

Let's take our Bibles and turn to Titus 1:5-9. Open your Bible and stand as we read God's word together. We're in a series called Doing Good, and the message we're beginning this morning, we'll wrap it up next Sunday morning, is called It Starts at the Top, because these are verses that address the need for well-qualified elders to give leadership to God's people. Follow along, Titus 1:5-9. "For this reason I," that's Paul, "left you," that's Titus, "in Crete that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you. If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of dissipation or insubordination, for a bishop must be blameless as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word, as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine to both exhort and convince those who contradict."

You may be seated. It starts at the top, Titus 1:5-9. In the field of medicine, in the arena of sports, in the world of business, in the halls of government, in the theater of war, you know, and I know, that we need well-qualified people serving and leading. In any of these arenas, in any of these disciplines, excellence, efficiency, effectiveness, requires the best person for the job at hand. In talking about the field of medicine, I like the story that comes out of a prestigious medical school where some of the students were beginning to kind of grumble about the fact that some of their required courses had no direct relevance to their field of study. In fact, one of the students got so bold as to go to one of their professors and challenge the curriculum and its requirements. He said, "You know what, why do we do courses like physics when it has nothing to do with our field of study?"

Well, the professor looked at this student and he said, "Because the study of physics saves lives." The student was rather stumped by that and said, "What do you mean, that doesn't make any sense? What does physics got to do with my field of study in the area of medicine?" Well, with a sly grin the professor patiently replied, "Because studying physics ensures that lazy and ignorant people don't become doctors." It's a good point. Every vocation, every field of study, every arena of life where service is rendered, or leadership is exercised, requires prerequisites, requires certain proficiencies.

I would suggest to you this morning that church ministry, and especially pastoral leadership, is no different. That's why in the New Testament, in the very passage we're going to come and look at this morning, there are some fundamental and foundational requirements that are set forth for any man who would occupy the pastoral office. Here we have got a criteria by which the measure if a man is well qualified to exercise leadership over the church. This is one of several passages that outline these fundamental prerequisites. You want to know what the other passages are, is 1 Timothy 3:1-7; it's Acts 20:28-38, and 1 Peter 5:1-4.

You know this from sports, to the military, to work, to family, everything rises and falls on the level of leadership. Everything starts at the top. That's why the church needs to be led by men whose lives are compelling, men who can, indeed, compel commitment and involvement from God's people, by the integrity of their lives, the authenticity of their love, the quality of their homes, the potency of their theology, and the clarity of their leadership. It all starts at the top. Success flows downward from leadership.

So, let's come and look at this passage as Paul outlines some of the criteria by which you and I can measure those who ought to occupy the pastoral office. Now, let's set the text in it's context, something we do on a regular basis here at Kindred. We're looking at verses 5-9. We have already considered

verses 1-4, and shortly we will look at verses 10-16. The verses we're looking at this morning and next Sunday are kind of sandwiched in between these two ideas.

You've got the good example of Paul, and you've got the bad example of false teachers, false teachers who are talkers and deceivers, insubordinate, whose minds need to be stopped. Verse 10, they subvert whole households, teaching those things which ought not to be taught. So, here's what Paul is saying to Titus, "You know what, I need you to follow my example, and I need you to reject their example, and I need you to be an example. Since you're only one person, here's what you need to do; you need to hand-pick qualified men who will do across the island of Crete what I'm asking you to do." That's the context. "Titus, follow my example, reject the example of false teachers, and get other men on board who will do the same thing across the churches in Crete."

If you remember, we've called this series, Doing Good, and if you remember verses 1-4 we said this, "Doing good is the product of the work of the Word." Well, I've got a second thought for you as we work our way through this little poignant epistle. Doing good requires following good leaders. Do you want to live a life of good works; do you want to develop a life of goodness and godliness that impacts your culture? Well, then follow good leaders who will lead you a good example, who will teach you doctrine and point you towards Christ.

