

Well, let's take our Bibles and turn to Titus. I want us to finish up a sermon we started last week on Titus 1, verses 5 through 9. We're in a series of expositions on the Book of Titus. Hopefully, you'll join us week in and week out as we work our way through this wonderful letter from Paul to Titus. He's on the Isle of Crete. He's in the middle of the Mediterranean. He's been left there by the great apostle to do some work for Jesus Christ. We started to look at verses 5 through 9, where we find the qualifications of a Christian leader. We find the profile of a pastor. Let's stand and read it together, and we'll come back to a message entitled It Starts at the Top.

Titus 1, verse 5. I'm reading from the New King James translation of the Holy Bible, "For this reason, I left you 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 both to exhort and convict those who contradict."

So reads God's word. You may be seated. Keep your Bibles open. A whole lot of Christians and churches got together and they came up with a profile of the perfect pastor. I don't know if you've read this profile, but it goes something like this.

"He preaches only 20 minutes, but he covers the whole Bible. He condemns sin, but never hurts anybody's feelings. He makes \$100 a week, wears good clothes, has a nice family, drives a nice car, and gives \$50 a week to the church. He's 26 years old, but has been preaching for 30 years. He's tall, slim, short, heavyset, handsome, has one brown eye, one blue eye, parts his hair right down the middle. The left side is dark and straight, and the right side is blond and wavy. He has a burning desire to work with teenagers. Spends all his time with the older folks. He smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously dedicated to his work. He calls on church members 15 times a day, spends all his time evangelizing the unchurched, and he never is out of the office."

Well, you realize that's a bit of a tongue-in-cheek profile of the pastor, and it's kind of poking fun at the idea that there are 10 of these unrealistic expectations for church leaders. Everybody's got a say on what they think a pastor ought to be, what a leader ought to look like. To put us out of our misery and to stop us from falling into that kind of trap, we thank God that the word of God puts the guesswork out of leadership and what the profile of a pastor ought to be, because if you were with us last time, we started to look at Titus 1, verses 5 through 9. This is one of several passages in the Bible that actually gives us the profile of a pastor. Look no further if you want the answer to the question, what does a pastor do and who ought a pastor to be? It's all here. You'll also find it in 1 Timothy 3, verses 1 to 7; Acts chapter 20, verses 28 to 38; and 1 Peter 5, verses 1 to 4.

We're realizing here that a leader is to be these things. We put the text in its context. We saw that Paul has left Timothy to appoint elders in every city. Paul realizes that the Gospel work in the Isle of Crete is too big for any one man and needs to enlist a whole army of good, qualified leaders that will help manage the work of God, will help shepherd the flocks that are dotted throughout this island in the Mediterranean. We started to look at it. We came up with an outline, the absence of pastoral leadership, because in verse 5, we read, "For this reason, I, Paul, left you in Crete. Implication, I was there, but I had to leave. You're left. Here's what I want you to do. For this reason, I left you in Crete that you should set in order the things that are lacking."

Now there were many things that were lacking in these young churches that were probably established either by Paul and Titus directly or by some converted Jews returning from the day of Pentecost. Either way, they're young, they're fledgling, they're weak. They need to be organized. They need to be developed and matured. And you know what? The best way to do that is to put godly men over them. There was an absence of that, and Titus was to fix that by appointing elders in every city.

We looked at the absence of pastoral leadership. Now, we're coming to look at what we started to look at last week, the appointment of leadership, the appointment of pastoral leadership. Titus was left in charge of putting others in charge, and he was to go throughout this island where the church could be found in its many cities. There were 100 cities in this little island, and he was to find a few good men and put them over each assembly of God's people. He was to fill the pastoral office.

We started to look at the appointment, the persons who should be an elder; the plurality, how many; the process, how do you appoint them; and the purpose for which they're being appointed. When he got so far into it ... Now before I pick that up, I want to just remind you that there are three primary titles for a church leader. Two of them are identified here in our text. Look at your Bible and you'll notice one of them in verse 5, "Appoint elders in every city." The church leader is called an elder. We'll come to explain that in a moment. But notice he's given a second title in verse 7, "For a bishop ..." Speaking of the elders, "For a bishop is to be blameless." That's the second word, bishop. The Greek is [foreign language 00:06:55]. It means to oversee, to lead, to rule, to be above. Those are two primary titles.

Now there are two titles, but one man in one ministry. In fact, there's a third title. It's shepherd or pastor. If you study your New Testament, you're going to find that this one office of church leadership, the primary leader in the church, is diversely called, variously described as an elder, a bishop, and as a pastor or shepherd. I'll give you a couple of references to look up in your own time. Acts 20, verse 17 and 28, and then 1 Peter 5, verses 1 to 2. You'll find that Paul addresses a group of men, and he describes that one group of men as elders, overseers, and shepherds. Peter does the same. I just want you to understand that it's three titles, one office. There's not a hierarchy. There's not different levels of leadership where you have a bishop over pastors or whatever. It's all one office described by three titles.

