

Introduction:

1. If you owned a company and you were looking for someone to promote to manager, what would you look for?
  - a. You would want someone you were familiar with (from within the company).
  - b. You would want someone who you trusted.
  - c. You would want someone who was familiar with the employees.
  - d. You would want someone who exemplified the attitudes and attributes you would want all of your employees to have.
2. God is looking for people to lead His congregations, so what is He looking for?
  - a. Someone from within the congregation.
  - b. Someone trustworthy.
  - c. Someone familiar with the members.
  - d. Someone who exemplifies the attitudes and attributes He wants all the church to have.
3. With these thoughts in mind, we are going to continue our look at two qualifications for elders listed in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1.
  - a. Apt to teach.
  - b. Must hold to the Word of God.

I. An Elder must be Apt to Teach (I Timothy 3:2).

A. What does "apt to teach" mean?

1. The ASV translates it "able to teach."
  - a. The word "apt" (as in aptitude) refers to ability.
  - b. It means that an elder must have the ability to teach.
2. The one word translated "apt to teach" only appears one other time in the Bible, II Timothy 2:24.
  - a. We will look at that verse in a few minutes.

B. What must he have the ability to teach?

1. Does the elder have to be able to teach any subject at any time (algebra, for example)?
  - a. We must remember that this is in the context of the church.
2. Does the elder have to be able to teach any and every Bible subject?
  - a. Does each elder have to have the ability to teach all the intricacies of the book of Revelation?
  - b. Does each elder have to be able to successfully prove whether Noah was alive when Abraham was born (a subject of debate among some)?
  - c. What if (like these and others) it is an issue that the elder has not studied or considered before? Does that make him unqualified?
  - d. Those both are issues in which the Bible is what is taught, but is this what Paul is talking about?
3. What must the elder be "able to teach"?
  - a. If an elder cannot teach someone what they must do to be saved, then he has no business being an elder.
  - b. If an elder cannot teach someone how to live faithfully (things to avoid, things to do), then he has no business being an elder.
  - c. Does this mean that unless a man can teach an adult Bible class thoroughly, deeply, and exhaustively that he is unqualified?
    - 1) No, and we will get into why momentarily.
4. Where must an elder be "able to teach"?

- a. The Greek word does NOT have public teaching as part of its inherent meaning.
  - b. There are certain types of teaching that an elder might not have any skill at whatsoever (teaching little children, perhaps); does that disqualify him?
  - c. The idea is that an elder must be able to teach someone the gospel in a way that can be understood (that is what makes someone able to teach).
    - 1) There are some college professors who might be very smart and able to write incredibly technical instructions.
    - 2) However, they could not teach it in a way it could be understood by most.
    - 3) There is no point in teaching if you make it so difficult nobody knows what you are talking about.
  - d. So, does an elder have to be able to teach an adult class on any/every book of the Bible?
    - 1) No, that is not inherent in the meaning of the word.
    - 2) No more than every elder must be able to teach a college doctorate class on Revelation (after all, isn't that teaching as well?).
  - e. Often people say that if a man isn't teaching a class, he can't be an elder.
    - 1) What do you say of congregations who have 10 elders?
      - a) Must each of them be teaching a class?
    - 2) What do you say of congregations which only have adult members and only one class on Sunday/Wednesday, but they have 3 or 4 elders?
      - a) Must they make extra classes so that each of the elders is teaching?
    - 3) The qualification does not say he MUST BE TEACHING A CLASS.
    - 4) The "Bible class" set-up is not really seen in the New Testament as a regular practice of the early church.
5. The qualification means that he is able to teach the gospel to someone (perhaps on a one-on-one basis), as well as teach people how to live faithfully so as to get to heaven.
- a. There are many people who are not very good at public speaking (such as teaching a class), but who are fantastic personal workers for the Lord.
    - 1) There are some people who are very good public speakers, but who are terrible personal-workers (they lack patience, perhaps cannot speak without a prepared script).
    - 2) Of the two, which would you rather have?
  - b. The apostles taught publicly and privately (Acts 5:42), but only one word is used to describe both (the same root word as "apt to teach").
  - c. Therefore, the word "teach" does not inherently mean a public setting, but instead simply means to teach someone, somewhere.
- C. A look at II Timothy 2:24.
1. This is the only other place in the Bible where "apt to teach" is found.
  2. The person who is to be "apt to teach" is "a servant of the Lord."

- a. The word “the” is not in the Greek, so it is “A servant of the Lord.”
  - b. Also, the word “servant” is not in the masculine (referring to male members only, or perhaps the preacher only as some suggest), but instead in the neuter gender, which encompasses every Christian (male and female).
  - c. So, every Christian is to be “apt to teach.”
3. Since we have the same writer (Paul) writing to the same person (Timothy) we should expect that this same phrase means the same thing in both instances.
- a. If it means that elders must be able to preach on Sundays, then that means all Christians (male and female) must be able to preach on Sundays.
    - 1) We know women are to keep silent in regards to public speaking roles in the church (I Corinthians 14:34-35).
    - 2) Therefore “apt to teach” cannot mean “must be able to preach on Sundays.”
  - b. If it means that elders must be able to teach the adult class, then it means all Christians (male and female) must be able to teach the adult class.
    - 1) Again, the previously mentioned verse makes this an impossibility, scripturally speaking.
  - c. If it means that elders must be able to teach others the gospel and how to get to heaven, then it means all Christians (male and female) must be able to teach others the gospel and how to get to heaven.
    - 1) Isn’t that a novel concept?
    - 2) Are Christians commanded to teach others how to be saved and how to live their lives as to go to heaven?
      - a) Matthew 28:19-20 – teach others, baptize them, and then teach them to do what I’ve commanded you to do (which includes teaching others).
      - b) II Timothy 2:2 – teach faithful men who can teach others as well.
      - c) II Timothy 2:4 – the older women are to teach the younger women how to live godly lives (which would allow them to go to heaven).
    - 3) If you know what you did to become a Christian, you should be able to teach others what to do to become a Christian.
- D. More than just ability to teach, all Christians must also have the willingness to teach.
- 1. This is the only way to prove that one is able to teach is if he actually does it!
  - 2. What good is the ability to teach if one does not use it?
  - 3. If a man is not willing to teach others the gospel, then whatever ability he has to teach the gospel is useless!
    - a. Such a man has no business in the role of elder.
    - b. Such a person has no right claiming to follow Christ if they are not willing to teach the gospel to others!
- E. Why should an elder be “able to teach”?
- 1. First, because ALL Christians are to be able to teach!
  - 2. Second, because he needs to lead by example, helping other Christians to be able to share their faith with others.

