

Introduction:

1. Last week we began looking at the qualifications that God has laid out for someone to serve as an elder in the church.
 2. This week we will be continuing that study.
 3. There are some qualifications that are easier to explain/understand, and some that are more difficult.
 - a. For example, we will be spending an entire lesson just dealing on the meaning of “husband of one wife” and all the views surrounding qualification.
 - b. We will also likely be spending an entire lesson on the meaning of having “believing children” and the various views surrounding that qualification.
 4. Tonight, we will be looking at some of the “easier” to understand qualifications laid out by God.
 - a. Vigilant
 - b. Sober
 - c. Of Good Behavior
 - d. Given to Hospitality
- I. An Elder must be Vigilant (I Timothy 3:2)
- A. Vigilant means “ever watchful.”
 1. Super-heroes are costumed “vigilantes” who are ever watchful for crimes being committed.
 2. Many people are said to be “keeping a vigil” by someone’s bed at night, making sure they are taken care of, watching for any signs of sickness.
 3. Sometimes police stakeouts are referred to as “vigils.”
 4. The idea is one of being aware of your surroundings and of what is happening around you.
 - B. How can you tell if a man is vigilant?
 1. He must be aware of himself and his actions and how those look to others.
 - a. The ASV translates this word as “temperate.”
 - b. We will deal with “temperate” in an upcoming lesson.
 - c. He must be self-controlled, not being carried away with things (this overlaps into the next qualification: sober-minded).
 2. He must not be a Christian who is ignorant of the things going on around him in the congregation.
 3. He cannot be a lazy Christian.
 - C. Why must an elder be vigilant?
 1. It is inherent in the word Shepherd that he should be vigilant (I Peter 5:1).
 - a. A shepherd must be constantly aware of where the sheep are so that they do not stray.
 - b. A shepherd must be constantly aware of the dangers which come from outside so that the sheep are not harmed.
 - c. A shepherd cannot be “sleeping on the job.”
 2. Imagine an eldership which paid no attention to the outside influences upon the congregation!
 3. Imagine an eldership which paid no attention to the direction in which the congregation was heading.
 4. Imagine an eldership which paid no attention to the attitudes of the congregation.

5. Elders must be vigilant in order to keep the congregation safely on their way to heaven.
- D. In order to be vigilant, the elder must know the members of the congregation.
1. Remember, the elders watch for the souls of the congregation.
 2. Do you really want the watchmen to be sleeping?
 3. A man cannot be considered “vigilant” if he doesn’t care about the problems the congregation faces.
 4. He must be aware of dangers to the congregation and be ready to combat them.
- II. An elder must be Sober (I Timothy 3:2).
- A. What is sober?
1. Sober does not mean “isn’t a drunk.”
 - a. This is the meaning that is placed on the word “sober” today.
 - b. There is another qualification that deals with alcoholic intake.
 - c. However, this word (in Greek) did carry with it the idea of not being intoxicated with wine, though that was not its only application.
 2. Sober means to be serious, sober-minded (NKJV).
 - a. This means that the person has good judgment, taking things into consideration.
 - b. This person is clear-headed.
 - c. This means the person is not flippant about Christianity.
 - d. This does not mean the person cannot have a sense of humor, but he must take his Christianity seriously.
 - e. Some have said that this word means dignified, calm, and collected.
 3. Someone who is sober-minded does not let outside influences cloud his judgment.
 - a. He is reserved, and does not does not make rash decisions based on emotions.
 - b. He will look to the heart of the matter and see it objectively.
 - c. He will not allow alcohol or other drugs to cloud his thinking.
- B. How can you tell if a man is sober-minded?
1. He takes important things seriously.
 2. He is not flippant, frivolous, or flighty.
 3. Does he take his Christianity seriously?
 4. Does he realize the importance of what he says and does in this life for both himself and others?
- C. Why should an elder be sober-minded?
1. We do not need people leading the congregation who do not think it is serious work.
 2. Would you want someone working for you who did not take their job seriously?
 3. Would you want someone as your boss who did not take the company seriously?
 - a. If your boss was indeed that way, you might not have a company to work for much longer.
 4. Imagine an eldership full of men who did not take the church seriously.
 - a. What kind of church are you going to end up with over time?
 - b. How many people are going to be led to heaven by these men?
- D. The command to be “sober” is also applied to all Christians.