Now if I was to try and maybe explain the meaning of the words in terms of why three titles for the one office, I think it would be fair to say that elder denotes age. It would denote that the man's got to have a certain maturity about him. That's why in 1 Timothy 3 we're told he can't be a novice or a new Christian. He's got to have some miles on the odometer of life. In the best of circumstances, he'll be married, he'll have children, he's a mature man, a mature leader. You'll be able to watch his life. The word elder comes from the synagogue or from the Jewish community, and it usually was described of a man at least 30 years and above. I think the word elder denotes age, maturity. The leader'll be a man who's lived a bit of life, not a novice.

The word bishop denotes activity. It's episcopos, overseer. In Hebrews 13, the elder, the bishop, the pastor would be someone who will give an account for the souls under his charge. This is a man deeply concerned about the spiritual well-being of his congregation. There's a great story about ... I think the man's name is John Welch. He was the son-in-law of John Knox, the great Scottish Presbyterian reformer. His wife wakens up one night and finds him over in the corner with a blanket wrapped around his shoulders. It's freezing. It's the dead of winter in Scotland.

She tells him to come back to his warm bed, but he says, "I can't. I'm praying for my congregation. There are several hundred, and I know not how it is with some of them." What did he mean by that? He's

telling his wife, "You know what? I can't sleep. I'm a bishop. I'm an overseer. I've got people under my charge in my congregation, and you know what? They're not as serious about spiritual things as they ought to be. They're in danger of damnation. I'm concerned about them."

So, the elder denotes age. The bishop denotes activity, and the pastor denotes attitude. The pastor speaks of heart, doesn't it? The shepherd speaks of heart. The shepherd loves his sheep. He's not a hireling. He's not a false shepherd. He's a true shepherd. He protects his sheep. He feeds the sheep, he's concerned for the sheep. He numbers them, names them. If there's one missing, he'll leave the 99 and go and find the one. That's the heart of a pastor. That's the heart of a leader. He's got a love for God's people. He's a people person.

When June and I and the girls came to the United States in 1994, all our worldly belongings were in 28 boxes. June will let you know the majority were books. I think there was 22 boxes of books and six boxes for June's clothes and the kids' toys. I've been paying for that ever since, I can tell you that. Now here's the deal. We were living up in Santa Clarita and we'd just taken on the pastorate of Placerita Baptist Church. One of the deacons, a man the name of Jim [Dougherty 00:11:09], he became a dear friend of our family. He collected me one day in his old, beat-up Ford 250 and we took it down to the docks in Los Angeles to pick up our boxes that were coming through Customs.

On the drive back, I remember him talking about his hope for my ministry. The church had gone through some tough times. He was hoping for a new day. He was excited about June and I and the girls, and he said, "You know what, Philip? You know what's true about a shepherd?" It's the first time I'd ever heard this phrase. You've probably heard it. I'd never heard it before. He said, "You know what's true of a shepherd?" I said, "What, Jim? What's true of a shepherd?" He said, "The shepherds smell of sheep." He was trying to say to me, I think, "I hope you're going to be out among the people. I hope you're going to love this congregation." Because they had had a tough time with the former pastor. He said, "You know what? True shepherds smell of sheep." Because that's what shepherds do. They love their flock. Those are the three titles for the one man and the one office. Elder denotes age. Bishop denotes activity. Pastor denotes attitude.

Now we started to look at the appointment. We looked at the persons, the persons. I'm not going to rehash this, but the whole point of that was that it's our conviction, and I give several reasons as to why that the pastoral officer ought only to be filled by men, by men. That's the persons. We see that here, and you'll see it 1 Timothy 3, that all the adjectives describing this ministry, this pastoral leadership office, are all masculine. We get several reasons of why women should not be pastors, and that's the conviction here at Kindred.

We did correctly point out that's not a denial of the equality of a woman in relation to a man. It's not a denial of God-given giftedness. My point was not to deprecate the dignity of women or their ministry for the Gospel's sake. There may be no room for women in the primary pastoral office and leadership within the church, but there's plenty of room in the church and in society and in the home for women to express their giftedness.

But there's one footnote I want to just add to this, something you maybe not thought about much. Because one of the texts I used in my argument last week was 1 Timothy 2, verse 12, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over men but to be silent in the church." That's Paul's argument in 1 Timothy 2. But just recently, I was addressing some of the young mothers in our church, and I wanted to remind them of both the dignity and the glory of motherhood. Here's a verse, ladies, I'm sure many of

you have maybe not thought about, but I want you to think about it. Write down 1 Timothy 2, verse 15. Let me read this passage and make a quick comment and move on.

