

ELDERS: WHO THE LORD IS SEEKING

Lesson Three: Negative Qualifications

Aaron Beard
Trussville
July 10, 2005

INTRODUCTION: (I PETER 5:1-4)

- A. Let's refresh our minds on what we talked about last time regarding their qualifications:**
1. We looked at the positive qualifications that Paul lists for Timothy and Titus seeing what we should look for in the men's lives whom we one day select as elders
 - a. These qualifications are neither "unattainable" or "unreasonable" but really should be seen in development in the lives of anyone who calls himself a Christian
 - b. Men who would be elders have matured in these qualifications – Not necessarily to perfection, but so they characterize him... he is strong in these areas
 2. Review points from last lesson...
- B. Let's now look at the "negative qualifications:" Now we are seeing what this man does not look like – Things that must not be characteristic of his mind and life!**

I. WHAT SHOULD AN ELDER NOT BE? WHAT DOES HE NOT LOOK LIKE?

- A. First of all, he must be a man who is not given to wine: (I Tim. 3:3)**
1. This literally means "Not at any time given to wine, drunken with wine, quarrelsome"
 - a. It means not to be addicted to wine so as to be brought under its influence
 - b.
 - c. Others translations read: "Not a drunkard, not addicted to strong drink, not a wine-drinker, not a hard-drinker"
 2. Some seek to justify the use of wine, or other alcoholic beverages, by using Paul's telling Timothy to take some for his stomach's sake **(I Tim. 5:23)**
 - a. First of all, Paul seems to have to instruct Timothy to do this – Evidently Timothy had a reluctance to use it at all! For strictly medical purposes, its okay!
 - b. Paul told Timothy to take A LITTLE! The approval does not extend beyond A LITTLE! Outside of a little for medical reasons, it is wrong!
 - c. Alcoholic beverages we can purchase at stores has a purpose – Intoxicating the one who drinks it! Other forms of more effective medicine is available!
 3. Abstaining from drinking intoxicating drinks, save for medicinal purposes, is clearly condemned for EVERYONE!
 - a. Proverbs tells us not even to look upon the glass of wine! **(Prov. 23:29-31)**
 - b. Drinking alcoholic beverages is condemned on all levels! **(I Peter 4:3)**
 4. The elders' mindset toward alcohol should be shared by all who follow the Lord!
 5. Since the impact of alcoholic beverages is one of the most destructive practices, it's no wonder that elders would be told to abstain from it!
 - a. His influence throughout the community would be destroyed if it was known that he was given to wine, beer, or other forms of strong drinks!
 - b. It would be difficult for an elder to be "sober-minded" while under the influence of alcoholic drinks! (Qualifications are for daily lives, not just while with members)
 - c. It is impossible for a man to be self-controlled while under the control, or influence, of some intoxicating drink! Can't be qualified if under the influence!
 - c. Alcohol is a dangerous spiral that leads to destruction! Brings one lower and lower and not only destroys the man, but tears apart those around the man!
- B. He must also not be a man who is violent: (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)**
1. Violent as used here means "bruiser, ready for a blow, contentious, quarrelsome person"
 - a. This is the physical reaction that results from an angry and overbearing person
 - b. He cannot have an aggressive disposition – One prone to fighting and brawling
 - c. Other translations render this phrase: "Not violent," "not violent," "not pugnacious," "not a fist fighter," "not given to blows," "Not ready to wound"
 2. One who is qualified to serve as an elder must have control of his temper:
 - a. He cannot be the type of person who responds with insults or wrong doing but

- patient and kind to everyone – even those who do him wrong!
- b. He cannot be the type who is eager to fight at even the slightest perceived wrong
- 3. This word only appears in these two passages; however, you can see the opposite of this response in the example of Jesus Christ! **(I Peter 2:21-23)**
- 4. A man who is violent in his responses will do nothing but destroy a congregation!
 - a. He would be a man who you could not talk reasonably with! You cannot approach him about sin or other problems in his life without him becoming angry!
 - b. If you were to question his decisions he would immediately become defensive!
 - c. He is a man who cannot lead others or be respected in the community because people have seen him blow up in fits of rage!

C. He must be a man who is not greedy for money... not covetous: (I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7)

