

Introduction:

1. If you want to know what anger looks like, cut someone off in traffic and then slow down in front of them.
 - a. I don't recommend actually doing that, but if you did, you would see people get livid and quickly.
 - b. For other people, that anger comes when someone speeds up so that they can't pass them.
 2. Anger is a real problem for a lot of people.
 - a. You hear almost daily about arguments that escalated until someone gets shot.
 - b. It is the cause of many divorces.
 3. So, you may ask, what does this have to do with the qualifications of elders?
 - a. I'm glad you asked.
 - b. Tonight we are going to be looking at the qualifications which deal with anger and other similar things.
- I. An elder must not be soon angry (Titus 1:7).
- A. What does "soon angry" mean?
 1. Thayer says the word used means "prone to anger."
 - a. Brother Hugo McCord translated it that way.
 - b. Another way of saying it is "quick-tempered."
 - c. This is the only time in the New Testament that this word appears.
 2. This describes a person whose buttons area easily pushed.
 - a. It is someone who gets angry very easily.
 - b. You know the type of person: he might be nice much of the time, but he quickly goes to being angry if he is crossed or disagreed with.
 3. Basically, this describes someone who does not have a handle on his temper.
 4. This person usually won't seek for understanding, but instead his first response is to get mad.
 - B. How can you tell if a man is quick-tempered?
 1. Simple observation over a period of time should make this quite clear.
 2. Is he quick to "fly off the handle"?
 3. Is he someone who you know you cannot discuss things with because he'll just get mad?
 4. Sometimes a man is well-behaved with his friends, but put him in his business, and he might be someone else completely.
 5. How does he act towards those who disagree with him?
 6. How does he behave towards his wife and children?
 - a. A quick-tempered man will usually focus his anger on his family.
 - C. Instead of being quick tempered, elders are to be patient and longsuffering.
 1. We looked at the need for all Christians (including elders) to be patient a few weeks ago.

2. All Christians need to spend time in prayer asking god for His help in controlling our tempers so they don't flare up.
- D. Why should an elder be "not soon angry"?
1. A man who is quick-tempered will bring reproach upon the church quicker than almost anything else.
 - a. He will fly off the handle and say things without bothering to consider other people's feelings or responses.
 - b. Do you really think that person can help us to be patient and longsuffering?
 2. A quick-tempered man will not show patience in solving problems in the Lord's church.
 - a. In fact, his anger will cause things to quickly escalate to the point where people may leave the congregation and souls may be lost.
 - b. He will not seek to work towards solutions, but instead get mad and let his anger cloud his judgment.
 3. A quick-tempered man will quickly give up on studying with people who may need more help and explanation.
 - a. Imagine a quick-tempered person, and then imagine someone telling them they don't understand what he's trying to get across.
 - b. Imagine even more someone who says "I don't think that's right..."
 4. A quick-tempered man will constantly have trouble in his family.
- E. Is it wrong to be angry (since it says not "SOON" angry)?
1. It depends on what you mean by "angry."
 - a. Ephesians 4:26 says "be ye angry, and sin not."
 - 1) This "angry" is the same root word in Greek as "not soon angry."
 - 2) Some take this verse to mean you can have righteous indignation (anger) towards sin, but that you don't let that anger drive you to sin (perhaps in berating the person who is sinning).
 - 3) Others take this verse to mean it is ok to be angry at someone so long as you don't sin because of your anger.
 - 4) The differences in the interpretations come down to "what are you angry at?" The person or the sin?
 - 5) If this refers exclusively to righteous indignation, it would mean that an elder must not soon get angry at sins.
 - i. God frequently was angered because of sin (Deuteronomy 4:21, 9:8, 9:20, etc...).
 - b. Some say it is ok to be angry so long as you don't actually "do" anything about it or act on it.
 - 1) Jesus taught that the thoughts behind actions were also sin (even if not acted upon) in the Sermon on the Mount.
 - i. The one who looks at a woman to lust after her (this refers to impure thoughts) has sinned just as if he had committed adultery.

- ii. One who hates his brother (thoughts) is just like a murderer to God.
 - 2) This obviously cannot be what is meant, so what is it?
 - 2. It is okay to get upset about something, so long as you do not give place to evil thoughts or actions (be angry, but don't sin).
 - a. If you are angry because people sin, that is a good thing.
 - b. Just make sure you don't decide to respond in an unchristian way.
 - II. An elder must not be a brawler (I Timothy 3:3).
 - A. What is a "brawler"?
 - 1. The first thought that might enter your mind is that of a boxer or a fighter, but physical confrontations are not what is in view here.
 - 2. Other translations:
 - a. ASV, McCord – Not Contentious
 - b. NKJV – not Quarrelsome
 - c. Coverdale – Abhorring Strife
 - 3. Really, what "brawler" means in this verse is someone who is always looking for arguments.
 - a. You know the people: they aren't happy unless there is some strife.
 - b. If there is none, they seem to find ways to cause some.
 - c. They are the kinds of people who are always trying to stir up trouble.
 - d. We might call them troublemakers.
 - B. How can you tell if someone is a "brawler"?
 - 1. Is he argumentative?
 - a. Do his "discussions" always involve how everyone else is wrong?
 - b. Do his "discussions" seek to cause problems?
 - 2. Is he a gossip?
 - a. Those who talk about others behind their back are repulsive to God.
 - b. Does this person always seem to bring other people up (and not in a good way) in his conversations?
 - c. There are a lot of congregations that have one person who can (and will) tell you all the dirt on any and all members of the congregation.
 - d. Paul called them tattlers and busybodies (I Tim 5:13).
 - 3. Does he seek to divide the Lord's church instead of uniting it?
 - a. Does he drive people away (members or visitors) from the congregation with his contentious attitude?
 - b. Does he insist everyone who disagrees with him on any subject is wrong?
 - 1) And worse yet, bound for hell because they don't agree with him on some issue that is not related to our salvation?
 - 2) Many one-cup brethren are like this in regards to the one cup and one loaf.
 - 4. Does he fit the description "he's not happy unless people are unhappy"?
 - C. Instead of being contentious, elders should be peaceable.

