

## Lesson 5: Qualifications of Elders – Part 4

(An Elder and His Children)

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Today I am continuing the study of the eldership and what is required concerning the lives and character of those who would serve in this position.
2. In the last lesson, we looked at how elders must be men who are...
  - A. Able, or skilled, teachers
  - B. Not addicted to wine, or men who do not drink alcohol.
  - C. Not pugnacious, or not one who bullies others, forcing their way upon their others.
3. Today I want to address a somewhat more involved qualification which has to do with an elder's **children**.
4. I have decided to present this qualification at this point because:
  - A. It is presented as the third qualification in Titus 1, right after husband of one wife.
  - B. It requires that we address an issue that comes to play concerning other qualifications, which is how we should view the two lists.
5. The texts that concern us today are:
  - A. 1 Tim. 3:4-5 – “He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity <sup>5</sup> (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)”
  - B. 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.”
  - C. As you can see these texts address how an elder must prove himself qualified to lead the church by how he raises his children and the results of his efforts.
6. It is my hope by considering these qualifications and the issues related to them that we will have a better understanding of the nature of these qualities and how to apply them.

### BODY:

#### **I. The lists:**

- A. Consider the lists side by side.
  1. Qualifications using the same words are **black**, those that are the same but use different words are **green**, while those mentioned in one list but not the other are **red**, being possibly *implied* in the other list.
  2. These differences create questions of whether the lists are *complete* on their own, or whether *they must be combined* to have the complete list of qualifications, etc.?
  3. These questions are important because how one views the lists will influence how one might view the qualifications.
- B. Are the lists complete?
  1. If they are *incomplete*, then...
    - a. Why would the Spirit at roughly the same time send two incomplete lists to two different men who are in different places (separated by 250 miles of water) when they required complete lists to do the work?
    - b. Why do the lists read as though they are complete?
    - c. How are we supposed to know how Timothy and Titus supplemented their list?
      - i. Are we supposed to combine them? There are no instructions to do this and Timothy was in **Ephesus** and Titus in **Crete**.
      - ii. Did they supplement their list by further revelation from the Spirit?
        - 1) If so, what did the Holy Spirit reveal to them?
        - 2) Are we to assume it is what is in the other list?
  2. If the lists are *complete*, then...
    - a. Each man's list could be used *independently* of the other to do the work of appointing elders.

b. 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1 must be *harmonized*, seeing they must both present by word and by necessary implication/conclusion the same qualifications.

C. Conclusion: The lists must be viewed as **complete**.

1. In other words, each man could have used his list to appoint fully qualified elders.
2. And, since we have been blessed to have both lists, we must *harmonize them*, believing that comparing them allows us to understand the details of each qualification more fully.

## II. Must have children:

A. Consider the texts.

1. 1 Tim. 3:4 – “He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping **his children** under control with all dignity.”
2. 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.”

B. Does having *children* require more than one child?

1. Though it is argued that children is plural, that is not the case in the Greek.
2. Defined (teknon): **Mounce** – the general term for a child or descendent; **Thayer** – offspring, children, child (whether male or female); **BDAG** – a child in relation to father or mother...without reference to sex
  - a. We use and understand it this way.
  - b. If you only have one child and someone asks, “Do you have children?” You say “Yes. I have one.”
3. Biblical usages is generic.
  - a. Fathers are not to provoke their *children* to wrath (Eph. 6:4). Does this only apply to fathers with more than one child?
  - b. Titus tells older women to train the younger women to “love their *children*” (Tit. 2:4). Would a mother with *one child* be exempt?
  - c. To ask these questions is to answer them!
4. So, despite the reasoning we sometimes hear about how more children mean more valuable experience, etc., the scriptures do not require an elder have more than one child.

## III. Must have *faithful* children:

A. Texts:

1. 1 Timothy 3:4-5 – “He must be one who **manages his own household well**, keeping **his children under control with all dignity** <sup>5</sup> (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)”
  - a. The father must **manage** (rule over/lead) his household well, controlling his children in dignified, or respectable, fashion.
  - b. His children obey, respect, and honor him, allowing him to lead, counsel, and guide them.
  - c. **The logic?** If he cannot rule his own house well, how can he care for the church of God.
2. 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.**”
  - a. His **children** must be **believing/faithful**, though to whom is not specified in the immediate context. More on this shortly.
  - b. These children are not to be accused of, or guilty of...
    - i. *Dissipation/debauchery/wildness (asōtia)*:
      - 1) Definitions:
        - a) **Thayer** – the character of...an abandoned man, one that cannot be saved (*a*, negative, *sōzō*, “to save”); incorrigibility, dissolute [depraved] life
        - b) **Vine** – prodigality, a wastefulness, profligacy [wildly extravagant, completely given up to recklessness, licentiousness/shameless immorality]
        - c) **BDAG** – debauchery, dissipation, profligacy
      - 2) 1 Pet. 4:3-4 says it includes sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.

