love what is right, what is godly, and what is true.
 - This is a matter of what is good not in the sight of men but in the sight of God.
 - Another definition in the Greek says “loving what is good”
 - Paul then mentions self-controlled (some translations may read “sensible”).
 - This means that the elders are to be sound in mind, sober-minded.
 - They are in a sane state and the guiding voice for their decisions is solely the Holy Spirit and His guidance.
 - Upright:
 - The elder is to be righteous in all things and if things are done out of order, they are able to and willing to put things in order, rightly and justly.
 - Their primary motivation is that of Christ and not of self.
 - The next must have is the elder must be holy.
 - Now when you think of being holy, recognize that this holiness is not found in and of yourself.
 - This holiness comes from what God has freely given us through the shedding of blood of His son Jesus Christ.
 - 1 Peter 1:14-16, Peter says this regarding holiness:

1 Peter 1:14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,

1 Peter 1:15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all

your behavior;

1 Peter 1:16 because it is written: **“YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”**

- Paul concludes the 6 must haves with the final qualification – discipline. I do not think that it is a coincidence that Paul mentions this quality or qualification last.
 - Why is that the case? Why does Paul use discipline as the last quality for seeking elders?
 - Discipline is the means by which these other qualities are exercised consistently to produce godliness and growth in grace.

2 Peter 1:5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge,

2 Peter 1:6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness,

2 Peter 1:7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love.

2 Peter 1:8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they do not make you useless nor unproductive in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- There is a benefit to these qualities and recognizing that these qualities are not just for the overseers or elders.
 - Before we begin to ask the question, why should this matter for me...I’m not an elder.
 - These are qualities that should reflect that of every believer.
 - These qualities are the marks of an individual prior to gaining a position and even becoming an elder.
 - Meaning, this character and quality of a person was shaped by the Spirit of God.
 - What am I saying in all of this?
 - The life of the believer should stand out from amongst the culture and should reflect Christ in every area of life.
- Paul moves next to what I would call the culminating point of this section regarding elder qualifications.

Titus 1:9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

- We see that the quality of this man is marked by his life in light of the scriptures. His life should both encourage others and convict others to the point of correction.
 - This man is able to do this because of the power of the Spirit in his own life and his obedience and submission to Christ Himself through the word of God.
 - The text says “holding fast the faithful word in accordance with the teaching.”

- Obviously, this man is so faithful to the text that when he hears something that is off, he recognizes it.
- Your familiarity with sound teaching should be so keen that the moment you hear something is off, it triggers something in your mind.
 - There is this flashing light like an alarm that should go off in your head.
 - If you want to see God’s transformative power at work in your life, be a doer of His word and watch the Spirit transform your life.
- Now the question that we should be asking ourselves regarding “holding fast” is, how?
 - How do I know that what I am hearing is true and that the word is active in my life?
 - You will see the fruit of your faithfulness in following Christ.
- This truth that you are holding onto WILL produce godliness within you and with this truth comes transformation.
 - We cannot come across the word of God and not be transformed by His Power.
- Paul then mentions in the text that this elder will be able to both exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict it.
 - This believer who is selected as an elder should be able to encourage men and women of God in the body to stand firm in the faith.
 - Not only is the exhortation by word of mouth for the elder but it is also in deed.
 - Because of the care these elders have, they are diligently disciplined in seeing the growth in grace of every member in their care.
 - It's this fatherly affection that no matter what, I am committed to seeing you grow as a follower of Jesus.
- Exhorting in sound doctrine is then followed by being able to refute individuals who contradict sound doctrine/teaching.
 - That word refute in the Greek means to expose.
 - The goal in refuting this individual is not to lose them but rather to convince them of the truth.
 - This love for the body is similar to the love of that of Christ himself, Who is the ultimate shepherd.

Revelation 3:19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

- The objective behind rebuke is repentance.
 - If an individual has been taught falsely, a good under-shepherd comes alongside that individual to correct in firm love in the hopes of winning that brother over.
 - And if the individual refuses to repent or their hearts are hardened to the truth, after much patience and work, they must be called out.

- Paul makes the weight of this point extremely clear, so clear that he mentions rebuke in this way in Galatians 2:14

Gal. 2:14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, “If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?”

- The only way that proper rebuke can occur is if a proper Gospel is known, taught, lived, and obeyed.
- In John MacArthur’s book, “Reckless Faith”, he said these words regarding counterfeits:

“Federal agents don’t learn to spot counterfeit money by studying the counterfeits. They study genuine bills until they master the look of the real thing. Then when they see the bogus money they recognize it.”

- True belief in the Gospel will always be accompanied by good deeds and right actions.
 - As followers of Jesus Christ, you and I should be proven true because the Gospel is our anchor.
- We must see, now more than ever, that Elders are a necessity for the church in order to protect the body.
 - They serve in this capacity not because they are perfect but because God has chosen them.
 - As a father would for his family, they are diligently seeking wisdom from the Lord to help shepherd our hearts in the scriptures.
 - It is the word of God that must be the anchor in all aspects of our lives.
 - We must consistently be praying for these men, and I would like to do that collectively this morning.