Paul's saying this, "I don't permit, I don't suffer, I don't want it to happen. A woman is not to teach or have authority over a man." That rules them out of the pastoral office, because a pastor must be able to teach the church. And Paul forbids that in the case of women teaching men. Just as in the home, in the church, men have the primary leadership role. But listen, "For Adam was formed first, then Eve. Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived fell into transgression. It was Eve that led humanity into sin."

Now notice next, "Nevertheless ..." He's tying his next thought to that thought, "Eve brought humanity into sin. Nevertheless, she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with self-control." What does that mean? Nevertheless, she, that's woman. I don't think it's speaking about Eve. I don't think it's speaking about the Virgin Mary, because we read here in verse 15, "Nevertheless, she will be saved ..." That's future. We're talking about what can happen now and what the impact will be, that which lies ahead. "She will be saved in childbearing if they .." We're not talking Eve or Mary, as some have argued. We're talking about women in general who come from Eve. "Nevertheless, she will be saved in childbearing." What does that mean, that you got to have a child to be saved? You got to be a mother to be a Christian? No. Because we know that's just patently not true. We're saved by faith in the Lord Jesus. We're saved by grace.

Now the word saved here can mean to rescue, to deliver, and so we could read it in that physical sense or metaphorical sense. She, that is the woman, can be delivered through childbearing. Delivered from what? I'd make an argument, Joe McCarthy makes this argument, several commentators make this argument, she'll be delivered through childbearing from the shame that Eve brought upon humanity. It was a woman. It was Eve that led humanity into sin.

But here's the wonderful thing. Through motherhood, which is unique to womanhood, she can lead humanity out of sin. She can win her children to Christ. She can influence them for God. She can show the Gospel in her life and in her behavior. The implication is this. Listen to this, that women and mothers, although they're not allowed to be the primary teachers in the church, they're not allowed into the pastoral office, Paul meets it and goes on to say, "But let's not forget they can influence the influencers. They can pastor the pastors."

Did my mother pastor me before I was a pastor? Of course she did. Some of the greatest influencers in my life. I love her. She taught me the word of God alongside my father. She loved me, cared for me, pointed me to Christ. I believe my mother delivered herself from the shame of Eve leading the humanity in the world into sin by pointing her children, Ian and Lisa and Philip, to Christ through childbearing and the results of her motherhood. I just think it's worth noting, mothers and women can influence the influencers, lead the leaders, pastor the pastors, and reverse the shame of Eve and the effects of the fall.

Just wanted to get that in, because in the context of 1 Timothy 2, where we read this very declarative statement, "I don't suffer a woman to teach or have authority over men in the church," they can't hold the pastoral office, but I want to remind you, ladies, Paul says that through childbearing, through motherhood you influence the influencers, pastor the pastors, and lead the leaders.

There's a great story about a lady who was converted through the ministry of Gipsy Smith. You may not be familiar with him, but he was an evangelist back in the United Kingdom many years ago. She wrote a letter to him after her conversion through his ministry, and she said, "I feel called to preach." Well, with these kind of thoughts in mind, you wonder how he might handle this. In a diplomatic fashion, he wrote back to her, and I love what he said. He said, "My dear lady, I'm happy to hear that you've been saved and you feel called to preach." Now the issue for this woman was she had 12 kids, and she didn't know how she could kind of preach and take care of the kids, so you'll get his next line, "I'm happy to hear that you've been saved and feel called to preach, and I'm even more delighted to see that God has already provided you a congregation."

She will be saved in childbearing if she continues in faith and love and holiness. I want to say it again because I've got a wife and three daughters. The last thing I want to do is hamper them, make them feel less than they are in God and in Christ. This isn't an issue of equality. It's an issue of functionality. But even though a woman can't hold the pastoral office, that in no way would give the impression that she can't live and can't express her full giftedness in so many areas in life and in one area especially, her motherhood. She'll influence the influencers and pastor the pastors and lead the leaders.

Let's move on. That's the persons regarding the appointment. Let's move through these next two or three things quickly. The plurality, not going to spend a lot of time here because it's self-evident. It seems from our text that Titus was to appoint a plurality of men in every church that was found in every city. I don't think the text is saying there appoint one elder in every church in every city. I think it's saying appoint elders in every church in every city. And I say that because in Acts 14:23, that was the apostles' pattern. Everywhere they went, they appointed plural elders in every city.

