

Introduction:

1. In order for a person to teach in the doctorate program in a college, there are certain qualifications that he must have:
 - a. He must have graduated high school
 - b. He must have graduated college with a Master's degree and a PHD.
 - c. He had to have taught college level classes for a certain number of years.
 - d. Anyone not meeting these qualifications is not considered for a teaching post in the doctorate program at an accredited university.
 2. In hiring someone to work in some stores, certain qualifications must be met.
 - a. They must be of legal age to work.
 - b. They must be legal residents of the United States.
 - c. They must pass a drug test.
 - d. If they do not meet these qualifications, they are not considered for employment.
 3. You might notice that sometimes people are willing to overlook the lack of qualifications when they hire someone.
 - a. How many illegal immigrants have jobs in the US?
 - b. How many places hire underage workers, hoping no one will notice?
 - c. Though they may supposedly "get away with it," they are still doing something illegal.
 4. Just as there are qualifications in getting a job in the world, there are qualifications for fulfilling the job/role of an elder in the church.
 - a. Ignoring those qualifications will lead to an unqualified person in the office.
 - b. Ignoring those qualifications will be "against the law" of God.
 5. Beginning tonight, we will look at the qualifications for elders as laid out by God.
 - a. Most of the qualifications are found in Timothy 3 and Titus 1, but we will also be taking some other Scriptures into account as we go through these qualifications.
 - b. This will take us a few weeks to go through all of them.
- I. An elder must be "older."
- A. Because we discussed this in a previous lesson, we will not be spending as much time with this qualification.
 - B. The word "elder"—by definition—means someone who is older.
 1. This is because as we age, we gain more experience and more maturity.
 2. The ones who are more mature should be the ones chosen to be the leaders.
 - C. How old must an elder be?
 1. As we discussed before, an elder must be one who is considered older by the place and time in which he lived.
 2. He must be old enough for his children to have shown themselves to be faithful (and this really cannot be proven until they move out of the house).
 3. It is not often the case that this qualification could be met by someone under the age of 50.
- II. An elder must "desire the office of an elder" (I Timothy 3:1).
- A. As we discussed last week, people may desire the office of an elder for many different reasons.
 1. Those reasons may be for personal gain.
 2. Those reasons may be for personal glory.
 3. Those reasons may be for personal power.
 4. Those reasons may be for the glory of God and aiding His church.
 - B. No one should be forced to be an elder if he does not desire the role.

1. I Peter 5:1-4 shows us that elders are to serve willingly, not because they were forced into the position.
 2. God does not want forced service, but willing service.
 - C. If a person does not desire to be an elder for the right reasons, he is not qualified to lead the congregation in that capacity.
- III. An elder must be a man (I Timothy 3:1-7).
- A. It should go without saying that this is the case, but in today's goofed-up world, it sadly has to be pointed out.
 1. Today there are female preachers and elders in the denominational world.
 - a. Until just recently, there was a female preacher next door at the Methodists.
 - b. There are female leaders of denominational groups (called pastors).
 2. But now there are even females taking the lead in the Lord's church!
 - a. A lot of congregations (some even in Oklahoma City) have women song-leaders (which is a position of authority).
 - b. They have women leading the prayers (which is something commanded specifically for males to do in worship – I Timothy 2:8).
 - c. They have women preaching (Paul said that women were to keep silent in the church, and that was specifically in the context of public speaking roles – I Corinthians 14:34-35).
 - d. At least one congregation in Missouri (probably more) now has female elders as well as male elders!
 - B. The word "elder" is masculine in Greek, meaning it must be a male.
 - C. In addition to this, the male pronouns are used in reference to elders.
 1. If a MAN desires the office of an elder, HE desires a good work (I Timothy 3:1).
 2. Having HIS children in subjection (I Timothy 3:4).
 3. If a MAN cannot rule HIS own house, how can HE take care of the church? (I Timothy 3:5).
 4. Not a novice, lest HE fall into the condemnation of the devil (I Timothy 3:6).
 5. HE must have a good report, lest HE fall into reproach (I Timothy 3:7).
 - D. Also, an elder is described as the "husband of one wife."
 1. When was the last time you met a woman who was a husband of anyone?
 - E. Regardless of what the religious world (and some in the Lord's church) wish to say, an elder must be a man.
 - F. Why a man? Why not a woman?
 1. God gave different roles to male and female, both in the family (see Genesis 2) and the church.
 2. This does not mean that women are somehow inferior humans, but only that they are given a different role.
 3. Unfortunately, we live in a society that goes against God's order for male and female.
 4. There are differences between males and females.
 - a. This is obvious to those of us with any common sense whatsoever.
 - b. There was a TV special about 10 years ago which gave the earth-shaking revelation: boys and girls are different!
 - c. These differences make each of us specially suited for the different roles God has laid out for us.
 - d. Women, generally speaking, are more nurturing.