1. Let us be sober (I Thessalonians 5:6-8).
 2. Older men are to be sober (Titus 2:2).
 3. Older women are to teach the younger women to be sober (Titus 2:4).
 4. Younger men are to be sober-minded (Titus 2:6).
 5. Gird up the loins of your mind and be sober (I Peter 1:13).
 6. Be sober, be Vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, walketh about as a lion seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8).
 - a. In order to be prepared to fight Satan's influence, we must be clear-headed, serious, and ever watchful.
- III. An Elder must be of Good Behavior (I Timothy 3:1).
- A. What is "good behavior"?
 1. Other translations:
 - a. Some versions translate this word as "orderly" (ASV, McCord).
 - b. Others translate it as "mannerly" (Coverdale - 1535)
 - c. "Respectable" (ESV).
 - d. "Modest" (Geneva Bible - 1587).
 2. It means to be polite and modest in conduct.
 - a. This person is not rude.
 - b. He does not seek to draw attention to himself in a prideful way.
 - c. This person takes the feelings of others into account before he speaks and acts.
 - d. He is not rowdy in his behavior.
 - B. How can you tell if a man is "of good behavior"?
 1. Is he polite towards others?
 2. Does he take the feelings of others into consideration?
 3. Is he modest (in dress as well as in actions)?
 4. If the answer to these is "yes", then that person fits this qualification.
 - C. Why should an elder be "of good behavior"?
 1. It will help convert others to Christ.
 - a. How likely are you to convert someone by being rude to them?
 2. It will help keep unity in the congregation.
 - a. It is when people put themselves first instead of the church first that problems happen.
 - b. If you have the right attitude (taking other people's feelings into consideration), then problems don't escalate as often.
 3. It will help the members to be better people.
 - a. We are supposed to follow the example of the elders.
 - b. If the elders are not modest and polite, what sort of example are they giving to the members?
 4. Would you be happy with people if they acted the same way you did?
- IV. An Elder Must be Given to Hospitality (I Timothy 3:3).
- A. What is hospitality?
 1. It is willing to take care of others in their needs.
 2. It involves helping to house or feed those who might have need.
 3. It involves having people into your house.
 4. It is a willingness to share your blessings with other people, including strangers.
 - B. How can you tell a man is hospitable?
 1. Does he share what he has with others?

- a. This means: does he give food to those who are hungry?
 - b. This means: does he give a place to stay for those who might need it?
 2. Does he have people over to his house?
 3. Is he welcoming to visitors here?
- C. Why should an elder be hospitable?
 1. First and foremost, because it is what Jesus did.
 - a. He fed the 4,000 and the 5,000 because they were in need of food.
 - b. He shared the blessings which He had with others.
 2. Some say this is simply the carrying out of the second greatest command: love thy neighbor as thyself (Mark 10:30-31).
 3. It is commanded for all Christians (Hebrews 13:2).
 4. It sets a good example for the congregation to follow.
 5. It will help to show the love of Christ to others.
- D. What does it mean "given" to hospitality?
 1. In Titus, Paul says that an elder must be "a lover of hospitality" (Titus 1:8).
 2. "Given" means it is his tendency, he is addicted to doing it.

Conclusion:

1. All the qualifications we have looked at today are not just for elders, but are commanded for all Christians.
 - a. All Christians are to be both vigilant and sober (I Peter 5:8).
 - b. All Christians should be of good behavior (I Timothy 3:15, I Corinthians 13:5).
 - c. All Christians should show hospitality (Mark 10:30-31).
2. Are you following these commands of God?