

Titus 1:5-16; "The Task at Hand" April 21, 2024

I. Welcome

A. Good morning! Ohayogozaimasu! Welcome to Calvary Chapel Iwakuni. It's great to be here with you all as we gather to worship our Lord and Savior and to fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

1. *Welcome any new faces and those streaming online.*

B. Before we continue any further, let's go ahead and dismiss our elementary aged children to their Sunday School class.

1. *As well as the Bible English class (Second Service)*

C. Last week we continued our march through the NT by beginning a new study in the book of Titus, the third and final of the "pastoral epistles".

1. As part of our study, we looked at a lot of the background information in order to set the stage for our study.

a. We looked at the basic background like the author of the book being Paul the apostle, the recipient of the book being his son in the faith Titus, their relationship history, and other important details.

b. We also considered the context of the book, the timing of when it was written, the place where Titus was ministering and the overall climate of that day and age in that place.

c. And we also considered some of the basic content of the book; looking at the overall theme and how the book is laid out for us.

i. We noted how the book is divided into two major sections; the first section dealing with the need for elders to protect sound doctrine in ch. 1 and the second section dealing with the need for the rest of the church to practice sound doctrine in ch. 2 & 3.

2. Then, after finishing our background overview of the book, to get things started, we looked at the first four verses of the book that were basically Paul's greeting and introduction to the letter.

D. This morning, we're going to get into the first major section of the book by looking at the details found in the rest of chapter 1 and the need for elders to protect sound doctrine.

1. Last week we read through verse 4, so this morning we'll pick up our account where we left off in verse 5 and read through to the end of the chapter in verse 16.

2. At first, when I sat down to study this portion of Scripture, I thought maybe I could get through the rest of chapter 1 in one teaching, but that is not going to be the case for us.

3. So, today will be part 1 of a two-part message I've entitled "**The Task at Hand**". In part 1 we'll focus upon *what* Titus needed to do and next week, Lord willing, we'll focus upon *why* Titus needed to do it.

4. For the sake of context and continuity, we'll read through the entirety of the text, but we'll only focus on the first main section today.

5. So, if you haven't done so already, go ahead and open up your Bible to the book of Titus. And then once you are there, I'd like to request that you rise to your feet in honor of God and His Word.

6. I'm going to read through our text from my Bible. I'm reading from the NKJV. If you are reading from a different translation, just do your best to follow along in your Bible as I read from mine.

7. Paul writes to Titus the following in chapter 1 verse 5...(R & P)

II. Titus 1:5; Intro & Outline

A. In our opening verse we are given information about where Titus is at and why he is there.

B. We are told that Titus was left on the island of Crete.

1. Now, what isn't told to us are the details surrounding how Paul and Titus' ended up on the island of Crete in the first place.

2. Nowhere in the book of Acts do we read of Paul and Titus traveling to the island of Crete together.

3. We do read of Paul traveling to the island of Crete on his voyage to Rome as a prisoner in Acts 27.

a. When sailing became difficult the ship Paul was on sailed under the protection provided by the island of Crete and they harbored in a place called Fair Havens.

b. We're told that Paul spent some time there and actually advised the crew and the centurion in charge of him to stay in Fair Havens and winter there, but the centurion listened to the helmsman and the owner of the ship instead and they set sail for a different location on the island of Crete that they believed would be a better place to winter in. (**Acts 27:11**)

4. If you know the account, you know that they never made it to that other port they intended to winter in, instead they got caught in a severe storm that pushed them further out into the sea where they were tossed back and forth by huge waves and blown around by strong winds eventually running the ship onto the island of Malta.

5. The fact that the only time we read of Paul being on the island of Crete was while a prisoner aboard a ship, it is very unlikely that Paul's leaving Titus upon the island of Crete happened during that timeframe.

C. So, the only other plausible explanation is to assume that Paul and Titus had set sail to the island of Crete after Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment. A timeframe that isn't covered by the book of Acts.

1. Most Bible scholars agree that Paul continued his missionary endeavors after his release from Rome.

a. It is believed that he was released in the year 62AD and that Paul spent the next couple of years continuing to spread the gospel to places throughout the Roman empire.