In Acts 20, verse 17 you'll read that Paul left Melitus and went to Ephesus, and he called the elders to meet with him. He goes to the church in Ephesus and he calls the elders to meet him. What about James 5, verse 14, "If someone is sick, they can call the elders ..." plural "... to pray over them." What's the point? The model in the New Testament is not a leader over the church, but leaders over the church. It's a team effort. Of course, there can be a first among equals. There can be a leader of the leaders, but the model is a plurality of godly men exercising shepherding and leadership over the church. Life is a team sport, and church life is also a team sport.

Ecclesiastes 4:9 to 12, "Ministry's not a one-man band." I don't know if you've ever seen these guys. I haven't seen one for a while. I think the last guy I saw was on Pier 439, is it? Up in San Francisco, the one-man band. There he was with his banjo and his base drum on his back and his harmonica, and he's just going gangbusters, giving it his all. I'm going to entertain. I'm going, "I bet you can't do that for more than 10 minutes." Because you can't keep that kind of thing up. You can't play five or six instruments all at the same time and play it well.

The ministry's the same. The ministry's not a one-man band. One guy can't do it all. He doesn't have the giftedness. He doesn't have the time. He doesn't have the breadth. That's the implication of plurality is that one person isn't the complete package. As good as any man might be, as gifted as any leader might be, he doesn't have all the gifts. And his giftedness needs to be supplemented by the gifts of others, so you're better working in a team.

Then you have the division of labor within that team. If you've got a team, an A-team of leaders who are gifted, their strengths and weaknesses play off each other and there can be a good division of labor, where some will rule well and some will teach well. 1 Timothy 5:17, "Honor those who rule well and

especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. All elders must be able to teach, but some will excel in teaching." I believe, hopefully, that's one of my gifts. That's what I give most of my time to. And then within our team, our pastors and elders all teach to some degree, but then they exercise gifts of counseling and administration and rule. That's the blessing of a team, because no one man has the complete package. It allows you to divide the labor. Number three, it affords mutual encouragement as you lean on each other. Then, you've got collective wisdom and then you've got accountability, which is a good thing in leadership. You get the point, plurality.

I like the story surrounding Victor Borge, who was an entertainer of a generation ago. He was once playing in New York's Lincoln Center and during the concert, this one particular character would laugh the longest and he would laugh after everybody else had stopped laughing. You've kind of heard that. You ever listened to a show or watched an entertainer, everybody laughs and all of a sudden, you hear this guy still laughing. It's like cut it out. That's annoying.

[inaudible 00:24:05].

But you know what? This guy kept doing it, and Victor Borge, he stops at one point and here's what he says in the middle of the concert, "Would you be kind enough, sir, to laugh when the rest of the audience laughs? Because if everyone's going to laugh, then eventually, we'll never get out of here. We got to do this together." It's the same in life, same in ministry. That's the beauty of marriage. That's the beauty of friendship. That's the beauty of plurality of godly men. Doing it together is better.

You've got the persons, godly men. You've got the plurality, godly men, a group of men. Next, you've got the process. Not going to spend a lot of time on this. What is the process of appointment? What did it look like? Who did it? Well, it's clear from Acts 14:23 that until kind of elders were appointed and the church matured, in those early days the apostles were the primary leaders. They will pass off the scene. We believe that's a temporary office. But they appointed elders in every city, Acts 14:23. Then you've got Titus who's a delegate of the apostles, someone that they put their hands on and said, "Hey, you can act on our behalf." And Paul leaves Titus, a delegate, in Crete to act on his behalf, and so he's to appoint elders in every city.

I'm building up an argument here. Who gets to appoint elders? So far, apostles appoint elders. Their delegates appoint elders. One other verse I see directly is the presbytery appoints elders. What I mean by presbytery, it's just the plural of presbuteros, a plurality of elders. That's what a presbytery is. If you go to 1 Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1, verse 6, Paul says to Timothy, "Remember when the presbytery or the group of elders put their hands on you and separated you to the Gospel ministry."

What about the process? We don't need to get down in the weeds, but it would seem that the apostles did it, their delegates did it, and as the church emerges, elders picked elders. I can't find anywhere in the New Testament where the congregation picked the elders. Now I'm not denying congregationalism full stop. You can see in Acts 6, you can see in Acts 15 the congregation played a role in the selection of deacons and other aspects of church life, but it's hard for me to find any clear passage where the congregation selected the elders.

It makes sense. Why would the leaders of the church, when it comes to the most important decision in leadership, that is, the picking of a leader, delegate that to someone else? Is that not an obligation of leadership? Why would the shepherd ask the sheep to pick the shepherd? That's not a denial of the

priesthood of believers. I'm not putting congregations down. I think it's wise for elders and pastors to meet with their congregation, to listen and to learn and to get perspective from all sides, but they're never to abdicate their rule or their decision-making to the congregation. You know what? That's all I'll say on that, and if you don't agree, you have every right to be wrong.