1. All Christians are told, “as much as lieth within you, be at peace with all men” (Romans 12:18).
 2. Since this applies to all Christians, it also applies to the eldership.
- D. Why should an elder not be contentious?
1. An elder is supposed to help protect the flock as well as helping them grow.
 - a. Driving them away is not going to help protect them, nor will it help them grow.
 - b. Paul is a good example of trying to be all things to all people so that he might SAVE some of them (I Corinthians 9:22).
 2. A contentious person will find it very difficult to encourage people to convert.
 3. A contentious elder will cause strife, not just within the congregation, but also within the eldership.
 4. A contentious person usually seeks to elevate himself over others which violates the need to put others above yourself (Philippians 2:4, Matthew 7:12).
- E. Does this apply to all Christians?
1. All Christians are to seek to be at peace with all men (Romans 12:18), which eliminates being a brawler.
 2. The contentious person will receive the indignation and wrath of God (Romans 2:8), is that what YOU really want?
- III. An elder must not be a striker (I Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7).
- A. What does it mean to be a “striker”?
1. Does this mean a union member who walks out on his job? No.
 2. Interestingly enough, McCord translates it as “quick tempered.”
 - a. The New King James translates it “not violent.”
 3. Some say it means “a pugnacious or combative person,” however that is not strong enough.
 4. The word, in Greek, comes from a word meaning “to strike” as in hitting or beating someone or something.
 5. So, the person who is a “striker” is a violent person.
- B. How can you tell if a person is a “striker”?
1. My great-aunt-in-law attends a religious organization that they refer to as “the Bloody Bucket.”
 - a. They call it this (not on their sign, obviously, but it has gotten that nickname) because just about every week there is a disagreement during their Bible study.
 - b. Instead of going to the Bible and looking to see what it says, they “take it outside” and proceed to fight in order to determine who is right on a given Bible issue.
 - c. They honestly have fistfights in front of their building until someone is bloody and gives up.
 - d. These are what we would term “strikers.”
 2. You can tell a person is a “striker” if he uses physical intimidation to get his way.

- a. Do people fear crossing him because of what the consequences might be?
 3. You can tell a person is a “striker” if he beats (by that I mean abusively) his children or his wife.
 - a. This man might take out his frustrations on his family with his fists.
 4. You can tell a person is a striker if he is serious when he asks “do you want to take this outside?”
 - a. If he is serious about resolving disputes with his fists, he is not qualified to be an elder, and has some serious work to do in order to even be a faithful child of God.
- C. Why should elders not be violent people?
 1. These would try to “Lord it over” the flock, which is condemned by the Holy Spirit (I Peter 5:1-4).
 - a. Violent people try to force others to do things their way.
 - b. This completely violates the example of Jesus who was meek.
 - c. This would also be trying to keep the members of the congregation faithful by force instead of willingly.
 2. They would bring reproach upon the church.
 - a. Can you imagine what would be said around town about the church of Christ if Jerry began to threaten the members with beatings if they didn’t come to services?
 - b. No one would ever want to visit here, and any influence we might have would instantly vanish.
 3. They would be bad examples to the rest of the congregation.
 - a. Is it permissible to God for a Christian to instigate fights?
 - 1) Jesus chastised Peter for instigating violence against the servant of the high priest (Matthew 26:52).
 - b. If the elders are allowed to do it, then why not all the rest of the congregation?
 - c. If that was allowed, we would end up with every member coming to blows anytime there was a disagreement.
- D. Does this mean that violence is never permissible by God?
 1. To cover this topic in-depth would require more time than we have tonight.
 2. However, God did command the Israelites to go to war and utterly destroy entire nations.
 3. Jesus Himself told his followers to have weapons, even if they had to sell their garments to get one (Luke 22:36).
 - a. If violence is not permitted, why would Jesus command the disciples to have weapons?
 - b. Since Jesus condemned Peter for instigating violence, yet commanded them to have weapons, the only explanation is that Jesus permitted them to have weapons for self-defense.

4. Some people teach that the Bible condemns any violence at all, that we must all be pacifists.
 - a. This means if a man comes in your house and begins smashing your children's fingers with a baseball bat, you would be forced to sit there and do nothing but watch until it was over.
 - b. The extreme views of some of these people even says that you cannot even call the police, because that could end in violence which you caused by calling them.
5. Needless to say, that is NOT what the Bible teaches.

Conclusion:

1. Do these three qualifications for elders also apply to every Christian?
 - a. Yes they do.
 - b. We are to be at peace with all men, not violent towards them.
 - c. We are to seek for unity and peace in the church, not causing trouble and strife.
 - d. We are all to be patient, not allowing our temper to take control.
 - e. All of this means that we are to follow God and not Satan.
2. Look at yourselves tonight.
 - a. Are you the kind of person who argues a lot?
 - b. Are you the kind of person who gossips (which causes strife and contentions)?
 - c. Are you the kind of person who resorts to violence?
 - d. If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," then you are in desperate need of repentance.
 - e. This is NOT the way God wants you to act.