

Lesson 6: Qualifications Of Elders – Pt. 5

INTRODUCTION:

1. We are studying elders because every church, including this one, is to work to have elders, knowing their great value in God's plan.
 - A. Of course, you need the right men to appoint elders.
 - B. And the right men are those that meet God's qualifications given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-10.
2. The qualities of a biblical elder that we want will examine today address two areas.
 - A. The first will focus on how a candidate must deal with others and their problems with the proper attitude and goals in mind.
 - B. The second address how his demeanor and actions must lead toward peace, rather than contention.
 - C. Finally, we will consider his life's focus and how it cannot be money/wealth.
3. As always, my goal is to explain these qualities in an understandable, biblically correct way, to help us move toward being able to establish an eldership here to the glory of God.

BODY:

I. An Elder must be *gentle* and *just* (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:8).

A. Text:

1. **1 Tim. 3:3** – “not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but **gentle**, peaceable, free from the love of money.”
2. **Titus 1:8** – “...hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, **just**, devout, self-controlled”

B. Defined:

1. **Gentle** (1 Tim. 3:3 – *epieikēs*) **Vine** – equitable, fair, forbearing; not insisting on the letter of the law, considerateness that looks humanely and reasonably at the facts of a case; **Strong** – mild, gentle, moderate, patient; **Thayer** – equitable, fair, mild, gentle; **BDAG** – yielding, gentle, kind
2. **Just** – (Titus 1:8 – *dikaios*) **Strong** – equitable (in character and act), innocent, holy, just, right; **Thayer** – rendering to each his due; and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others; **BDAG** – just, honest, good...perhaps merciful
3. What we learn:
 - a. It refers to how one deals with people problems, whether involving self or others.
 - b. He does not insist on *rights* over *what is right* (1 Cor. 6:1, 7 – “Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints?...⁷ Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?”).
 - i. This is what is meant by Vine's “not insisting on the letter of the law.”
 - ii. This is a man who can look at the circumstances and go beyond what is legally right to do/judge according to the love and patience of Christ—what is *biblically right*!

C. Application:

1. People problems arise in a congregation that must be settled quickly and biblically to preserve unity and harmony.
2. His dealings and judgments must not allow legal rights to triumph over what is right.
 - a. It could be one's legal right to evict a brother/sister in Christ for not paying the rent.
 - b. But when extenuating circumstances are considered, it may not be the godly thing to do.
3. This ability indicates one has gained divine wisdom (James 3:16-17 – “For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then **peaceable**, **gentle**, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”).

II. Peaceable, not self-willed, or quick tempered (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7).

A. Text:

1. 1 Tim. 3:3 – “not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, **peaceable**, free from the love of money” (NASB)
2. 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.”

B. Translations:

1. 1 Tim. 3:3 – peaceable, not quarrelsome, not contentious
2. Titus 1:7
 - a. Not self-willed, not arrogant, not overbearing.
 - b. Not quick-tempered, not hot-tempered, not prone to anger

C. Definitions:

1. Peaceable (*amachos*) **Vine** – (lit. not fighting), not contentious; **Thayer** – not contentious; **BDAG / Strong** – peaceable
2. Not self-willed (*authadēs*) **Thayer** – [not] self-pleasing, self-willed, arrogant; **Vine** – [not] self-pleasing, one who, dominated by self-interest, and inconsiderate of others, arrogantly asserts his own will; **BDAG** – [not] self-willed, stubborn, arrogant
3. Not quick tempered (*mē orgilos*) **Thayer** – [not] prone to anger, irascible [irritable, testy – rp]; **Vine** – [not] angry, prone to anger, irascible; **BDAG** – [not] inclined to anger, quick-tempered.

D. Application:

1. Though an elder must confront and address those who contradict the scriptures, as well as false teachers, he must not have a *contentious* or *confrontational* spirit.
 - a. He does not love to argue for argument’s sake.
 - b. For, he is to be *peaceable*, or one who works for peace and not contention, which is God’s will for any Christian.
 - i. Rom. 12:17-18 – “Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.”
 - ii. 2 Tim. 2:24-25 – “The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth”
2. Though he must stand strongly in the truth, he must not be self-willed, headstrong, or arrogant in his stance, seeing he would...
 - a. Not work well with the other **elders**, seeing, as *Trench’s Synonyms of the New Testament* says, he would be one who “overvalues any determination at which he has arrived and will not be removed from it.”
 - b. *Struggle* to see the value of the congregation’s thoughts on any matter as well as struggle to avoid “**lording it over**” the flock (1 Pet. 5:3).
3. He must be peaceable because elders deal with weak and indifferent sheep that try the patience, with strife and disputes that can fracture a congregation, as well as personal attacks.
4. This does not mean he can never be angry, but that he must not be an angry man.
 - a. Eph. 4:26-27 – “Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and do not give the devil an opportunity.”
 - b. Jas. 1:19-20 – “This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.”

