

## I Timothy 3 – Sermon #19

I Timothy 3

We began last week a series on “The Leaders of the Church”

Last week we began our study on the two official positions in the church— the offices of bishop/deacon – Bishop

There are three terms in the New Testament used for the same person (Bishop, Elder, Shepherd) so don't be confused!

Bishop has to do with his function, which is to oversee the church.

Elder has to do with his maturity/character as a man of God.

Shepherd has to do with pastoring the people/flock

All of these refer to the same person in Scripture

We learned that the elder must have first of all, an inner desire/compulsion (Vs. 1), and secondly, he must meet 16 qualifications.

I've entitled today's message “The Leaders of the Church, Part 2”

I Timothy 3:2

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word

I Timothy 3:2-7

Let us pray

You may be seated.

## The Leaders of the Church

First, we are given the positive requirements of an elder—the things he ought to be. Blameless – foundational quality upon which all the rest are built.

**The second qualification** of the elder is that he is “to be the husband of one wife”

Of all the qualifications, this one is the most discussed and debated.

What do you think that means?

The husband of one wife – does that mean—

- He has to be married? If you’re going to be an elder, you have to be married. The Apostle Paul was single (I Cor. 7:8) and so was Jesus Christ – no matter what the DaVinci Code says.

The Bible says it is better for a man to be single so that he can serve God fully/wholeheartedly (I Cor. 7:32)

- Does this exclude the single man from being an elder? I don’t believe so.

If this were true, then he would also, according to Verse 4 – have to have what?  
Children.

Practically, I can understand why it would be a help to be married – dealing with family issues – but the Bible teaches it is better if a man is single – he will have more time to dedicate to God.

Secondly, does this mean that he is not married to a woman, but he is married to the church?

Some teach the spiritual leader is to be celibate and he is to only have one wife and the church is to be that wife—he is married to the church.

What segment of the Christian church holds this position?

Roman Catholic position.

Real problem

Roman Catholic Church says it is founded on whom? Who was their first pope? Peter

I Corinthians 9:5, *“Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?”*

What does this verse tell us? Cephas has a wife.

Who was Cephas? Peter

By the way, Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law in the Book of Matthew

Matthew 8:14, *“And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.”*

She got up and got busy serving the Lord.

Peter had a wife and in I Peter 5:1, he was an elder – Peter is an elder with a wife.

So, this verse is definitely not teaching this view of celibacy.

The word for wife here is *Gunay* – female / woman.

Another view says, that this prohibits remarried widowers – because they have been married twice!

His first wife is dead and he is remarried – two wives – therefore, he is disqualified.

The Scriptures permit and honor second marriages under the proper circumstances.

Paul expected younger widows to remarry and raise a family (I Tim. 5:9, 11, 14).

In I Corinthians 7:39 he wrote, *“but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.”*

Paul has addressed this in Corinthians and I Timothy 5:14.

Everywhere the Scriptures teach—especially a younger widow or widower—it is God's will that they remarry.

So what is this saying? The husband of one wife—what does that mean?  
It definitely prohibits polygamy – more than one wife at a time – sects of Mormonism

The divorce issue is not hit here—that would be in the “blameless” realm – the first qualification.

What a problem that would create.

I personally believe a divorced man is disqualified from the ministry.

Warren Wiersbe said, “A pastor who has been divorced opens himself and the church to criticism from outsiders, and it is not likely that people with marital difficulties would consult a man who could not keep his own marriage together.”

So what is this second qualification saying?

The Greek text literally reads “a one-woman kind of man.”

The issue is his moral, sexual behavior.

Many married men are not one-woman men. Their eyes are roaming.  
Many with one wife are unfaithful to that wife – through magazines, Internet

Remaining married to one woman is no indication or guarantee of moral purity.  
A recent poll of elders – 40% are involved in sexual misconduct!

★Some may wonder why Paul begins his list with this quality.

He does so because it is in this area, above all others, where leaders seem most prone to fall. ★

The failure to be a one-woman man has put more men out of the ministry than any other sin.

It is thus a matter of grave concern.

A one-woman man is a man devoted in his heart and mind to the woman who is his wife.

- He loves, desires, and thinks only of her.
- He maintains sexual purity in both his thought life and his conduct.

By the way, should this be true of all Christian men?

Scripture makes clear that sexual sin is a reproach that never goes away.

Proverbs 6:32-33, *“But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: (he doesn’t have any sense) he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonor shall he get; and his reproach [disgrace] shall not be wiped away.”*

An elder’s whole demeanor – character – his life is reserved for the one woman.

A pastor’s home life is very important, and especially his marital status.

His heart is pure – no stain on his life – dedicated to his spouse – embracing and holding her and there is no unfaithfulness in them.

What if an elder who is married – committed adultery? And then he confessed and repented and made it right with the church?

Now, I want to resume my pastoring – How often do we hear of people falling in this area and churches taking them right back into leadership? great mistake.

Sexual sin involves another party – public sin

This qualification speaks of his character – **he is supposed to be a one-woman kind of man.**

**III. Thirdly**, bishops are to be “vigilant” (vs. 2) – temperate – literally, not intoxicated with any kind of influence – sports, lawn, video games, garden, house, Internet, vehicles, boats – not being carried away to excess – theological – end times (tangent) or following a man.

