

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES: GOD'S DIRECTIVES FOR HIS UNDERSHEPHERDS

II. Titus: Church Planting Manual

B. The Need For Qualified Elders In A New Church

(Titus 1:6-16)

I. Introduction

- A. When the Gospel is proclaimed in an unreached area and people respond by trusting in Christ, believers need to be organized into local churches for their nurture and for an abiding godly witness in the community.
- B. This task requires knowing how to plant a church, and Paul's epistle to Titus is a template for such a ministry.
- C. Titus 1:6-16 reveals that a new church needs spiritually highly qualified elders to lead it, explaining why these men are so necessary for the body, and we view the passage for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. The Need For Qualified Elders In A New Church, Titus 1:6-16.

- A. Having mentioned the need for Titus to appoint elders in each local church on Crete (Titus 1:5b), Paul presented an extensive list of sterling spiritual qualifications for such elders in Titus 1:6-9 (as follows):
 1. An elder must be "unreprovable, blameless" (*anenkletos*, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 762), v. 6a; v. 7a.
 2. He must be "a one-woman-man" (v. 6b; U. B. S. Grk. Test., 1966, p. 739), and the phrase "a one-man-woman" in 1 Timothy 5:9 used of widows can only mean to be married once (Ibid., p. 726), so an elder must not be divorced and remarried, or be promiscuous or a polygamist; Ibid., B. K. C., N. T., p. 762, 736.
 3. He must have his family under control, his children being believers who are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient, Titus 1:6c; Ibid., p. 762.
 4. An elder (Paul here uses the word *episkopos*, "overseer, bishop," what is apparently interchangeable with *presbyteros*, "elder" in the context, Ibid.) must **not** be *authades*, "self-willed, stubborn, arrogant," Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 120), Titus 1:7b.
 5. He must **not** be *orgilos*, "quick-tempered," Titus 1:7c; Ibid., p. 583.
 6. He must **not** be *paroinos*, "addicted to wine," Titus 1:7d; Ibid., p. 634.
 7. He must **not** be *plektes*, "a bully," Titus 1:7e; Ibid., p. 675.
 8. He must **not** be *aischrokerdes*, "fond of dishonest gain," Titus 1:7f; Ibid., p. 24.
 9. He must be hospitable, Titus 1:8a; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 762.
 10. He must be one who loves what is good, Titus 1:8b; Ibid.
 11. He must be "self-controlled, temperate, sensible" (*sophrona*, Ibid.), Titus 1:8c; Ibid.
 12. He must be "just, upright" (*dikaion*, Ibid.), Titus 1:8d.
 13. He must be "devout, pious, holy" (*hosios*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 589), Titus 1:8e.
 14. He must be "self-controlled, disciplined" (*egkrates*, Ibid., p. 215), Titus 1:8f.
 15. He must be reliable in handling Scripture aright, holding "firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught" to him, Titus 1:9a; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 763. The last phrase, "as it has been taught" occurs first in the Greek, emphasizing the need for the elder to be a "conservator of the truth, one who must understand it, hold it fast," Ibid.
 16. He must encourage others by teaching the Word, Titus 1:9b; Ibid.
 17. He must also refute those who oppose the Word, Titus 1:9c; Ibid.
- B. These extensive qualities in an elder of a newly planted church are necessary due to the great dysfunction that exists in society and that often affects many new converts to Christ who comprise such churches, Tit. 1:10-16:
 1. Paul explained that such qualities in elders were needed since there were many insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially of Judaistic leanings, who needed to be silenced because they were upsetting whole families by teaching error for shameful gain, and such false teachers needed to be silenced by capable leaders in the newly formed churches on Crete, Titus 1:10-11 ESV.
 2. Indeed, Cretans were said to be liars, abusive and undisciplined by one of their own writers (Titus 1:12-13a), so new converts coming out of such a society often needed to be firmly disciplined, Titus 1:13b-16.

Lesson: *In view of the very dysfunctional world from which many new converts to Christ in a newly planted church often come, it is necessary that the elders of such a church be devout, godly, self-disciplined men who are also able to handle Scripture effectively to disciple these new believers and to protect the church's holiness.*

Application: *May we get Biblically qualified men to lead newly planted churches that have many new converts for the good of the body, for such converts often bring significant dysfunctional baggage with them from the world.*