

Elders: Qualities or Qualifications?

Tit 1:5 For this cause left I thee (*as an evangelist, Titus could know which of the men there would make good elders*) in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order (*Gk.1930-to straighten further, that is, [figuratively] arrange additionally*) the things that are wanting (*lacking*), and ordain (*Gk.2525- to designate*) elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

1Ti 3:1 This *is* a true saying, If a man **desire** the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

- **G3713** *ὀρέγομαι* oregomai *or-eg'-om-ahee*

Middle voice of apparently a prolonged form of an obsolete primary (compare [G3735](#)); to **stretch oneself**, that is, **reach out after (long for)**: - covet after, desire.

This desire is a must, not for power but for service, not out of arrogance but out of humility and not to be popular because sometimes he will have to make decisions that may cause his best of friends to be upset with him.

1Ti 3:2 A bishop then must be .., **apt to teach**;

- **G1317** *διδασκικός* didaktikos *did-ak-tik-os'*

From [G1318](#); **instructive** (“didactic”): - apt to teach.

Unless he is in constant study, how can he fulfill this requirement?

Tit 1:6 If any be **blameless**,

- **G410** *ἀνέγκλητος* anegklētos *an-eng'-klay-tos*

From [G1](#) (as a negative particle) and a derivative of [G1458](#); *unaccused*, that is, (by implication) *irreproachable*: - blameless.

Some will say “no one’s perfect”. True. Only Christ is perfect. There will always be those who will try to accuse a just man of some unjust act just as those who tried in vain to accuse Christ. But that’s not what is being portrayed here. This man is not to be involved in any fault, either personally or by association, that will disqualify him to serve in this capacity.

..**the husband (male) of one wife (female)**,

(Cannot be a woman or married to another man!)

One wife...

- **G3391** *μία* mia mee'-ah

Irregular feminine of [G1520](#); **one** or *first*: - **a (certain)**, + agree, first, one, X other.

Example:

[Act 28:13](#) And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one (*a certain*) day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:

Not... **G1520** *εἷς* heis hice

(Including the neuter [etc.] *ἓν* hen); a primary numeral; *one*: - a (-n, -ny, certain), + abundantly, man, one (another), **only**, other, some.

Example:

[Eph 4:5](#) **One** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism, **6 One** God and Father of all, Who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

His selection of a wife exposes his true character. Depending on his situation, he **could** be “scripturally” divorced. ([Mat 19:9](#) “*except it be for fornication*”) Any who would play the “divorced” card to disqualify a **godly** man from serving, even if he meets all of the other qualifications, would be speaking where the Bible does not speak on this matter. Of course there are other issues that would come into play here. Was his divorce of such a nature that would bring reproach to the church, even though he was the “innocent” party? These and other issues factor into the equation. But just being divorced, in and of itself, should not.

He could also be a widower who is remarried to a godly wife.

...having faithful children...

- **G4103** *πιστός* pistos pis-tos'

From [G3982](#); objectively **trustworthy**; subjectively **trustful**: - believe (-ing, -r), faithful (-ly), sure, true.

In the context is where we find to whom the child is to be faithful; the husband and his wife. They are to be of such a spiritual nature as to mold their children into the godly offspring our Lord expects. If he can't do that, then he probably would not be able to do so with others who would be under his leadership; and once his children, always his children, even when they leave home. Their lives confess to their spiritual upbringing.

Examples:

[Act 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.

[2Th 3:3](#) But the **Lord is faithful**, Who shall stablish you, and keep *you* from evil.

 ...not accused of riot or unruly.

If his children are “believers” then this statement would not necessarily be needed because “believing” would be a synecdoche for all that is involved in the word. If his children are riotous and unruly then it reflects in his disciplinary leadership. If this statement has to with him, he would not be a good candidate because of his insubordinate, ill tempered nature.

1Ti 3:4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection (*subordination*) with all gravity (*honesty, integrity*); 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

The implication here is that his children are to be believers (*Christians*). If he can't lead his own children to Christ then how can he shepherd the flock of God? And that goes for after they leave home!

 Tit 1:7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the **steward** of God;

- **G3623** οἰκονόμος oikonomos *oy-kon-om'-os*

From [G3624](#) and the base of [G3551](#); a **house distributor** (that is, **manager**), or **overseer**, that is, an employee in that capacity; by extension a fiscal *agent* (*treasurer*); figuratively a *preacher* (of the Gospel): - chamberlain, governor, steward.

There are many passages that tell of stewards who had the run of the house. The faithful ones were blessed.

Example:

Luk 12:42 And the Lord said, **Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?**

 ...not (*Gk.3361- negation*) selfwilled,

- **G829** αὐθάδης authadēs *ow-thad'-ace*

From [G846](#) and the base of [G2237](#); **self pleasing**, that is, **arrogant**: - self-willed.

