

## I Timothy 3

### Sermon #20

I Timothy 3

The Leaders of the Church – two official positions in the church and they are  
bishop/deacon

Right now, focused on the bishop's role

Several names for this position—shepherd /elder/overseer/pastor – same person

16 qualifications for this man – serious business for the church.

I've entitled this new series, "The Leaders of the Church" – today is Part 3

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

We have come to the negative qualifications—the things an elder should not be.

In Verse 3 – our **eighth qualification** of an elder is – “not given to wine”, not a drinker.

That literally means not staying near wine.

Why would God say that an elder cannot sit alongside wine?

Because these wines were intoxicating influences

An elder should not have a reputation as a drinker.

He doesn't frequent bars or involve himself in the scenes associated with drinking.

A man who is going to be in a ruling position among God's people could not be a man who is intoxicated.

He is not to be under the influence of alcohol.

Ephesians 5:18, *“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.”*

This verse teaches us about control – we are to be under the control of the Spirit, not under the control of alcohol.

An elder must be under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

These are diametrically opposed to one another.

He is not to be controlled by wine, but controlled by the Spirit of God.

There is a vast difference between the cultural use of wine in Bible days and supporting the alcohol industry of today.

I want to tell you right up front, this phrase does not teach abstinence.

In ancient times most people consumed wine, since it was the staple liquid to drink.

The water was impure and mixing the wine with water not only significantly diluted the alcohol content, but it purified the water.

A mixture of eight parts water to one part wine was common.

- I Timothy 5:23

Drinking only water was contributing to Timothy's poor health.

Water in the ancient world was impure and the carrier of such diseases as dysentery.

Paul's encouragement to take a little wine was to help safe-guard Timothy's health from the illnesses of polluted water.

Timothy was even reluctant to take the mixed wine, so as not to set an example that could cause someone to stumble

Pastor Timothy had obviously committed himself to total abstinence from wine.

He was committed to abstinence.

Now, most all of us have taken medicine with alcohol in it.

I have no problem with using alcohol in mouthwash or medicine, but we have plenty of water to drink today that is not contaminated.

Paul's admonition and example in Romans 14 (especially verse 21) would apply today in a special way, *"It is good neither to eat flesh [meat], nor to drink wine, nor anything by which thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."*

I believe a man who is a drinker has no place in the ministry – this falls under our first qualification of being blameless.

He is a poor example, and will surely be the cause of serious sin and disaster in the lives of others who follow his example as drinkers, justifying their indulgence because of their leader.

**The ninth qualification is – not a striker (vs. 3).** This refers to hitting people.

Who would think that a preacher would hit people?

The first place he is not to be a striker is with his wife and children.

Fred Phelps – Topeka

A leader in the church must not be one who reacts to difficulty with physical violence.

He must react to situations calmly, coolly, and gently.

An elder – oftentimes he is in the position of putting spiritual pressure on a person and carnal people react.

When carnal people react, it is very easy to be carnal yourself and to lash back.

- This refers to literal blows.

We are not talking about self-defense.

We are talking about a man who likes to settle things/control things with physical force.

Sort tempers do not make for long ministries.

Now, **the tenth qualification** in this passage is – “**not greedy** of filthy lucre.”

This one is tied with covetousness – at the end of verse 3.

It is talking about a man who does not have ulterior, material motives, in the ministry

He is not greedy of gain that would come in filthy ways or in illicit ways – He is not to be motivated in any way by the material.

Would he be willing to take a ministry that did not pay anything? Be willing to do it for nothing?

★ Finances should not be the determining factor when a man examines a ministry.

Greedy pastors always have “deals” going on inside or outside their churches.

“Not greedy of filthy lucre” – He shouldn’t have a love of money.

The love of money is a root of all evil we are told in Scripture (1 Tim. 6:10).

The way a church leader handles his money can lead him into a great deal of trouble—  
either his own money or the church’s money.

Our church’s policy is that the pastors are completely out of the finances.

We don’t write checks, we don’t sign checks, we don’t know who gives what.