- e. Men, generally speaking, are stronger physically and are more logically minded.
 - f. Because of these differences, men make terrible mothers.
- IV. Elders must be faithful Christians.
 - A. You would think that “elders being Christians” is something that should go without saying, but unfortunately it must be said.
 - 1. The word “Christian” is not the same as “baptized.”
 - a. Christian means “one who is like Christ.”
 - b. If someone is not living like Christ, then by the meaning of the word, they are not a Christian.
 - c. We frequently use the terms “faithful Christian” and “unfaithful Christian,” when one is redundant and the other is an oxymoron.
 - d. A Christian (one being like Christ) is one who is faithful.
 - 2. There are congregations who will appoint a man as elder who is not even faithful in his attendance.
 - 3. There are congregations who will appoint a man as elder because he is well-known in the community.
 - 4. There are congregations who will appoint a man as elder because he has a lot of money.
 - 5. Unfortunately, there are many congregations who seem to ignore the need for that man to be Christ-like.
 - B. There are many “Christian colleges” that are associated with the Lord’s church.
 - 1. Some of them now have as their presidents people who are not even members of the Lord’s church, let alone faithful ones!
 - 2. Leaving aside the issue of the schools, how is one supposed to lead people to heaven if he isn’t even going there himself?
 - 3. The same standards exist in some congregations which are led by a “board of directors” instead of elders, some of that board being Lutheran, Baptist, or Catholic.
 - C. Can you imagine Paul going from town to town, ordaining the most prominent people in town to be the elders of the Lord’s church instead of those who were faithful members of the Lord’s body?
 - D. We discussed 4 or 5 lessons ago that elders were always selected from within the local congregation.
 - 1. This presupposes that they are Christians.
- V. An elder must be blameless (I Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:5-6).
 - A. Blameless does not mean “sinless.”
 - 1. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).
 - 2. Walking in the light (walking with God) gets us continual forgiveness of the sins we commit as a Christian (I John 1:7).
 - 3. Peter sinned as a Christian (Galatians 2).
 - 4. If blameless does not mean sinless, what does it mean?
 - B. Blameless literally means “unarrestable.”
 - 1. Charges against one who is blameless will not stick to him.
 - 2. ASV says “without reproach.”
 - 3. He must be one about whom no evil rumors exist (or are accepted).
 - a. Some may spread malicious gossip about him, not no one takes it seriously because he is blameless.

4. His character is unimpeachable.
5. He lives a pure, clean life.
- C. Some list this as the first or second qualification in the list that Paul gives.
 1. It depends on whether or not you count “desires the office” as part of the list or not.
- D. Some, however, believe that “blamelessness” is the ONLY qualification for an elder.
 1. This is not to say that they throw out the next 5 verses.
 2. Instead, Paul says an elder must be blameless, and the next 5 verses go on to give specific areas in his life to look at to see if he is blameless.
 3. Are they blameless in the qualifications listed by Paul?

Conclusion:

1. Starting next week, we will be looking at the specific qualifications found in I Timothy and Titus.
2. We need to realize that since we are to follow the example of the elders, these should all be attributes that we should emulate.
3. Are you living your life as a Christian would?
4. Are you living your life blamelessly?
5. Or are there things that people could say against you which are true and ought to be changed?
6. Make up your mind right now to change, to live for God instead of yourself, to turn your life over to Him.