So, let's begin to look at this passage here, one to [outline 00:06:50], we've got the absence of pastoral leadership; we've got the appointment of pastoral leadership, and we've got the assessment of pastoral leadership. Let's see how far we go. Let's look at the absence of pastoral leadership. Let's make no mistake about the fact that Paul didn't dump Titus on Crete. There was a purpose to him being left on that island; He was there to protect and prosper the gospel. Here's what Paul says, "For this reason I left you, ..." Implication I was once with you there, but I left you there. "For this reason I left you in Crete that you might set in order the things that are lacking and appoint elders in every city, as I commanded you." Paul is indicating that there was an absence of pastoral leadership among the churches of that island. Homer, the Greek poet, tells us that the island of Crete was made up of 100 cities. This was a good-sized island.

If you remember back to our introduction from Acts 2:11, we made an argument that many of these churches were started by Jewish converts to Christianity returning from the Day of Pentecost. That's one source of the emergence of these churches. Another source was Paul and Titus directly, perhaps, founded some of these churches while Paul was on the island. But, now he has left the island. Titus has been left to do what hasn't been done, to finish what is left unfinished. So, that's the absence of leadership. Two things come out of it. Number one, the correcting of church life and number two, the selecting of church leaders. That's what Titus has been left to do.

The first thing you'll see is he is to set in order the things that are lacking. Now, those are mixed metaphors, so let's pick it apart. He's to set in order things, things in general from opposing the opponents of the gospel, to instructing the faithful, to encouraging the discouraged, to promoting godliness, to instilling eschatological hope in the rapture of the church and the blessed hope of the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior. Set things in order.

By the way, that's a Greek word that gives us our words orthopedics and orthodontics. It means to set things straight. What does an orthopedic surgeon do? He sets bones straight. What does an orthodontic dentist do? He sets teeth straight. That's why I try to remind my girls if they've got a frown on their face, "Hey girls, I need to see that \$4000 smile." Okay, that's our word, orthodontics, orthopedics. It means to

set things straight, put them in order, and that's speaking in general, although that which was left unfinished is clearly the appointment of elders in every city. That's what Titus has to finish. That was what was left unfinished. That's what was left incomplete, which would be a reminder, by the way, the work of the ministry is never done; we're always fixing; we're always finishing stuff.

That's why one of the Puritans said of pastors and church leaders, "The minister will never find his work the next day as does the carpenter." What does he mean by that? Well, typically the carpenter if he's working maybe on a cabinet, or a piece of furniture, he knocks off about 6 o'clock in the day and goes home. When he gets back to his workshop in the morning there it is exactly as he left it, because it's inanimate; it just sits there waiting to be worked on. But, that's not true of pastoring. The devil meddles in God's work. God's people take two steps forward, one step back. The minister never finds his work as does the carpenter, and that's true. "Titus, can you straighten out a few things, and can you finish what was not finished by appointing elders in the cities? I want you to be part of the next step in the maturing of Christians on the island of Crete," because the Great Commission isn't just about making decisions, it's about making disciples, and that's hard work.

Now, I want to make an application and move on. Titus teaches us that the consolidation of church life, and the Christian life is a matter of importance. "Hey, Titus, we didn't get it all done. Now, we got some things; we achieved some things. People got saved; we got baptized; we got them into some accountability group; we started teaching them the Word of God, but there are some things that are not finished yet. We need to put good leaders over them; we need to get them to another level of maturity; we've got to help them think through how they're gonna be salt and light in their culture." So, Paul is saying to Titus, "You know what, consolidate the church, consolidate Christians, help them to go on to the next natural step."

That's a good reminder. We all need to protect our progression. It's so easy to go backwards in the Christian life. Have you noticed that, by the way? Two steps forward, one step back? Have you woken up to the fact how shockingly ill-disciplined you and I can be? We can sin in ways that surprise us on a given day after a day before that was so good? It's a battle; it's something you're constantly working at. You can go forward, and if you don't consolidate that and fix what's lacking to go forward some more, you'll go backwards.