III. Free from love of money (1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7).

A. Text:

1. 1 Tim. 3:3 – “not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, **free from the love of money**.”
2. 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**”

B. Defined:

1. Free from love of money (*aphilargyros*) lit. “not fond of silver”; **Thayer** – not loving money, not avaricious; **BDAG** – not loving money, not greedy; **Vine** – [not] money-loving
2. Not fond of sordid gain (*aischrokerdēs*) **BDAG** – [not] fond of dishonest gain, greedy for money; **Vine** – [not] greedy of **base** gains; **Thayer** – not eager for base gain

C. Application:

1. Though the words are slightly different in meaning, they point to the same attitude of heart...an elder must not love money!
 - a. This is not to be a characteristic of any Christian (Heb. 13:5 – “Make sure that your character is **free from the love of money**, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you”).
 - i. Loving money shows a lack of contentment.
 - ii. Loving money shows a lack of faith in what God can and will provide.
 - b. One who **loves money** subjects himself to all sorts of temptations, including that of gaining money in questionable, or dishonest, ways (1 Tim. 6:9-10 – “But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 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.”).
 - c. One who loves money **cannot serve two masters** (Lk. 16:13 – “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”).
 - i. With such a man God’s will and the sheep will lose out!
2. Why would such a man want to be an elder? Elders may be paid (1 Tim. 5:17).
 - a. Thus, Peter also warns against this characteristic in the eldership (1 Pet. 5:2 – “shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and **not for sordid gain**, but with eagerness”).
 - b. When a man seeks a position like this for the money, a position that requires great concern for those he oversees, it rarely if ever goes well. For example:
 - i. There was an eastern KY school system in the **late 1980’s** or early **90’s** whose board members were *elected*.
 - 1) Board members made \$50-60k+, while superintendent made 80-100k+!
 - 2) Guess what the hardest fought elections in that county were? School board!
 - ii. The kicker? That school system was the **poorest** in KY, the **worst** in KY, and its teachers were **paid the least** in KY!
 - iii. Those overseeing it were there for the money, not the welfare of the kids!
3. This would also prevent a stingy man, or one who hoards his money, from being appointed.
 - a. Elders control the finances of the local church.
 - i. Money is the means of getting many biblical things done.
 - ii. So, hoarding money means that far less gets done!
 - b. Ex: A man who was extremely tight with his money took the treasurer role of a local church (without elders) and *strongly* sought to run its finances like he did his own.
 - i. He insisted the church get out of debt and, therefore, spend as little as possible otherwise.
 - ii. That church never paid the preacher properly and most all support came from outside.
 - iii. As a result, the church building was paid for, but they could never get or keep a good preacher. So, now the church is down to just a handful and barely hanging on.
 - c. The eldership needs to be biblically responsible with the treasury, which means doing all the Lord’s work it can in responsible fashion.
4. This quality does not bar a rich man from being an elder, if he has the proper view of riches (1 Tim. 6:17-19 – “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. ¹⁸ Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to

share, ¹⁹ storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.”).

- a. He would have to show himself a man of faith in God, not in riches.
- b. He would have to show himself a generous man, storing up treasure in heaven.

CONCLUSION:

1. So, from these characteristics we see that elders must be...
 - A. Gentle and just, fair, and willing to address situations and problems among brethren in such a fashion that God’s will is done, rather than legal rights being upheld.
 - B. Men who are not fond of contention, not overly fond of their opinions/thoughts, nor would an elder be prone to anger when questioned or when unable to get his way.
 - C. Free from the love of money, not being greedy, but instead men that show contentment and the proper view of wealth and riches.
2. Again, we see the superior characteristics of those who grow to maturity in Christ, and how they differ so greatly from those dominated by worldly thoughts and pursuits, by selfish desires and sin.
 - A. Hopely you can see that the character of life demanded by the gospel stands infinitely higher than that of the world—and I mean the whole world—all religions included.
 - B. Why would you not want to respond to Christ’s invitation today to enter His grace and rise above the mundane, above the flow, above the ways of sin, guilt, and ultimately death, to live a truly blessed life?
 - C. Will you come to Jesus today in F-R-C-B?