Here's the fourth point, the purpose, the purpose. As elders are appointed, what are they appointed to? Well, initially as I looked at this, I didn't see a lot. Because if you look at Titus 1:5 to 9 and 1 Timothy 3:1 to 7, the first thing will strike you is it doesn't talk a lot or it seems it doesn't talk a lot about activity. It talks about a lot about the character and the makeup of the man himself. We'll come to that in a moment because that's true.

But the more I read Titus 1:5 through 9, eight things jump out about kind of profile, what an elder will give himself to. Number one, he'll offer him a true example. That's embedded in the idea of elder. Remember what I've said, it's come out of the life of Israel. It's a synagogue word, and what we know from research, no one in the Jewish community could be an elder under 30. Why would we want to carry that over into the Christian church and say no one can be in leadership until they're over 30, I'm not sure. But it's least conveying this idea. There's a certain maturity about that leader. They've lived a bit. As we said earlier, there's some miles on their odometer. In fact, here it's assumed he's going to be married with children. He's lived a little. He's not just out of university. He knows life. He lives in the trenches. He's actually chasing leadership at home. He offers a mature example.

Number two, he brings seasoned wisdom. Still comes out of this idea of the elder. If we're told that Titus is to appoint elders, that means men of maturity who are an example in their lives and who have some seasoned insight on the life. They're good decision-makers. They know how to think. Number three, they're to set things in order. Set things in order, the things that are lacking, verse 5. That's what elders will do. That's why Titus will appoint them. What does that mean? They will mature in ministry.

Time has to go by. The clock has to tick. But at some point, several years, five years, 10 years, you should be able to demonstrably look at a church and say, "You know what? Under this present leadership, it's growing, down and out. It's maturing. We're not what we once were. We're better at this. We're growing here." They will set in order things that are lacking. They'll bring about change and transformation.

Number four, they will exercise spiritual oversight because they're called a bishop in verse 7. They will be among the congregation. They will disciple. They will discipline. They will just give spiritual oversight. Number five, they will be theologically astute. They will be doctrinally definitive. Why do I say that? Because in verse 7, they're called stewards of the Gospel, managers of the Gospel. The Gospel is being entrusted to them, and they guard it with their life. They're not so much worried about popularity, what the audience thinks, what the culture says. They are stewards of the Gospel. They are theologically astute.

Number six, they teach the word, verse 9. They hold fast the faithful word as been taught them so that they might be able to teach sound doctrine through exhortation and rebuke. They not only are theologically astute, they're not only doctrinal, they're good at communicating it. They're able to communicate it. They're able to put it down on the bottom shelf and get across theology and doctrine in a way that's palatable to their people.

Number seven, they're to encourage godliness because they are to exhort, at the end of verse 9, through sound doctrine. Number eight, they are to rebuke sin. They are to contradict those who contradict sound doctrine and the faithful word. Too many pastors have a wishbone where they need to have a backbone. They need to have conviction, clarity, willing to stand for the truth. When it's unpopular, when it's not in season, they'll preach the word in season and out of season. Put that all together, elders lead, rule, develop, guard, teach, care, rebuke.

Let's move on. The assessment of leadership. We'll take the balance of our time here and cover the assessment of leadership. What is he to look like? What's the measure of this man? Here's a job description for the primary church leader. There's three things that jump out. If you're taking notes, you may want to write these down. His character, his connections, his convictions. It's all here. I'll unpack it. But before we go there, [inaudible 00:32:17] may be checking and going, "Hey, Pastor, this is good. It's good for you, good for the leaders, good for young men that are thinking about seminary."

Well, more than that. It's good for you. One, because this is what you ought to expect from us. You can hold our feet to the fire of Titus 1, verses 5 through 9. If you move and you go to another church at some point in your life, look at the men in leadership. Look what's coming from the pulpit. Ask yourself, "Is this the kind of church that's good for my family?" Because you can get caught up in the bells and whistles of children's ministry, in whatever your preference in style is and music, and you forget, hey, the first thing I need to be concerned about is the primary thing, who's in charge of this congregation and what are they like? Are they biblical? Are they what Titus and Timothy described?

And don't forget this. 1 Peter 5:3, Hebrews 13:7 and 17, "Elders are the benchmark for spirituality." They're called examples. Doesn't Peter say that, "Be an example to the flock"? What does that mean? It means that you actually want to be like this description yourself. Now while God desires it from you, He demands it of them. This is what leaders must be. They must be this. You ought to be this. There can be a point in your life where you're not this, but there can't be a point in their life where they're not this in any demonstrable fashion.

