

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS

I. 1 Timothy: Basic Local Church Ministry F. God's Qualifications For The Office Of Elder (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

I. Introduction

- A. In view of reports of great needs and problems in various churches, much of which has been produced by Church leaders themselves, we view the Pastoral Epistles, handbooks on local pastoral ministry.
- B. 1 Timothy 3:1-7 provides God's qualifications for the office of elder, qualifications that are greatly needed amid the dysfunctional lives and relationships of many professing Christians today.
- C. We thus view this passage to establish a template of what godly church elders should be (as follows):

II. God's Qualifications For The Office Of Elder, 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

- A. In 1 Timothy 3:1, Paul claimed that if a man "aspires" to (*orego*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 583) the office of an "overseer" (*episkopos*, Ibid., p. 299), the KJV term for "overseer" being "bishop" and what elsewhere in Scripture is used interchangeably with the term "elder" as in Titus 1:5, 7 (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 1 Timothy 3:1), he desires a "noble" (ESV, NIV) work.
- B. Paul then listed and discussed the qualifications of the office of "elder" in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 (as follows):
 1. An elder must be *anepileptos*, "irreproachable" (Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 64), without blame, v. 2a.
 2. An elder must be a "one-woman-man," *mias gunaikos andra* (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 723), what some claim means "one-woman-at-a-time" to allow for men who have been divorced and remarried to serve as elders, 1 Timothy 3:2b! However, a similar expression is used of a widow who was qualified to receive church financial support as being a "one-man-woman," *henos andros gune* in 1 Timothy 5:9 (Ibid., p. 726), what can only mean that she had been married once (Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to Titus 1:6). Paul forbade divorce and remarriage to another party in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, so elders must be men without divorce and remarriage in their history. [Incidentally, remarriage to a believer after the death of one's spouse is allowed in 1 Corinthians 7:39, so such a remarriage does not disqualify one from being an elder.]
 3. An elder must be *nephalios*, "temperate" in the use of wine; "sober," Ibid., Arndt & Ging, p. 540; v. 2c.
 4. An elder must be *sophron*, "prudent, thoughtful, self-controlled," Ibid., p. 810; 1 Timothy 3:2d.
 5. An elder must be *kosmios*, "respectable, honorable," Ibid., p. 446; 1 Timothy 3:2e.
 6. An elder must be *philoxenos*, "hospitable" to strangers, Ibid., p. 868; 1 Timothy 3:2f.
 7. An elder must be *didaktikos*, "skillful in teaching," Ibid., p. 190; 1 Timothy 3:2g.
 8. An elder must **not** be *paroinos*, "drunken; addicted to wine," Ibid., p. 634; 1 Timothy 3:3a.
 9. An elder must **not** be *plektes*, "pugnacious; a bully," Ibid., p. 675; 1 Timothy 3:3b.
 10. An elder must be *epieikia*, "gentle," Ibid., p. 292; v. 3c.
 11. An elder must be *amachos*, "peaceable," Ibid., p. 44; 1 Timothy 2:3d.
 12. An elder must be *aphilarguros*, "not loving money, not greedy," Ibid., p. 126; 1 Timothy 2:3e.
 13. An elder must manage his own household well, having his children in subjection with all respect, for if a man does not know how to manage his own household he will not be able to "take care of" (*epimeleomai*, Ibid., p. 296) the church of God, 1 Timothy 3:4-5.
 14. An elder must **not** be a *nophutos*, a "neophyte; new convert" (Ibid., p. 538) lest he be lifted up with pride for being soon elevated to the elder office and thus fall into the condemnation of Satan who in pride tried to replace God, 1 Timothy 3:6 with Isaiah 14:12-15; Ibid., Ryrie, ftn. to Isaiah 14:12 and Isaiah 14:13-14.
 15. An elder must have a good testimony before unbelievers outside the church lest Satan take advantage of a bad testimony in the man to disgrace him and thus disgrace the testimony of the local church of which he is a part, 1 Timothy 3:7; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 737.

Lesson: *The office of elder fits that of Church leaders and pastors in general (1 Timothy 5:17), so an elder must go beyond desiring to be an elder to be irreproachable, a one-woman-man, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, skillful in teaching, not addicted to wine, not a bully, gentle, peaceable, not loving money, managing his own household well, not be a new convert and have a good testimony with the outside world.*

Application: *(1) May every man who aspires to be an elder in the local church work on Biblically qualifying for that office. (2) May all of the people in the congregation who vote for the men who are to fill that office be sure that the candidates involved truly Biblically qualify for that office.*