- 1. The word used here means, “Eager for base gain, greedy for money”
 - a. He is a man who does not obtain wealth in an unlawful or even an immoral manner
 - b. He is not consumed by the desire to gain more and more of this world’s wealth
 - c. Other translations say, “Not greedy of filthy lucre,” “Not desirous of filthy gain,” “No lover of money,” “Not addicted to dishonest gain,” “Not making gain by dishonest methods,” “Not greedy for dishonest money”
 - d. This qualification is actually a combination of two ideas: That he is not greedy for the gain of money and that he is not making it by unlawful means!
- 2. This does not mean that a man cannot be rich and be an elder! **(I Tim. 6:9-10)**
 - a. Money is not inherently evil! It’s the love of money and the dangers that are associated with such a passion that the Bible condemns!
 - b. Ask, “Has his riches come through dishonest means?” “Is he a content man?”
- 3. This is something ALL Christians are warned about **(Hebrews 13:5; Eph. 5:5)**
- 4. Elders cannot be men whose motivation in life is tied up in material wealth!
 - a. If this is his drive in life, he will not spend the amount of time and effort that is necessary in carrying out his work as a shepherd!
 - b. He will likely not have a sharing attitude in the proper use of the Lord’s money!
 - c. If he has been guilty of the dishonest or immoral gain of wealth in the business realm, why wouldn’t he carry the same over to his decisions for the church?
 - d. Elders also, like preachers, can be supported by the congregation – His desire to serve as an elder must not be financially motivated! **(I Peter 5:2)**

D. He must be a man who is not quarrelsome: (I Tim. 3:3)

- 1. This means that this type of man is “not contentious, abstaining from fighting”
 - a. The idea is that he abstains from contention – whether physical or spiritual
 - b. Webster: “To quarrel or speak noisily and indecently. To roar, as water, to make a noise... uproar; loud or angry contention.”
 - c. Other translations read: “Not a brawler, not contentious, not quarrelsome, averse to contention, averse to strife”
- 2. This is something that should be characteristic of all Christians! Christians shouldn’t be the type of people who are prone to arguments and fighting! **(Titus 3:2)**
- 3. This does not mean that he will not stand up & passionately defend the truth **(Jude 3)**
 - a. Some elders seem to have confused “not quarrelsome” with “compromising”
 - b. When it comes to truth & error, sin & righteousness, and justice he cannot simply sweep things under the rug but handle problems straight on!
- 4. Quarrelsome elders will divide & destroy the eldership & the congregation! **(James 3:16)**
 - a. The last thing a church needs in its leadership is a person who has a chip on his shoulder or who is trigger happy to fight over everything done or said!
 - b. If someone hurts his feelings he will not run over them in anger or personal hurt
 - c. **Illustration:** You go to this man about something, his entire demeanor changes, and he suddenly verbally attacks you or your motives!

E. He must be a man who is not self-willed: (Titus 1:7)

1. This means that the men must not be “self pleasing, self-willed, or arrogant”
 - a. Isn't one who considers himself before others, is stubborn, headstrong, or proud
 - b. He is not a man who makes demands for selfish reasons – Who demands his way in all matters regardless of the outcome!
 - c. Other translations render this passage as... “Not stubborn, not proud, not self-indulgent, not arrogant, not presumptuous, not self-pleasing”
2. One good way to see if a man is self-willed is to look at his relationship with his wife!
3. Peter uses the same word to describe those who despise & reject authority **(2 Peter 2:10)**
4. This qualification really hits at the foundation of Christianity and serving the Lord!
 - a. We have to be willing to submit “my will” to the will of God revealed in His word
 - b. One who is self-willed doesn't care what God's word says but wants what he wants & ultimately will do whatever he can to get it! He always has to have his way!
 - c. You almost always can see this in their attitude toward God's moral instructions before it is present in their actions!
5. When an elder is unwilling to submit his will, you will have chaos within the eldership!
 - a. He cannot truly lead because his example betrays him! He sees plenty of problems in other people's lives but is blinded to his own sins and failures!
 - b. It's called an elder-ship for a reason! They work TOGETHER in leading the church – A self-willed man doesn't “work with others” but dictates others!
 - c. When dealing with the members of the congregation he is unwilling to give up his own desires on anything because “I'm an elder!”

F. He must be a man who is not quick tempered: (Titus 1:7)

1. This means he is not a man who is irritable, passionate, prone to anger, testy, soon angry
 - a. If one is hot-headed, quick to blow his top, he is not fit to lead God's people!
 - b. He must not be or quickly stirred by angry passions, easily irritated or provoked
2. Not being quick tempered should be characteristic of all Christians! **(James 1:19)**
3. This does not mean that he would never be angry! There is a place for anger!
 - a. His anger would grow from a violation of God's will by those who know to do better!
 - b. Even in his anger he would respond with control and with consideration of others!
 - c. When there is a cause for anger – He is still SLOW to anger! Hearing out all sides and understanding the situation before he responds!
3. It should be a given that a man who cannot govern his own self should not be put in a role to govern a congregation of the Lord! **(Prov. 17:14)**
 - a. Some elders feel they must have rages of anger from time to time to show their power and authority over a congregation – To prove a point!
 - b. Issuing demands in anger is not a spiritual means of achieving any goal
 - c. Elders must not be the type of people who would get easily riled up when approached with problems or if his feelings got hurt

CONCLUSION: We should not only be concerned with what an elder should be like, but also what he should not be like. Remember... these are God's qualifications not ours. We are not free to overlook or to lessen their meaning or importance!