Don't check out on me here. We've got about 15 minutes to go. This is important. What about their character and their connections and their convictions? Well, as you can imagine, character is bedrock because what we are or who we are colors everything we do. Life is an inside, outside thing. It's out of the heart the issues of life flow. A dicky heart, spiritually speaking, a bad heart, a bad character will color what a man does and how he acts. You'd understand, it shouldn't surprise you that, indeed, Paul would say to Titus, "Hey, I want you to look for men that are blameless in character, unimpeachable in character." He says in verse 6 and verse 7, "They are to be blameless." Character comes before capacity. I don't care how gifted they are. I don't care how good they are at what they do. Character comes before capacity because capacity without character leads to abuse, hypocrisy, and tyranny in leadership.

Now the word blameless here can throw us off because it could leave the impression, man, they're to be blameless, perfect, spotless, no blotch on their [inaudible 00:35:16]. Well, you know they can't be that, because that way it's glorification. What does it mean? Well, it's certainly a hallmark virtue and it carries the idea of unimpeachable in character, above reproach in reputation. What does that mean, above reproach? It means that, you know what, they're above scandal. Scandal can't reach them because their lives are in order. Doesn't mean they're perfect. It just means that they're unimpeachable in character. This is a present tense verb. This is what they are when you meet them and as far as you can remember them. That's the direction of their life. This is the umbrella term. Everything said beneath this kind of fits under this.

Alistair Begg has a good analogy that I heard him share some years ago. He says that the elder is a Teflon man. Remember when Teflon came on the market? Before that, you'd be at a frying pan, everything stuck to it. Your eggs stuck to it. Your bacon stuck to it. Your mother had to scrub that thing clean before she could use it again. Then comes the Teflon frying pan. You saw the adverts where the egg could be kind of just slipping all over the place and flip and wouldn't stick. It's the non-stick pan. And Alistair kind of says, "That's the elder. He's a Teflon man." Scandal doesn't stick. Criticism doesn't stick. Censorship doesn't stick. It's not that he's perfect, but he's a good man with his life in order.

On to this character idea, you have 11 positive and negative qualities. I'm not going to dig down into them deeply. Notice verse 7, "For a bishop must be blameless, a steward of God, not self-willed." He's a man that's not about him. It's about you. He doesn't think about himself first. He thinks about others first. Philippians 2, he seeks first the kingdom of God. He doesn't have agenda. It's about the kingdom. It's about the king. He's not self-willed. It's not about him. It's about you. It's not about him. It's about Christ. He's not quick-tempered. He doesn't fly off the handle.

If you're in leadership to any degree, let alone the church, you know that you've got to have a kind of calm spirit as a leader, because stuff gets messy. And a good leader can't be quick-tempered. He's got to be patient. He's got to have a long fuse or everything around him will be exploding and falling down. Not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine. I don't believe that's a prohibition against drinking wine. I've made it my life choice not to drink alcohol, but I don't believe the Bible prescribes that. I think that's a wisdom choice on our part.

But it's not a prohibition against drinking wine. It's a prohibition about liking it too much, giving yourself to it. It's certainly a prohibition against drunkenness, because later on, the elder's described as someone who's sober-minded, sober-minded, clear in his thinking. Too much wine, too much alcohol, you get the buzz, get a little fuzzy. It's not good for leadership. A man can't be dominated by drugs or influence to a point which clouds his thinking.

Not violent. That means he's not a bully. Remember, he's not self-willed. It's not about him. But there are those in leadership it is about them. They don't get their way, they throw a tantrum. They get quick-tempered, and then it can even get violent. It's not emotional bullying. It's physical bullying. It's hard to believe it, but there are stories out there about elders and leaders coming to fisticuffs. Let's settle this thing outside. Paul says never. Shouldn't be. Not greedy for money, kind of self-explanatory. He's not in it for the feathering of his own nest. He's not greedy. He's not trying to fleece the congregation. He's hospitable. His home is open. His family is accessible. He's a lover of what is good. He's sober-minded. He's just. He's devout. He's a dedicated disciple. He's holy, separated from ungodliness, and he's self-controlled.

Character, it's so critical, isn't it? Character trumps capacity, trumps chemistry. Not that those things aren't good in and of themselves, but capacity is not transferable. Chemistry is shallow. Character is deep and abiding. Wasn't it said of Hudson Taylor, his was a life worth looking into? His was a life worth looking into. The elder's life is something that can be looked into, and scandal won't stick. And you'll find that this man has got a well-rounded character that's growing and growing in godliness.