Isn't that what Galatians is all about? Paul says, "I'm shocked. You guys are so soon removed from the gospel. I'm gone and I'm hearing your abandoning the gospel?" Galatians 5:7, "You did run well but who did hinder you?" What about the book of Hebrews, that's all about the danger of going backwards, of drifting. Hebrews 2:1, "Pay attention. Give diligence to this lest you drift." That's a nautical term. If you have a boat and you tie it to the jetty or to the quayside, if you don't tie that knot well the mooring becomes loose and all of a sudden the boat begins to drift and the tide carries it out to sea. That's our Word. Don't drift; don't become unmoored; so easy to get carried away from Christ.

Listen, there's no such a thing as marking time or treading water in your pursuit of Christ. Just write that down. You don't get a day off; a day off is a day in which you go backwards, lose ground. I love that little phrase, "Fix what is lacking." I wrote that down to myself; I've been thinking about it. What is lacking in my life? What's lacking in my walk with Christ, my prayer life, my disciplines? What is lacking in my marriage, my love for my wife, my parenting? What is lacking in my personal development? What is lacking in my physical and mental health or strength? You got to ask yourself that all the time, what's lacking? Then, to determine what's lacking and fix it. There's no time to waste. Growing cannot be lost.

What does Jesus say in one of the churches in Asia in Revelation 3:2, "Strengthen those things that remain and are ready to die." How challenging is that? Our prayer life can die; our commitment to studying the Bible can die; our passion for souls can die; our love for Jesus and worship can die. Got to work at it. Didn't Tozer talk about the hunger of the wilderness? Listen to this, "The neglected heart will soon be a heart overrun with worldly thoughts. A neglected life will soon become a moral chaos. The church that is not jealously protected by mighty intercession and sacrificial labors will become, before long, the abode of every evil bird and the hiding place for unsuspected corruption. The creeping wilderness will soon take over that church that trusts in its own strength and forgets to watch and pray."

You get his analogy. I mean, we've all seen it in our own gardens; leave your garden unattended and what does it become? A wilderness. Wildernesses are hungry; they'll spread unless you impede them, unless you cultivate the ground that you have, watering it and tending it, and weeding it. It's the same in the spiritual life. One of my favorite bible teachers is my mother, not that she's ever formally taught a Bible study, or preached from a pulpit, but she holds court in her kitchen. When I was a young Christian I loved to go as she held court, and as I would listen to her wisdom, as I negotiated for a piece of her sponge cake, and there she would hold court, and as I would stick my hand in the mixing bowl, or whatever the case may be, she would say, "Now, Philip, remember."

One day she said, "Philip, remember. I want you to remember something my old pastor, Pastor Hugh Ward, taught us at Great Victoria Street Baptist Church in Belfast. He said to us in our early days as Christians, "The Christian life is like riding a bike uphill without brakes; you're either going up or you're coming down." Forward or backward, those are the choices. It was a good word, cake or no cake. It's a good word. It stayed with me my whole life; I'm either going forward or I'm going backwards. There's no treading water, no day off. You can't consolidate your Christian life and walk away from it for several hours and think it's gonna be the same when you get back.

Here's another thing, not only do you have the crafting of church life you have the selecting of church leaders. One of the things that was left unfinished by Paul, and he's left Titus to complete it, is the appointment of elders in every city. Titus was to organize the church for future impact. Elders had not yet been appointed in every city, and that was an apostolic pattern. Write it down, look it up later, Acts 14:23, where we read that wherever the apostles went they appointed elders in every city. That's a New Testament pattern. Every New Testament church worth its name is a church that has godly elders at the forefront leading the charge.