- ii. *Rebellion/disobedient/insubordination (anupotaktos)*:
    - 1) **Vine** – (lit. compound word – “not + in subjection”) not subject to rule, unruly
    - 2) **Thayer** –un-subjected; that cannot be subjected to control, disobedient, unruly
    - 3) **BDAG** – undisciplined, disobedient, rebellious, refusal to submit authority [parental, civil, or divine].
  - iii. Both sins:
    - 1) Show a lack of faithfulness to their father, but also to God!
    - 2) Have application to older children.
  - iv. How would this happen? **Older men** converted out of the world would have children that continued to live like the pagans they were raised to be, disqualifying him from being an elder.
- B. What does *faithful children* mean (Titus 1:6)?
1. Translations:
    - a. ASV, ESV, NASB, NIV – “children who *believe*,” or “believing children.”
    - b. KJV, NKJV, NET – “*faithful children*”
    - c. Both are correct and are at the discretion of the translators.
  2. Defined: (*pistos*)
    - a. **BDAG** – *believing (in Christ), a (Christian) believer*
    - b. **Thayer** – one convinced that Jesus is the Messiah [a believer]
    - c. And *most commentaries* take the position that it means *believing*, as in believing in God.
    - d. Yet, this is done according to their *judgment*, not by Greek rule of language. And some disagree.
  3. The contextual use of *pistos* (not exhaustive):
    - a. In **Timothy**:
      - i. *Faithful/trustworthy* (1 Tim. 1:12; 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:2). Though it must definitely mean trustworthy (3:1), could the others mean faithful/trustworthy toward God?
      - ii. It can clearly mean *one who believes in God, a believer* (1 Tim. 4:3; 5:16; 6:2).
    - b. In **Titus** – *faithful/trustworthy* (Titus 1:9 “faithful word”; 3:8 “trustworthy statement”).
    - c. If the context helps at all, it would indicate “faithful/trustworthy” would be the better translation in Titus 1:6. But again, faithful to whom or what?
- C. The correct conclusion?
1. NOTE:
    - a. We must be careful to avoid the Pharisee approach and take a certain position because we believe it is the “safe” position, when it is not what the scriptures present.
    - b. Good men and good parents can have bad children. Yet, because of these qualifications, the character of a man’s children will affect the appointment of that man.
  2. When harmonized, both are saying, or at least implying, that an elder’s children must be faithful, or obedient, to both their earthly father and God.
  3. Proving my conclusion (Titus 1:6):
    - a. These children are apparently of accountable age, being old enough to commit dissipation [debauchery, lewdness, sensuality].
      - i. *Dissipation* is defined as having the character of one *who will not be saved/unsaved*.
      - ii. Does this not say that his children should *have the character of the saved*?
    - b. If a shepherd loses all his own sheep, how will he keep/protect God’s sheep?
    - c. If a man is not able to teach his children to believe and obey the gospel, how effective of a teacher can he be for God’s children!
  4. Proving my conclusion (1 Timothy 3:4-5):
    - a. Can a candidate’s *accountable-aged* children be in submission to him while never submitting to God?
    - b. Would not refusal to obey the gospel be a rejection of their father’s ultimate wish and of who he is, what he stands for?

- c. Wouldn't refusing/neglecting to obey God be the ultimate form of **insubordination or rebellion**?
  - d. If you disagree with the logic, then what if they were obedient to their father, but refused to submit to civil authority? Would you not say they are not in subjection to him if they refused to submit to civil authority like their father wants them to?
5. So, it is my conviction that faithful children refers to children that are faithful to Christ, which would naturally require that they be faithful to their earthly father's rule as well.
- D. Question: Must an elder's children remain faithful once they leave home?
- 1. Believing children, like many other qualifications, has no statute of limitations.
    - a. But, what about if his believing children die?
    - b. Some would say that though not on this earth, he was appointed because he has proven himself by how he raised them, and they are still believers though dead.
    - c. Some apply this same logic to those who leave the faith after leaving home.
  - 2. But there must be some *judgment* applied.
    - a. If a man has two and one remains faithful?
    - b. He still has believing children.
  - 3. Yet, in both situations the judgement of the elder and the congregation is going to have a bearing on whether this man can continue as an elder.
  - 4. For, an elder cannot lead/shepherd a flock if there are serious questions concerning his biblical right to lead/shepherd, whether he questions himself or the congregation questions!

CONCLUSION:

- 1. I hope I have presented a competent, faithful, and understandable interpretation of this qualification.
- 2. So, with that said I remind you, then, that an elder must have children and at least one of those children must be a believer, a Christian, which only makes sense considering the work he must do.
- 3. Should it not be your goal that when the time comes that you have a family that you would want to raise them to follow the Lord, to live as believers in Christ?
- 4. To do that you must be a faithful Christian yourself.
  - A. If you are a Christian and have not been faithful, God pleads with you to repent, confess your sins, and return to Jesus.
  - B. If you are not a Christian, God pleads with you to become a Christian by trusting in Jesus, repenting of your sins, confessing your faith in Him, and being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.
- 5. Will you come to Jesus today?