

SCRIPTURAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR AN ELDER

The New Testament gives some guidelines for choosing elders in **1 Timothy 3:1-7 (and Titus 1:5-9)**. These Scriptures include moral qualities, because high character is vital when leading Jesus' church, but it also includes marks of leadership a man must demonstrate, because he must be able to lead others in the Christian walk.

- 1. "ABOVE REPROACH"** The character of his life is such that there is "no handle" for someone to grab onto that would make it hard to respect his leadership.
- 2. "THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE"** The Greek literally says, "A one-woman man," which means devoted completely to but one woman. He is completely faithful and single minded in this matter.
- 3. "TEMPERATE"** This means self-controlled or self-restrained and sound in judgment so as not to be diverted by false teachings. He reacts according to biblical principles and doctrine.
- 4. "SELF-CONTROLLED"** This means a quality of mind that is serious, earnest, and sound. It is the opposite of lightness and frivolity in matters of Scripture.
- 5. "RESPECTABLE"** This phrase comes from the Greek word "kosmos," or "world," meaning an orderly arrangement, not chaos. This refers to a life that is systematic and well ordered, which is the expression of a well-ordered mind.
- 6. "HOSPITABLE"** It means he loves to have guests in his home and to practice serving others. (Also see Titus 1:8)
- 7. "ABLE TO TEACH"** This means that he must have a good grasp of doctrine and be able to properly handle God's Word so he can effectively communicate it to others. (Also see Titus 1:9). This enables him to perform his primary task, namely, "To shepherd God's flock" (1 Peter 5:2).
- 8. "NOT GIVEN TO DRUNKENESS"** An elder must be free from any form of substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, etc.) or any kind of addiction which might take control of his life, cause belligerent and irresponsible behavior, and cause weaker Christians to stumble.
- 9. "NOT VIOLENT"** This simply means that the man must not be a quick-tempered person

who strikes back with physical violence to settle arguments.

- 10. "GENTLE"** This means a personal disposition that will avoid contention. It describes one who is approachable and willing to learn from others, hence not jealous for his own authority, but doing a work for the ministry he can perform, not for the power he can wield. He does not demand his personal agenda. (see also Titus 1:7).
- 11. "NOT QUARRELSOME"** (see also Titus 1:7). This denotes a person who is not contentious, not offensively aggressive insisting on his rights; but one who loves peace, and who keeps his temper under control. (However, this does not mean the weak policy of "peace at any price.")
- 12. "NOT A LOVER OF MONEY"** This means he is not to have his attention fixed upon the monetary reward. This is one who handles faithfully with good returns, that which belongs to God and which God has entrusted to him (namely God's Word and Church).
- 13. "WHO MANAGES HIS OWN FAMILY WELL"** This means one who stands at the head of his house as example and leader, taking the initiative and leadership in both material and spiritual things. 1 Timothy 3:5 asks that if a man can't lead his family, how will he lead the church of God?
- 14. "HIS CHILDREN OBEY HIM WITH PROPER RESPECT"** (see also Titus 1:6). This means more than compelled subjection. He cares for his kids' spiritual, emotional, and physical needs in a way that is worthy of their respect.
- 15. "NOT A RECENT CONVERT"** The overseer must not be a new believer. Maturity in the faith is required.
- 16. "GOOD REPUTATION WITH OUTSIDERS"** He is known in the community with the same godly reputation he has in the church.

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