What about his connections? Well, a pastor is a people person. Shepherds smell of sheep. A good pastor, a good leader is going to be a people person. They have good people skills. How do you find that out? Well, why don't you look at those who live in his house? They'll tell you what his people skills are like. They'll tell you what his leadership is like. They're going to be a good weather vane as to his fitness

for the pastoral office, and there's two primary connections. Go back to our text, verse 6, "If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife." Let's look at his relationship to his wife. And then having children who are not accused of dissipation or insubordination. The word dissipation is an interesting word. It's used of the prodigal son in Luke 15, speaks of wild living. The kid's not wild. You don't have a hell-raiser in the parsonage, and he's not insubordinate. He listens. He obeys.

Let's look at these two things quickly. The husband of one wife. Literally, and the Greek can be read this way, and I like the way this goes. A one-woman man, that's what he ought to be. That's really the meaning of the grammar. This man ought to be blameless and he ought to be a one-woman man. The intent of that phrase, it's not focused on his marital status, as in he's married and married to one woman. That means he's not a polygamist. It means he's not single. That's not the focus. First of all, a single guy can be an elder. Certainly, a polygamist can't. But that's not the focus. It's not on the marital state because he's assumed to be married. Remember, he's an elder, probably over 30, married with children. The issue is the state of his marriage. Not his marital state, the state of his marriage. He is assumed to be married, although not required, but it's just assumed because they're looking at older men. In the culture in that day, it would have been assumed.

But the focus is on his marriage. Is it marked by intimacy, fidelity, purity? I think it's [Arkan 00:42:54] Hughes that makes this argument. It's a good one. The focus of the text of this idea of being a one-woman man, it's not quantitative, that is, he's married to one woman, not a whole lot of women. The focus isn't on whether he's divorced or a polygamist. That's not the focus of the Lord. Adultery would be a problem for a leader. Pornography would be a problem for a leader. Homosexuality would be a problem for a leader. Polygamy would be a problem for a leader.

But that's not the focus. The focus is not quantitative, but qualitative. Is he truly married to the one woman? Is he a one-woman man? Has he got eyes only for her? Is his shoulder reserved for her to cry on? Is his hands given to her solely to serve her and bless her? Does his feet come running to her when she's in need? Is his back strong enough to carry her in difficulty? That's the point. Is he that kind of man, a one-woman kind of man? Because he's an elder over the bride of Christ, therefore, he must be completely devoted to his own bride. If he's not, he doesn't qualify to look after the bride of Christ. He must be a one-woman kind of man in his heart and in his behavior.

I like the definition of a successful marriage where someone said this, "A successful marriage requires falling in love many times, but always for the same person." And that's what Paul's getting at, where this man just keeps falling in love with his wife again and again and again. He's got eyes only for her. His shoulder is for her to cry on. His arms are for her to be carried by. His heart given completely to her. Isn't that why when Churchill was at a dinner party and they were playing this kind of game around a conversation, if you weren't who you were, who would you like to be? When it came to Churchill's chance to speak, he surprised everyone, but it was a wonderful response. He said, "Well, I'd like to be Mrs. Churchill's second husband. Give me another life to love her." It's kind of the idea here.

Here's the other connection or the other area, having children that are faithful. Not accused of wildness or prodigal living or insubordination. Over in 1 Timothy 3:4-5, we're told, "If a man can't manage his house, then what makes you think he can manage the church?" If we believe in male leadership in the home and in the church, before you appoint a guy to leadership in the church, go and see how he has managed his leadership in the home. Does he love his wife? Does he serve his wife? Has he given her his whole heart? And then look at his children. Are they following his leadership? Do they consider Dad's the real deal? I like his wisdom? I want to model his example? That's what we have here. Are they under

his authority? Are they respectful to him while they are under his house? Or in his house and under his roof?

The Greek word for children here, while it can speak of teenagers and young adults, most of the time it is focused on children. But either way, I think all commentators assume the measure here is while the children are at home under his leadership. While they're under the home, he's responsible for them. If you look at them, you'll see something of himself. That's what's being argued here. They're his first flock. They're his initial congregation. They're a window into how he will shepherd the church.

I like what Donald Guthrie says in his commentary, "Any man unable to govern his children graciously, gravely by maintaining good discipline is no man for government in the church." The principle is universal. For potential skill in a larger sphere can only be indicated by similar skill in a lesser sphere. Take his first congregation, how does he look there? And then you can take it over and see how he would do in the larger congregation. Look at his first flock, his children, and then see how he'd do with the larger flock, our children or your children. It's a great standard. Now remember, it's not perfection, but it is a measure by which you can see that he's got well-behaved children, responsible teenagers, respectful young adults.

Let me say this, too, mind you. You've got to look at his whole family, not an isolated child that might be going through a difficult season. You know what? If he's single and doesn't have children, then you could look at the way he teaches Sunday School and what he's like with children and then young people. Give you a measure of his leadership.