We stay completely out of that realm.

Now, our eleventh qualification is “**patient**” – verse 3

Patient in his dealings, leadership, in his presentation; there is a gentleness to his spirit

He is not a man who will shove things down people’s throats to achieve his program,  
agenda.

His wisdom will show itself in patience and gentleness.

Patience – he will need it in ministry.

Working with people, volunteers – people going backwards, causing trouble, unfaithful,  
mean, like snakes – undermining, gossiping, stirring up trouble

An elder does not keep a list of all the wrongs done to him, or hold a grudge.

Many men leave the ministry because they can’t accept such high and lows.

They can’t deal with troublemakers.

The elder must listen to people, be able to take criticism without reacting.

“Patient” means reasonable.

He should be a reasonable man, someone you can talk to or reason with.

Our **Twelfth qualification** is “**not a brawler**” – vs. 3

It refers not so much to physical violence as to a quarrelsome person. (Greek – no peace).

Porcupine – always jabbing someone

Contentious person – do you know where contention comes from?

Do you know what root sin is at the bottom of a contentious spirit? Pride

Only by pride cometh contention (Prov. 13:10) – a prideful person will not take a back seat; he will not give in; he will never admit a fault.

We cannot have a person like this in leadership.

To have a contentious person in leadership will result in disunity and disharmony, seriously hindering the effectiveness of the church.

The Bible says if it be possible as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all people (Rom. 12:18).

There are times we must argue, debate, must stand up, but we are pushed into it.

We ought not to be looking for it.

We don't want to – it is not a typical temperament.

An Elder must “disagree” without being “disagreeable.”

**The thirteenth qualification** – “**covetous**” – tightfisted/opposite of generous.

A person can covet many things besides money: popularity, praise of men, attention of women, a large ministry that makes him famous.

He should not be a man who has the wrong motives for ministry.

Skip the #14 Qualification – A man's household

Verses 4 & 5 – we will look at those next week for Father's Day.

Now, Verse 6 – #15 on the list – **not a novice** – young convert, or a “young ‘n’” in the faith (Christianity)

Not someone who has recently been saved.

Sometimes a man is converted one week, and the next week he is made a church officer/Sunday School teacher/or asked to give his testimony.

He is not ready for that. This is a caution that needs to be heeded today.

It has been natural for churches to want to push to the front some prominent personality who had recently made a decision for Christ.

However, the cause of Christ is hurt when those who are young in the faith attempt to speak on matters of doctrine about which they are not knowledgeable.

We saw this when the woman of the Roe vs. Wade – Norma McCorvey – who was the “Jane Roe” repented and trusted Christ

They have taken people who have made professions of faith and before they have shown/made any changes in lifestyle to verify their profession, they have them standing up making professions before people and have put them in an awkward position.

The word means a “neophyte”—someone who has recently come to faith – newly planted in the faith.

No church should have a new Christian become an elder in the assembly.

This doesn't have anything to do with age or being young; it has to do with maturity.

Some people have the attitude – Let's get rid of these young preachers.

That is not what this phrase is talking about.

They may say, “I am tired of having people that are ‘wet behind the ears.’”

When I came here, I had been married less than two years and never pastored anywhere and there was much discussion of bringing a young, 23-year-old, inexperienced greenhorn to pastor.

But, we are not talking about someone who is new to the office – but **new to the faith**.

We have to be very careful about this and this, of course, has been one of the damaging things about some of the practices of modern churches.

The primary problem with a novice in leadership (vs. 6) lest being lifted up with pride/being all swelled up.

What happens – he falls into the condemnation of the devil.

What condemnation of the devil? Pride was the Devil's great sin.

His problem was pride – now, he is condemned and if he never had grown proud, he never would have fallen.

He falls into the same kind of judgment pronounced by God on Satan.

The judgment or condemnation of the devil was a demotion from a high position due to his sinful pride.

That is the danger awaiting the man placed in a position of spiritual leadership before he is ready.

As Proverbs 16:18 warns, *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.”*

It was pride that brought Satan down.