Now, why would that have been left unfinished? Got to question Paul, "Why didn't you do it when you were there?" Well, I would assume at least one answer to that question might be time had to go by, because these converts were back from the Day of Pentecost, but they're novices. If Paul and Titus had directly seen people come to faith in Jesus Christ, none of them were ready-made leaders; they needed time to mature. One of Paul's benchmarks, according to 1 Timothy 3:7, when it comes to an elder, a bishop, or an overseer, all interchangeable terms, he's not to be a novice. He's not to be a new Christian, or a recent convert. They're enthusiastic; they're gung ho for Jesus; we love that about new converts. Don't pour cold water on them, by the way, ever; let them be. Let them be a little reckless; they'll find their feet. You nurture them. But, they're not ready for prime time.

Time has got to go by, and over time they'll mature and you'll be able to look at a congregation and see a man who loves his wife; you'll see a man who's got his house in order; you'll see a man that's got a good reputation in the community; you'll look at that man and he's governed by Jesus Christ as Lord, and his life is marked by self-control and godliness. He's your guy. So, time had to go by. Isn't that what

Paul says also in 1 Timothy 5:17-22? "Lay hands on no man suddenly." That doesn't mean you can't go up behind someone at a Bible study and put your hand on their shoulder. That's not what that verse is about; it's about laying hands in terms of setting leaders apart.

Paul is saying, don't do that quickly because some people are not ready for it and, frankly, life will teach you this, and this is something we don't often think about. The presence of a bad leader does more damage to a church than the absence of a good leader. Better to wait; better to want what you don't have than to not want what you do have in a bad leader. I think it was Alistair Begg spoke of a Northern Irish friend of his by the name of T. S. Mooney. He was 70 years old; he was a Presbyterian elder up in Londonderry in Northern Ireland, and he never married. One day Alistair asked T. S. Mooney why he had never married, and he had this classic response. "The desirable was unattainable and the attainable was undesirable." That's why he was a bachelor. If you kind of apply that to marriage and ministry the point is what? Don't rush into marriage, rather want what you don't have then not want what you do have.

Same in ministry. Wait for a godly man to rise up, having been produced by God the Holy Spirit. But, it does reinforce the importance of elders. I want to quickly answer a question, "Why elders?" Why should we have elders? Why must we look for elders? Why would Paul say to Timothy, "Appoint elders in every city where there's a church." Well, number one, because that's the pattern of the New Testament. Don't we want to be a New Testament church? Well, let's do what the New Testament church did. It's clear that as soon as a church was established, as soon as they could they looked for well-qualified leaders to take the lead. Acts 14:23, "They appointed elders in every city." Here we've got Paul writing to one of his apostolic disciples and delegates, Titus, and saying, "Hey, you need to make a priority of getting this straight; get leaders in place in those churches," shepherds, overseers.

Not only do we have the pattern of the New Testament church as a kind of implication of that, number two, it was the apostles' succession plan; it's the conviction of this church that there are no apostles today, or prophets today. Ephesians 2:20, "Therein the foundation of the church," that was a temporary spiritual gift and office, and that is gone. Here's what I find interesting, everywhere those apostles went they hand-picked godly men to lead in their absence, because they saw that their day was coming to an end. They were a generation of eyewitnesses to Jesus Christ; they were a special core of men hand-picked by Christ for a special time-limited assignment, and that was coming to an end. So, what did they do? They had a succession plan. Let's get elders in every church in every city. You know, they talk today about apostolic succession. Catholics will tell us that's the Pope. Episcopalians will tell us that's their bishops. I think the nearest thing to apostolic succession is godly elders in any local church. That was the apostles' succession plan.

Number three, it safeguards the rule of Christ in His church. Study your Bible, God always mediates his rule through human instruments who are fit vessels for His use. God uses human government to exercise his rule over society. God takes mum and dad to exercise His rule over the family, and the children. God takes godly men and uses them to exercise His rule over the church. That's why these men must be well qualified; that's why they must be under shepherds to the chief shepherd, men submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ; men living beneath, and living out, the authority of God's Word in their home, in their lives.