 ...not soon angry,

He must be even tempered.

 ...not given to wine,

- **G3943** παραινός parainos *par'-oy-nos*

From [G3844](#) and [G3631](#); staying **near wine**, that is, *tippling* (a *toper*): - given to wine.

As was stated in an earlier lesson, he can't even be near where alcoholic beverages are being served for fear that he could be blamed. He is to avoid even the appearance of imbibing.

...no striker,

- **G4131** πλήκτης plēktēs *plake'-tace*

From [G4141](#); a **smiter**, that is, *pugnacious (quarrelsome)*: - striker.

My dad would always say “it takes a bigger man to walk away from a fight”. He didn't mean physically bigger either. A man of a larger character would know when to just be defrauded.

[1Co 6:7](#) Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather *suffer yourselves to be defrauded?*

...not given to filthy lucre;

- **G146** αἰσχροκερδής aischrokerdēs *ahee-skhrok-er-dace'*

From [G150](#) and κέρδος kerdos (*gain*); **sordid**: - given to (**greedy** of) filthy lucre.

He's not in it for the money. Also, his conduct “outside” the church would not be one of “ripping people off” or playing the lottery. There were those congregations that paid their elders.

[1Ti 5:17](#) Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double (*two-fold more*) honour (*value, money paid*), especially they who labour (*feel fatigue, work hard*) in the word and doctrine (*learning, teaching*).

[Tit 1:8](#) But a **lover of hospitality**,

- **G5382** φιλόξενος philoxenos *fil-ox'-en-os*

From [G5384](#) and [G3581](#); **fond of guests**, that is, *hospitable*: - given to (lover of, use) hospitality.

He's not afraid to have folks over for a meal even if it might be inconvenient for whatever reason or to have someone stay with him.

...a **lover of good men**,

- **G5358** φιλάγαθος philagathos *fil-ag'-ath-os*

From [G5384](#) and [G18](#); **fond of good**, that is, a **promoter of virtue**: - love of good men.

He enjoys the virtue of company with those of like faith to the point of promoting it.

...sober,

- **G4998** σώφρων sōphrōn so'-frone

From the base of [G4982](#) and that of [G5424](#); **safe (sound) in mind**, that is, **self controlled (moderate as to opinion or passion)**: - discreet, sober, temperate.

...just,

- **G1342** δίκαιος dikaios dik'-ah-yos

From [G1349](#); **equitable** (in character or act); by implication **innocent, holy** (absolutely or relatively): - just, meet, right (-eous).

...holy,

- **G3741** ὅσιος hosios hos'-ee-os
Properly **right** (divine character)

...temperate;

- **G1468** ἐγκρατής egkratēs eng-krat-ace'

From [G1722](#) and [G2904](#); **strong in a thing (masterful)**, that is, (figuratively and reflexively) **self controlled** (in appetite, etc.): - temperate.

Tit 1:9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught,

He is to adhere to the truth, care for it and support it. Why?

...that he may be able by sound (*true, uncorrupt*) doctrine both to exhort (*implore*) and to convince (*convict, admonish*) the gainsayers (*those who contradict themselves*).

Unless he is in constant study, how can he fulfill this qualification?

1Ti 3:6 Not a novice, (*newly planted, young convert*) lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

1Ti 3:7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without (*external [outside the church, un-believers]*); lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

To summarize...

1. has a deep desire to do the work of leading and feeding the flock without “lording it over” (*1 Pet 5:3*)
2. un-accusable and not a new-born babe in Christ
3. scripturally married with faithful children who are not brattish or rebellious
4. a good steward who is not arrogant or temperamental
5. does not consume alcohol and is not quarrelsome
6. is good and fair in business (*whether of the church or secular*)
7. is hospitable and enjoys the company of others of like character
8. is self controlled and fair
9. is righteous and masters himself well
10. holds to the word and studies it so that he can aid others in knowing the truth

Some of the above are to be the goal of all Christians. Others cannot. For example, a babe in Christ cannot be an elder but is to strive to be self-controlled and fair. A woman cannot be an elder but can be hospitable. And so on. Many of these can be the “qualities” of all Christians, again gender becomes an issue, but **ALL** of them are to be “qualifications” fulfilled by the man who wishes to shepherd the flock among him. And this is in no way a complete study since his wife also has a lot to do with his becoming a bishop in the Lord’s church. Her attitude and demeanor will greatly influence him in the decision making and other issues of the local congregation.

If in the above article I have misrepresented any scripture I welcome positive comments in order to correct any error there may be.

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April 10, 2011

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