He was not content with being the highest ranking angel; he sought to exalt himself above God.

The five “I wills” of Isaiah 14:12-14 clearly show his pride was “cast . . . as profane from the mountain of God.”

What happened to Satan could easily happen to an immature Christian elevated to eldership.

The church must not lift up those whom the Lord will later have to cut down.

Placing him in a leadership role would expose him to the temptation of pride.

Ezekiel 28:11-19

Vs. 17, *"Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground."*

This happens to a man when he is thrust too early into a position of leadership. Actually, he may be destroyed this way.

Don't take new believers and put them into a position that could destroy them.

Not a neophyte – Why? Because he can get swallowed up with pride.

Putting a new convert into a position of spiritual leadership is likely to puff him up, to put his head in the clouds.

That would place him in grave danger of falling **into the condemnation incurred by the devil.**

**#16 on the list** – the last one – the last qualification on the list.

He must have a good report – verse 7 – (witness – testimony) of them who are without.

Who are those who are without? -- Unsaved people.

- Could the people in his neighborhood give a good report on him?
- Could they tell you, would they tell you, anything that would bring blame upon him and the ministry?

- Do unsaved people respect the way he handles himself?
- Does he have a good reputation among unsaved people with whom he does business? (Col. 4:5, 1 Thes. 4:12)
- Does he pay his bills? Does he keep his word?

★ How can a man have a spiritual impact on his community if that community does not respect him? Such an individual can do nothing but bring **reproach**/disgrace on the cause of Christ. ★

The Bible expects every believer's life to be a positive testimony to the watching world, and that is especially true of those in pastoral positions (Phil. 2:15).

By having a good reputation in the community, an elder will avoid **the snare of the devil** – refers to the snare set by Satan.

God does not set traps for His people, but Satan would like nothing better than to set a trap to discredit a leader in the church.

For one who has a bad reputation in the community, to be placed by the church into a prominent place of authority would be to draw upon himself and the church the disgrace of the world.

The enemy's aim has always been to destroy the leaders of the church.

Hence great care must be exercised in the selection of its leaders.

A good witness from them on the outside – WHY? lest he fall – vs. 7b.

The Godly character of an elder must be in his personal life, the church, and his home – not just those three areas –

He must also **have a good reputation with those outside the church.**

★ A man's reputation and personal testimony [are] of great importance to the local church. Those who are "without" are the ones we are assigned to reach. ★

Fifteen of the 16 qualifications deal with a man's character or his home life.

They deal with not what the man knows, not what the man can do, but with what the man is.

Isn't that interesting? That God's primary concern is what's in his heart?

Do you know how people pick their leadership?

- Who can talk the best, who is the most popular, who is the nicest person.

Folks, we don't choose leadership this way.

It's a man and his character and his character is proven and you know that you can trust him with the business of the church.

People who occupy positions that are leading God's people must be sure that their lives/living are so spiritually credible that it verifies what they stand for

The Leaders of the Church

Let us stand for the closing invitation

These qualifications are benchmarks of maturity for the Christian.

Has alcohol influenced us? Controlled us?

Are we known to batter people?

Are we greedy? Are we seeking financial gain as first place in our life?

Are we patient with people?

Are we contentious? Stirring up strife?

Do we have a good testimony amongst lost people?

Are we lost ourselves?

Are we new converts to Christianity?

There is only one way to be a Christian and it is through Jesus Christ.

Has a spirit of courtesy

Glory in a good argument

Such individuals enjoy nothing better than a good argument.

Arguments are usually destructive

**Free from the Love of Money (I Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)**

Never seems happy no matter how much money comes their way.

...create a religious “superstar” out of new convert

Not a novice – not newly saved. It is for his own good that he is not placed into leadership.

“Them which are without” - if a man has a bad reputation on the outside—if he doesn’t pay his bills, is untrustworthy, or is a liar—he immediately is not a candidate to be an officer in the church.

If he is such a man he is really a candidate of the Devil—he would better represent the Devil than he would represent the cause of Christ.