Number four, it's one of two distinguishable church offices. The church, fundamentally, is an organism, but it is an organization; it needs to be led; it needs to be structured; it needs to be managed like a home. That's why the elder must be able to manage his own home, because if he doesn't manage his own home how would he manage the church? So, whether the church is an organism, it's an

organization, and there are two offices that help that organization, elder, deacon. Philippians 1:1 where Paul writes to the bishops and deacons at Philippi.

Number five, given that distinction it promotes the biblical rule of deacons. Why do we need elders? We need elders doing what elders are called to do so that that helps deacons to understand what they ought to be doing lest they do the work of an elder. Those are two distinct offices with two distinct roles. We need elders because we need deacons, and if we have elders doing what they ought to do; deacons will do what they ought to do, and there won't be a mismatch.

Then, number six, it produces a well-led, bred, and fed church. If a plural body of man, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, shepherd the flock, serve the body, teach the Word, protect signed doctrine, guard the flock against error. They do all of these things. What do you have? You have a well-led, well bred, well fed, body of believers. That's my answer to why elders. It reminds me of the story of a church banquet where a deacon was asked to give thanks for the food. He looked around the room, realized there were no pastors there, so he prefaced his remarks by asking the people to stand, and here's what he said, "There being no pastors present, let's give thanks." Now, he didn't mean anything by that, but there are some people actually would say, "Amen," to that.

There are some models of ministry emerging in the church where people don't believe in pastors, any form of hierarchy or rule over the church. I think that's come out of some people's experience where they were hurt by abusive leaders. I understand that, but don't let your experience trump the Word of God. I think there are plenty of reasons to have elders to help to rule over us as the body of Christ. I experienced that when I went to Emmanuel Baptist Church; I followed a pastor who was discovered having relationships with prostitutes that covered several years of his ministry. June and I walked into that buzzsaw probably a little naïve for the damage that had done. I remember clearly within a week or two talking to one of the pastor's grown daughter who said to me, "I'll never trust you." It kind of offended me and then as June and I talked she said, "You need to understand where that girl's coming from. She's been abused and let down."

One of the joys of leaving that ministry was, after five years that same girl come up and said, "Pastor, thank you for restoring my trust in leadership." I understand, but don't let your experience, don't let your hurt, don't let a bad example, rule out the rule of an elder in the life of the church, and don't let the culture inform you rather than the Bible. There's an anti-authoritarianism spreading throughout society that if we're not careful will seep into the church.

Let's move on. The appointment of leadership. So, we've got the absence of pastoral leadership, what about the appointment of pastoral leadership. Well clearly that was the role given to Titus. "Set in order the things that are lacking and appoint elders in every city as I directed or commanded you." The word command or direct has military overtones; it's a word used for a commander giving orders to his troops, or an emperor giving orders to his citizens. Pretty strong word. So, here's a directive. What is it? It's that in every city where a church is found ... Remember, this is the island of 100 cities. We're not saying there's a hundred churches, but in every city where a church was found Titus had to try and identify well-qualified men to put over that ministry. I like what Robert Yarbrough in his Pastoral Epistles Commentary says. "Titus was in charge of putting others in charge."

Now, there's four things we want to look at, only do one this morning. As we look at this sense of appointment, there are the persons, the plurality, the process, the purpose. What do I mean? Well, there's the persons, who ought to be put in charge? Then, it seems that that could be done in numbers;

there ought to be a plurality of people in leadership. The process, who gets to appoint them, and the purpose of their appointment; what does an elder do?

I want to look at the persons. That's all we'll cover for the time that remains. I'm just gonna cut to the quick, to the chase. The persons, I believe, that ought to be in the office of elder and fulfill the role of pastor, are men; real, righteous, responsible men, men who have got their lives and act together; mature men, passionate, lovers of their wives, men who are effective and faithful fathers, men who are good leaders in their homes and community, men who have the respect of those around them. Elders are real, righteous, and responsible men.