3. Anyone who is not willing to teach the gospel to others is not qualified AT ALL to be an elder.
- II. An Elder must Hold to the Word of God (Titus 1:9).
- A. This qualification goes hand-in-hand with the previously mentioned one (able to teach).
    1. This is viewed by some as Paul; describing the same qualification in two different ways (since it is in two separate letters).
    2. Really, one describes the ability, the other describes the standard held while teaching.
      - a. Teaching the Baptist gospel does NOT mean one is qualified to be an elder.
      - b. Be must be willing and able to teach the gospel AS FOUND IN THE BIBLE!
  - B. The word of God is where the gospel is found.
    1. Here, it is called "the faithful word."
      - a. "Faithful" means trustworthy.
      - b. It also means that it is faithful to the original.
      - c. Therefore the word of God, as delivered to us, is faithful to the original message sent by God.
      - d. As Paul said, when we read what he has written, we have the same understanding that he had received from God's Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:3-5).
    2. Teaching any other gospel than what is found in the Scriptures causes one to be cursed by God (Galatians 1).
  - C. It is in the gospel that God's power to save is found (Romans 1:16-17).
    1. No one can be saved without the true gospel.
    2. A false gospel makes fake Christians.
    3. A false gospel gives false assurances.
    4. If we do not hold to the FAITHFUL word of God, we will not be saving souls.
  - D. Why must he hold to the faithful word of God?
    1. Paul clarifies the reasons for holding to the word of God.
    2. In order to exhort by sound doctrine (Titus 1:9).
      - a. Exhort literally means "to call to one's side."
      - b. We use sound doctrine (true teachings) to call people to our sides in Christ.
      - c. It is the same idea we discussed earlier with "able to teach."
        - 1) If you know how you became a Christian, you should be able to teach others how to become a Christian.
        - 2) This would be calling them to your side.
      - d. Without sound doctrine, there is no calling them to Christ.
        - 1) Exhorting them would describe teaching them the gospel.
    3. In order to convince the gainsayers (Titus 1:9).
      - a. To "convince" is to convict, answer, or correct someone.
      - b. A gainsayer is literally "one who speaks against."
        - 1) The same word is translated one chapter later as "answering again" (Titus 2:9).
        - 2) It carries the idea of talking back or against someone or something.
        - 3) The gainsayers are not just people who are antagonistic, but also those who might argue about what Scripture teaches.

- c. Holding to God's word will help convince those who have the disposition to accept it.
- d. This also contains the idea of correcting the Christian who has gone astray.
  - 1) After all, most people don't really care if they've violated a certain passage of Scripture unless they are Christians in the first place.
- E. Does this mean that an elder must always be able to convince the opposers?
  - 1. Some people will never be convinced, nor do they care what the Bible teaches on any given subject.
    - a. Such people will never be convinced or convicted.
    - b. They will never come to your side in response to the call of the gospel.
  - 2. The verse does not teach that elders must be able to convince everyone or even most people.
  - 3. Instead, the qualification is that he holds to the true word of God so that he MIGHT exhort and convince others.
  - 4. It only speaks of his responsibility in the matter.
    - a. His qualification does not hinge on whether or not some people respond to God's call for repentance.
    - b. The qualification is that he holds to the word of God and uses it as his tool for converting people to the Lord.
- F. What about the rest of us?
  - 1. We saw that all Christians must be willing and able to teach others.
  - 2. Do we also have to hold to the faithful word of God as our instrument for teaching others?
    - a. Quite obviously the answer is YES!
    - b. This does not mean we cannot use aids (pamphlets, filmstrips, DVDs, illustrations, etc...), but if the teaching is not Biblical, we sin in teaching it!
  - 3. II Thessalonians 2:15 – hold fast to the teachings which were delivered by the apostles.
  - 4. II Timothy 1:13 – hold fast the form of sound words which Paul delivered.
  - 5. Again, if we do not teach the truth (which is the sound doctrine from the faithful word of God), we give others false hope and also condemn ourselves!
  - 6. Make your choice: are you going to hold fast to the word of God?

Conclusion:

- 1. More than just a discussion of the qualifications of elders, this lesson has been an attempt to remind all of us that we have a responsibility to share the pure gospel with others.
- 2. All Christians are supposed to be able to teach others.
  - a. If you have become a Christian, all you have to do is share with others how to become a Christian.
  - b. If you see a Christian who is not living their lives properly, you have a responsibility to teach them how to teach them what they are doing wrong so that they can get to heaven.
- 3. Most importantly, YOU need to pattern your life after God's revealed word and encourage others to do the same!
- 4. Are you?