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Church – The Beginnings, Part 65

Paul's Charge to the Ephesian Elders – Part 2

The Character Qualities of Elders

Acts 20:17-38

1 Timothy 3:1-15

Titus 1:5-9



Acts 20:17-38 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁷ From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.

¹⁸ And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; ²⁰ how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, ²¹ testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. ²² And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. ²⁴ But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

1 Timothy 3:1-15 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

3 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*. ² An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. ⁴ *He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity ⁵ (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), ⁶ *and* not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. ⁷ And he must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

⁸ Deacons likewise *must be* men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted

Titus 1:5-9 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁵ For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, ⁶ *namely*, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. 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, ⁸ but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, ⁹ holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

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Acts 20:17-21:

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. ¹⁸ And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; ²⁰ how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, ²¹ testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

REVIEW: Paul used himself as an Example – as a Pattern of Life and Ministry for these Elders to follow – as they led their congregation, together.

1 Cor. 11:1 → Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

1 Timothy 1:12-16 → Jesus made Paul a template/pattern for all who would come to Christ thereafter.

Paul worked night and day – for his own income, but also with his Missionary Team to make sure that the church in Ephesus was strong in Christ and in His Word – doctrinally sound in Christ. (also read Acts 20:35)

Paul also conveyed this to Timothy in the Pastoral Epistle: 1 Timothy

1 Timothy 4:15-16:

¹⁵ PRACTICE these things; be COMMITTED to them, so that your progress may be EVIDENT to all. ¹⁶ Pay close attention to your LIFE AND your TEACHING; PERSEVERE in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.

The focus was his LIFEstyle (his Living) of his LIFE as a Disciple of Christ as an Example to others

AND

His TEACHINGS – His Doctrine that he held (embraced) and Taught
His LIFE and His TEACHINGS must be Consistent as an EXAMPLE

So, let's look at the Character Qualities and Abilities that Paul Lists for Elders in
1 Timothy 3:1-7 & Titus 1:5-9

1. The Major Difference between Elders and Deacons is:

that Elders **MUST** Be Able to Teach God's Word, whereas this is **NOT** a requirement for Deacons.

For more on **Deacons**, please, read Acts 6:1-6 & 1 Timothy 3:8-13

Deacons are Elders in training – or at least can be

→ **Deacons must be Tested**, whereas with Elders, this is not mentioned.

This may imply, that Elders were Deacons before they became Elders, or at least that is the normal progression of leadership development.

Deacons are Servants – working under the authority of the Elders.

Deacons are Leaders – Team Leaders – Leading other Servants in Serving the Lord in “teams” within the local church family.

There is **no** such things as **Deacon Committees** or **Deacon Councils** in the Bible. Deacons serve **under** the authority of the elders, always.

“Women” are mentioned in 1 Tim. 3:8-13 – it means – the **wives** of the Deacons, not a Deaconess Ministry, based on Context and History

Since, Paul, is addressing the **Elders** of Ephesus in Acts 20:17-38, this will be our focus in this study.

2. The Motivation – what is behind the “desire” to become an Elder?

It is a good desire. If that is the case – HE – must be a HE.

A husband of one wife. Only a Male of the Human species qualifies.

But, before being a Husband (or a “one wife kind of man”), He must be Above Reproach. Blameless. He is not doing things that are shameful, that would bring shame upon himself, his family, the local church family, or upon the Name of Jesus Christ (tarnish Christ’s reputation). The impact of the Elder is great in many ways.

Proverbs 22:1 - A GOOD NAME is to be more desired than great wealth, favor is better than silver and gold.

(“good name” = good reputation)

James 3:1 - Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

1 Timothy 3:2-3 - An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

Titus 1:7-8 - 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, ⁸ but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled . . .

3. Personal and Social-Relational Character Qualities of the Elder:

Just like there is the Ideal Woman seen in Proverbs 31:10-31

These are qualities of the Ideal Man – the highest example within the Body of Christ. This is reflection of Jesus Christ, Himself.

→ temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, not addicted to wine or pugnacious (combative, belligerent), but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled

1 Timothy 3:4-5 - He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity ⁵ (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?) . . .

Titus 1:6 - . . . the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion

4. Family LIFE is a Part of the Qualification – 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:6

His Marriage and Parenting are a focal point ... if he cannot manage his own household well, then he has no business being an elder.

Children → those who are still in the household, who are still “children” and not grown adults. “children who believe” – can also be translated as “children who are faithful” – in the sense as being under parental control with dignity – as the synthesis of both 1 Timothy 3:3-4 and Titus 1:6 seem to suggest.

This excludes Full Brutality/Abuse and/or Neglect (e.g.: c'est la vie)

1 Timothy 3:6-7 - not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. ⁷ And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Titus 1:9 - holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

4. Not a New Convert – why? (this goes for both Elder & Deacon)

Not being a new convert – is another way of saying –

A Humble, Servant-Hearted, Seasoned, Mature Veteran in the Faith

As Titus 1:9 explains – he must be mature in the faith, Know and Embrace the Faith and be able to explain sound doctrine and refute those who contradict. Having a good reputation outside the church does not mean that everyone is going to like him. Just being a Christian is enough for some folks to just hate you. Faithfulness, Holiness, Goodness, Kindness – reputation of those kinds of things. Humility in Christ or the alternative would be the Devil's attitude.