I want to make an argument here that from the New Testament it is clear to me that the pastoral office ought to be occupied by qualified men only. It's a men-only club, if I might put it that way. It's not a role for women; it's not a place for women. Now, let me say this by way of qualification; it is qualified men. They are not qualified to be elders simply because they're men; it is men only, but they are to be qualified men. Now, I realize in today's society, and feminized culture, I've just told pulled a pin on a hand grenade, but that's okay. I'm gonna get howls of protest from some quarters; I'll be categorized as out of touch; I'll be pegged as holding a position that belongs to a less-enlightened age; I will be charged with sexism and misogyny. But, as unpopular as that might be, in today's world it is my belief and conviction, I hope they're rooted in scripture, that the pastoral office is for men only. There are no apostles and prophets today, because they are gone, and there should be no women pastors, because it's forbidden.

Now, let me say this right away, that my position and the position of men only in the pastoral office is not an endorsement of the totality of the church's behavior towards women. I'll be first to admit that the church across its history has underappreciated, and overlooked, the role of women in its life. God has gifted women; God has got specific roles for them that enlarge and enhance the life of the church. I can hear the heartbreak of Florence Nightingale, a very gifted woman, who said in her day, "For women she has ..." What? Speaking of the church? "I have no case for theological discoveries. I would have given her my head, my heart, my hands. She would not have them. She did not know what to do with them. She told me to go back and crochet in my mother's drawing room, or if I was tired of that to marry and look well at the head of my husband's table. 'You may go to the Sunday School if you like it,' the church said, but you gave me no training even for that. She gave me neither work to do for her, nor education for it."

It's true. The church has done a poor job in recognizing the God-given roles, and responsibilities, of women in the church. So, ladies, hear me, because I've got a wife and three daughters, and I hope my track record is I have never tried to suppress their giftedness. I want all that God has for them; I want them to express their giftedness in all spheres of life, in society, in the home, and in the church. I want what God wants for them, but I know this, God doesn't want for them to be elders in the church. But, that's not to say I am in any way diminishing a woman's dignity, or her giftedness, so, hear me. It's not a denial of the crucial role of women in the life of the church.

I'm gonna make an argument in a few minutes here that women ought not to teach men in the church, but that doesn't mean they can't teach. In fact, I think a woman can teach alongside her husband in private discipleship. What about Priscilla and Aquila who taught Apollos to be more perfect in the scriptures? What about a woman teaching her children? What about an older woman teaching a younger woman, according to Titus 2? So, we're not denying the role of women in the church; we're not denying their dignity; their equality; their giftedness. We're not even denying that they can teach; we're

just qualifying what God has qualified. They are our equals, but we have differences in functionality. I believe strongly, and so does this church, in the role of male leadership in the home and the church.

Now, there could be several arguments quickly for male elders, male pastors. This isn't exhaustive. We're in the middle of a series; this isn't a series by itself, so I'll kind of hop, skip, and jump. Hopefully I covered enough ground to make you think, reinforce my own conviction, and this church's stance, but maybe also encourage you to read up on this issue, talk to our elders, our pastors. We'll have books we can recommend you on this.

Number one, here's the first argument. Jesus selected and trained 12 men. That's Luke 6:13. You say, "That's rather obvious, Pastor." You're right, it is rather obvious, and it's something you shouldn't discount. But, someone's gonna argue; this is one of the arguments that comes up, "But Jesus is just reflecting his day," where women were sat upon and kind of held down. You really believe that about Jesus? Do you believe He's just reflecting the culture? I don't believe that for several reasons. Number one, according to Luke 6:12, "He prayed all night long about the choice of those disciples." The Father directed Him, not the culture. The Father directed Him to pick 12 men to be His disciples.

Number two, again if Jesus isn't reflecting conventions and customs of His day, because in Matthew 19:4-5 when He's addressing the issue of divorce, He begins by saying, "It was not so from the beginning." Let's go back to the beginning. This is where we need to start. God made them male and female. Jesus accepts gender distinction. Jesus wouldn't for a second embrace transgenderism, and He believes in gender distinction in terms of roles, because Adam was made and God said, "It's not good that he should be alone. I'm gonna make for him someone comparable to him, a fellow human being of the same essence equal to him, in terms of reflecting my image and my glory, but her role alongside her husband is to help him," helper, not leader. Jesus, I think, would embrace that, because He goes back to those issues in Matthew 19.