Vigilant means keeping your head in all situations – using sensible judgment

He cannot be vigilant if he is under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or even prescription drugs (Intermittent Explosive Disorder – drug)

- A leader must be one who thinks clearly.
- Temperate means clearheaded – there are a lot of things that can cloud a man’s judgment

**IV. Fourthly**, Elders are to be “sober”

Drunkenness? No, this refers to his attitude

Sober – serious attitude about his work, God’s ministry

Doesn’t take it lightly.

He does not cheapen the ministry or the Gospel message by foolish behavior

“Sober” does not mean an elder cannot have a sense of humor, but he should be serious about the office which he holds.

He is to be self-controlled, serious, in earnest, not a clown.

**V. The fifth qualification** of an elder is that he is to be “of good behavior”

That’s an interesting one – *cosmeon* – *cosmos* – world – ordered, harmonious arrangement

We also get our English word “cosmetics.” That means “putting her face in order.”

An elder is to be *cosmeon* – what do you think that means?

- A man whose life is orderly, harmonious, arranged.
- Look at his garage, car, desk, or drawers, home life, work life

That's a picture of how well a person fits this qualification.

His dress – hair disheveled, disorganized, frantic look, never quite having things in his grip/control.

People who are around an elder know whether things are under control or in chaos.

Is this a person whose life is arranged, orderly – and if we committed unto him the affairs of God, would he run the affairs of God in an orderly, harmoniously fashion, or would we be wondering about it?

Homer Kent said, “The ministry is no place for the man whose life is a continual confusion of unaccomplished plans and unorganized activities.”

A spiritual leader must not have a chaotic, but an orderly lifestyle.

**VI. Sixthly**, elders are to be “given to hospitality” – literally, to love strangers

This is a man who is a host – whether it be at the church, at a restaurant, or at his home. He is fond of guests.

We are not talking about hosting friends – everybody should be doing that.

By the way, when was the last time we had church friends in our home?

If an elder is not hospitable to church people, certainly he won't be to strangers – goes out of his way, comfort zone – looking around, looking for the person who is alone, lonely – cannot repay

Elders are not elevated to a place where they are unapproachable; they are to be available. A pastor's life and home are to be open.

An elder is to love God's people. So he is a people lover – people-oriented!

Sometimes, an individual can be a bookworm – loves to study, but if he doesn't also have a people orientation, he should not be in the ministry.

It is not enough to love books – take what he gets from the Book and books and communicate that publicly and also on the personal level.

There has to be love for people.

Someone said – if you don't like the smell of sheep, don't be a shepherd

“Given to hospitality” – he is the type of fellow who invites others – looking out for others – into the conversation – out to lunch – to play sports, be in activities – into his home

**VII. Seventhly**, elders are to be “apt to teach”

This is something I emphasize, because I do not feel any man ought to be an elder in a church unless he can teach the Word of God.

This man is ready and able to instruct in the Holy Scriptures

- Does this mean that every bishop is to be a preacher? **NO**
- Should we expect that any elder ought to be able to teach and minister the Word? **ABSOLUTELY**

Out of the pool of elders – out of that group – there is a group who specifically labor in the Word and doctrine – we call these men the pastors (I Timothy 5:17).

Some of the elders give more time to this than others, but all were to demonstrate this ability.

What does it mean “apt to teach”?

Any elder ought to be able to minister the Word to people – to give spiritual counsel, guidance, and direction from the Word of God  
He is a spiritual overseer. He must be able to do this.

Can he handle the Bible? The overseer in the church must be **able to teach**.

This is the only qualification that relates specifically to his giftedness and function. This qualification appears only and in 2 Timothy 2:24 in the New Testament.

II Timothy 2:24-25

An elder must be a highly skilled teacher, who works hard in his studies and proclamation.

That is the one qualification that sets him apart from the deacons.

The primary duty of the overseer is to preach and teach the Word of God, and being gifted for that is crucial.

To preach and teach God's Word is the primary task of elders (Titus 1:9, 2:1)

It was for that purpose that the elders were given to the church (Eph. 4:11-14).

Not all church people have gifts for preaching and teaching (I Cor. 12:29), but those who aspire to pastoral duty, however, must be so gifted.

What criteria identify a man as a skilled teacher?

- First - a gift of teaching.
- Secondly – He must have a good understanding of doctrine.
- Thirdly – He must be a diligent student of Scripture (2 Timothy 2:15).

Apt to teach—it is not something to which one comes by accident or by any sudden burst of fiery zeal.

A lot of preachers holler and shout so that they can overshadow the hollowness of their message.

An elder must be a careful student of the Word of God.  
The elder who is lazy in his study is a disgrace to his church.

### **The Leaders of the Church**

Let us stand for closing invitation.

If we are married , are we fully devoted to our spouse? In heart and mind?

Is there anything in our lives that we are carried away to excess?

Are we serious about our work, our ministry for the Lord?

Do we have our lives in order? Are we disorganized?

How about hospitality? have we met any new people? Reached out to the strangers?

Are we learning the Book?

It is only by the power of God's Spirit working in us and maturing us that we can meet these standards of spiritual maturity

Is God working in your life by the power of the Holy Spirit?

I don't know what you are talking about.

My friend, you need to trust Christ as your Savior.

We are in a bad way – full of sin – we have sinned against God – broken relationship/fellowship

We are on our own – but God has made a way for us – He sent His Son, Jesus Christ