Before we leave this, I do want to answer a question that New King James translates this faithful children. Your NASB will translate it believing children because it can be translated either way. Here's the argument. Some take this position, I don't, that it's believing children. That means by implication that the elder must have children that are saved, children that are Christians. I don't believe that is the qualification for several reasons.

Number one, the Greek can be translated either way. Read the commentaries. It can be translated believing or it can be translated faithful. I think faithful's a good rendering for several reasons. Number one, this is a young church. Remember, this is fledgling flocks of God's people that don't even have leadership yet. They're either directly converts from the day of Pentecost that have come back and have started these churches or they were directly established by Paul. But here's the point. They're young, and you know what? I don't think many of these potential leaders have had time to lead all their children to Christ. It's an impossibility. It's impractical. I think that's why faithful's better. You can measure that because whether young in the faith or old in the faith, you can see how a man exercises leadership presently.

Plus, if you think about that, if it is believing and a lot of time hasn't gone by, what's the threshold? And if you carry that into today, where do you look and have they got to be saved by the time they're five? That gives them five years. Have they got to be saved by the time they're seven? That gives them seven years. Have they got to be saved by the time they're 10. That gives them 10 years. That's just crazy. Because you're going to have to make the judgment call at some point if that's your measure. They've got to be believing. You're going to say, "Hey, you know what, Buddy? You've had enough time to get your children saved. You're out of here. It's nuts.

No. It's faithful. The Greek can be translated that way. The context of the church in that day would make it so. It would be impractical and impossible to measure and implement that in terms of time. And then just finally, that's to put a burden on the father that's not fair. He can pray for his children's salvation. He can plead with them to get saved. He can have them sit under the teaching of God's word. But somewhere between the sovereignty of God and human responsibility, that's their decision to make and he can't force it. He can't force that. Don't put that burden on a man. It's not fair. John 1:12 to 13 tells us that salvation doesn't come about by the will of man or by blood. It's impractical, it's not fair. Grammatically, it's fine as it is, faithful.

Let's go to the last thought, the convictions. The character, the connections, the convictions, we've kind of covered this, so I'm not going to spend a lot of time on it, but it's verse 9. We kind of touched on this when we looked at the purpose of the appointment. What does this man do? Well, one of the things he does is that he's theologically astute. He loves doctrine. He promotes doctrine, and he's able to teach doctrine. In verse 9, "Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught that he may be able by sound doctrine both through exhort and through convict those who contradict."

We're going to see the next time we're together verses 10 to 16, there's a danger to every church from false doctrine. Elders need to be theologically astute. They need to be men who are able to teach sound doctrine and they need to be able to exhort the congregation to abide by that sound doctrine and contradict anybody in the congregation that stands up to try and undermine what is good theology.

What does it mean to be faithful to the faithful word? It means to mentally assent to sound doctrine, hold fast to it. It means to be able to teach it. It means to be able to promote it through exhortation and it means to be able to protect it through confronting error. It is the job of an elder to define, to declare, and to defend the Bible and to make sure the Gospel is there for the next generation. The thing comes up. You've heard me tell this story, but I think it illustrates this point, that elders must be men of theological conviction and courage.

David Hume was a well-known British philosopher in the 18th century. He rejected Christianity. He poo-pooed the miracles and the deity of Jesus. Early one morning in London, he meets a friend who's scurrying along the street, stops him and said, "Where are you going in such a hurry?" His friend says, "Well, I'm going to go and hear the great evangelist George Whitfield." David Hume knew his friend, shared his philosophy. He said, "But you don't believe what he believes." He said, "I know that, but I'm going to hear him because he believes it." I want to tell you, a healthy church and a group of men that can impact a culture for Christ will be a group of men who believe what they preach, men who hold fast to the faithful word, who know what sound doctrine is, and who exhort their congregation to pursue it and practice it and who contradict those who contradict it.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for this profile of the pastor. Our first reading would leave us thinking, well, this doesn't have a lot to do with the most of us. But as we've argued this morning, this has got to do with all of us. This is what our elders ought to be. This is what our congregation ought to aspire to. And this is what they ought to pray for us to be and look for us to be and may we be it so that we're an example to their families, we're a blessing to their marriages, we're a help on the path to discipleship, that we're going to guard the Gospel here for the good of this generation and the generation to come.

Lord, thank you for the elders at Kindred Community Church. Thank you that they strive to be blameless men who deeply love their wives and who pastor their children. Thank you that they're men marked by godliness, the men who love doctrine, who are involved in teaching it. We thank you for this

congregation that loves their leaders, respects their leaders, and prays for their leaders. They have made it a joy for us. We pray you'll bless them for allowing us to do what you've called us to do. Help us as pastor and people to grow together, to do good in our community. We realize that doing good is the product of the work of the word. We realize that doing good comes through following good leadership. We pray and ask these things in Christ's name. Amen.