I've got another thing, do you really believe Jesus just surrendered to the conventions of His day then? Please explain to me, when we studied Mark's gospel, why He was always in trouble with religious authorities? He didn't always toe the party line. What about the Sermon on the Mount? "You have heard it said, but I say to you I'm gonna turn that upside down and inside out. Whatever that convention is, whatever that commandment is I'm gonna take it further; I'm gonna take it to another place; murder, anger, adultery, lust." Come on, Jesus was never one for toeing the party line.

Here's number two. The 12 followed the same example. What do I mean? Well, when the church had problems in Acts 6, we think it's the prototype of the office of deacon of the church servant. When they needed help, the apostles told the church to what? Pick seven men; full of the Holy Ghost, and faith, and wisdom. Again, are you saying that's just convention? No, I think they're reflecting the wisdom of their Master. They're reflecting the pattern of scripture, and since they appointed men as potential deacons, or servants, within the church, my assumption is in Acts 14:23 that when they appointed elders they appointed men also, full of faith and the Holy Ghost. Jesus' death in the book of Acts is in the history books, and His resurrection, and we see them carrying on the pattern, because Jesus' death did not abolish gender distinctions within leadership and life in the early church.

Number three. If you read first Timothy 3, and Titus 1 we'll look at again next Sunday, all the adjectives used in the list of qualifications are in the masculine. He's to be the husband of one wife; He's to be a good father to his children; He's to be this, and He's to be that. See them in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, and you know why we see them in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 because back in 1 Timothy 2:11-15 Paul says this, "I do not

permit a woman to teach or have authority over men." Now, what's the role of an elder? Fundamentally it's to exercise oversight and management of the church, authority under Christ. One of the great elements of that role is to be able to teach. How does a woman fit into that role if Paul forbids her to take authority over men and to teach men. I've said that doesn't mean she can't teach, she can. There are gifted women teachers. I've read their books, and I've heard them. Their primary role is to work alongside their husband in individual discipleship, and their primary role is to teach other women, but they cannot take the office of elder or pastor.

Number four, quickly. People will point to Galatians 3:28. That's a verse that says, "You know what, there's neither male nor female in Christ; we're all one." Absolutely true. I have no problem with that, but the [inaudible 00:39:33] context of that verse has nothing to do with leadership. The context is access to the promises of Abraham, and salvation through those promises. Paul is not suggesting the erasure of role distinctions. We can be one; we can be equal but have different functions. You know, our theology teaches us that the Trinity are one; the Father is equal to the Son; the Son is Equal to the Father; the Spirit the same. But, if you go to 1 Corinthians 11, you'll find that the head of Christ was God. Are we saying that Jesus is inferior to God? No. We're saying that within the economy of the Trinity in relation to redemption Jesus willfully submitted Himself to the Father in a function as coming to be our sacrifice for sin. He wasn't less than the Father, but functionally he submitted to the Father. It's the same between men and women. No woman is less than any man, but her roles are different. Just because she submits to those roles doesn't mean she's less than the man she's submitting to, anymore than Jesus was less than the Father. Get the argument?

Here's the last thought. Male leadership at home points to male leadership in the family of God. Now in Titus we're told that this man is to be the husband of one wife; verse 6, having faithful children; not accused of dissipation and insubordination. We'll come back and look at that next week. If you go to 1 Timothy you'll see that he's to manage his house well. Now, in that home we would make an argument that he is the leader of that home; he's the head of that home. In fact, Titus makes that clear. Look at chapter 2, verse 4 speaking of women, older women teaching younger women; they are to admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discrete, chaste homemakers, good, ..." Notice. "... obedient to their own husbands." Ephesians 5:22-24 the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, and God is the head of Christ. It's all these distinctions of function within God's purposes and plans. But you get the point. If the man is the leader in the home one of the qualifications for leading the church is that he is to be that kind of man at home. There's this parallel; there is this direct parallel. Leadership at home points to male leadership in the family of God.

Last point. This isn't exhaustive, remember, just suggestive. There is no reference anywhere in the New Testament to a female elder. Zilch. Zip. Now, you're gonna say, "Hold on a minute, Pastor, you're the first to say that's an argument for silence." You're right. It's not the best argument. My first five were better, but a deafening silence, deafening silence. Again, I'm arguing for the wonderful contribution that women make, and the Bible doesn't blush in it's cultures to raise and elevate women. The woman in Proverbs 31 is priceless. The Bible celebrates womanhood and motherhood in the home and outside the home. Jesus was ministered to by many women.

Read Paul's letters and he'll always finish with acknowledging this woman and that woman who helped him in the gospel. 1 Timothy 3:8-13 Paul addresses deacons, and I believe he addresses deacons' wives, not deaconesses. But, the issue is this, when there's a role for women to be had the Bible is not slow to point it out. "Hey, here's what women do; here's where women are great; here's where women are gifts

from God; here's where women excel; here's where women ought to be considered priceless." But, there's a silence, deafening silence, on pastoral leadership.

Okay, so I'll finish with this. I don't know how this got past some of the people at Levi Strauss but several years ago they put an ad out about their Dockers, you know their trousers, and it was certainly not politically correct, which was kind of surprising in a confused culture. It was entitled Wear the Pants. I want to read it and we'll rap this up. Here's what the unedited version was from Levi Strauss. "Once upon a time men wore the pants and wore them well. Women rarely had to open doors, and little old ladies never had to cross the street alone. Men took charge because that's what they did, but somewhere along the way the world decided it no longer needed men. Disco by disco, latte by non-fat latte men were stripped of their khakis and left stranded on the road between boyhood and androgyny," ... That means neither a male nor a female.

"But, today there are questions our genderless society has no answers for; the world sits idly by as cities crumble, children misbehave, and those little old ladies remain on one side of the street. For the first time since bad guys we need heroes. We need grownups. We need men to put down the plastic fork and step away from the salad bar." Amen. I love that line anyway. I know what June would say but that's another thing. "We need men to put down the plastic fork, step away from the salad bar, and untie the world from the tracks of complacency. It's time to get your hands dirty; it's time to answer the call to manhood; it's time to wear the pants."

How did that get out of Levi Strauss I have no idea, but it made it for a short time. My friend, Steve [Davey 00:45:51] wrote a commentary on Titus where I got that illustration and he says this, "The church then and now needs men; men who will step up to the plate of duty, swing the bat of integrity, and run the bases of responsibility. Titus is going to issue a search for men."

Father, we thank you for our time in the Word this morning. We pray that as we work our way through this little manual on church living and Christian living that we would heed it's instructions. Help us not to be squeezed into the mold of the world. We live in an androgynous society, a genderless society. Lord, help us as the church to reflect the created order, to submit ourselves to the authority of Jesus Christ, to push back on the culture, not become a pushover in the culture. Lord, help us to see men wear the pants in our homes and in our church. Lord, that in no way means authoritarianism; it in no way means abusing our wives, or women; it means loving servanthood, clear leadership. Help us to embrace that. Help us to wear the pants in that sense, as gentlemen, knights in shining armor, protectors of our homes, providers for our children.

Lord, help us to celebrate the women of our congregation. We thank you for the gift that they are. We mourn that the church at times has undervalued them, and underappreciated them, and underused them. If there are things we haven't yet seen in the life of our own church, help us to see them without violating what we've been taught today. Help us to work together. Help us to fit into your order in life, and the home, and the church. Lord, help us to work on those things that are lacking, for we pray and ask it in Jesus' name, amen.