- b. Most scholars hypothesize Paul going on at least a couple more missionary journeys before ultimately being arrested again and taken to Rome where he was subsequently executed by Caesar Nero around the year 67AD.
- 2. So, sometime between his release from prison and his second imprisonment, Paul traveled to the island of Crete with his trusted friend and co-laborer Titus.
- D. We get the sense from verse 5 that there was a growing Christian population on the island of Crete, but that Paul didn't have time to really help establish those communities in the faith.
  - 1. Where these believers came from or how they came to know the gospel is not told to us. Some speculate that the presence of Christians on Crete came from those who were there in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost.
    - a. In Acts 2 we read about how there were Cretans there on the day of Pentecost who heard the disciples speaking in their own language the wonderful works of God. (**Acts 2:11**)
    - b. Some hypothesize that those Cretans that were there on the Day of Pentecost departed Jerusalem and returned to Crete with stories of all they heard and saw on that day, leading to a growing Christian community there. And that Paul maybe may have encountered this community during his time on Crete, creating a desire for him to return to Crete and help establish them.
    - c. While we can't prove that's how the gospel came to Crete, and why Paul returned, it is one plausible explanation.
- E. Again, from verse 5 we get the sense that these believers in Crete were not very organized; there wasn't a lot of structure in place for them as believers in the gospel. And that is why Titus was left there by Paul.
- F. Paul tasked Titus with setting things in order that were lacking.
  - 1. The phrase "you should set in order" is one word in the Greek; it's the word "epidiorthoo" [ep-ee-dee-or-tho]. And it is only used here in the NT. The word is believed to be a medical term that was applied to when a doctor would set a crooked limb in order for that limb to grow properly.
  - 2. The church in Crete was very new. It needed to grow properly, but in order to do so, Titus needed to set certain things in order that were lacking.
  - 3. The fact that certain things were lacking, leads us to believe that Paul's visit to Crete was not a very long one.
  - 4. For whatever reason, Paul had to leave, but he didn't want to leave the people on Crete without some direction and without some structure and thus, he left Titus there to do complete that which was lacking.
- G. And the first priority that Titus was to tackle was the appointment of elders in all the cities of Crete.

- 1. One of the things that Paul would often do on his missionary journeys was to establish elders in the various cities he traveled to where they planted churches. We read of this practice in the book of Acts. (**Acts 14:23**)
- 2. But Paul was unable to do so in Crete. And so, Titus was charged with the completion of this work.
- 3. In verse 5, Paul reminds Titus that this work was something that he had commanded Titus to do. This not only reminded Titus to do this work but would also go to show the churches the authority Paul had entrusted to Titus to do this work.
- 4. Titus was **acting in the apostolic authority of Paul**; doing the work Paul was unable to do in his limited time there.
- H. And what follows in verses 6-9 is a description of the kind of people Titus is to appoint as elders; a list of qualities and characteristics that are needed for those who serve as spiritual leaders within the church.
  - 1. This morning, we're just going to look at the qualifications and characteristics listed in verses 6-9. And then, Lord willing, we'll take a look at the rest of this text next week.
- I. So, let's take a look at what Paul had to say about the kind of person Titus was to look for that could serve as elders in the cities of Crete. Take a look at verse 6.
- III. Titus 1:6; Private Life
  - A. It seems as if Paul starts off talking about potential elders in regard to their private life they lived at home amongst their family.
    - 1. We see here a very important principal regarding spiritual leadership; that **spiritual leadership must begin in the home**.
    - 2. If we want to be used by the Lord as leaders within the church, we have a priority to ensure that things at home are solid first and foremost.
  - B. Paul begins by stating a man must be blameless; your translation may read "above reproach".
    - 1. Now blameless does not equate to perfection; the requirement was not that one could never be accused of any wrong doing. The truth of the matter is that none of us are perfect, none of us have done everything correct; we all make mistakes.
    - 2. But the idea presented here is that of a man whom none would bring into question, none would accuse this person of being anything other than what he portrays himself to be.
    - 3. A spiritual leader must be someone that is above reproach. He can't have any conduct in his life that would be grounds for any sort of accusations to be brought against his own integrity, or that would cause someone to question his walk with the Lord.

4. Considering the emphasis upon his private life, makes all the more sense as it is those who are closest to a person that see him at his most vulnerable times.
    - a. An elder's family, his wife and any children he may have, sees how he lives his life away from the public eye.
    - b. And the inclination here is that the elder needs to be blameless or above reproach amongst those closest to him.
- C. Verse 6 also says that he must be "the husband of one wife".
1. Now, a lot of debate has transpired over the proper interpretation of this character trait when it comes to spiritual leaders in the church.
  2. Some hold to a very literal translation and interpret this as a requirement *for* marriage in order to be considered for the position of elder within the church. That basically, if you want to be a spiritual leader in the church, you *must be* married.
    - a. But this interpretation is not likely what Paul had in mind. And the most obvious reason for this would be the fact that Paul himself was not married.
      - i. In 1 Corinthians 7 Paul writes, "But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: it is good for them if they remain even as I am" (1 Co. 7:8)
    - b. Paul was not married. And it would seem unlikely that Paul would list out here a qualification for church leadership that he himself did not meet.
    - c. If Paul meant that a person must be married in order to serve in church leadership then he would end up disqualifying himself.
    - d. Not to mention the fact that Jesus Himself was unmarried.
    - e. The idea that an elder or spiritual leader in the church has to be married would disqualify both Paul and Jesus from being a leader in the church.
    - f. So that interpretation doesn't seem to really fit.
  3. A second interpretation is that this is speaking about a prohibition against a second marriage. That an elder can only be the husband of one wife and never a second wife.
    - a. So, this would disqualify anyone who ever remarried.
    - b. Holding to this interpretation would mean that someone who had been left a widower and then subsequently remarried would be disqualified from serving as an elder.
    - c. Or someone who had been previously divorced, even under proper Biblical grounds, could never remarry and then serve as a spiritual leader.
    - d. This too seems unlikely. In the book of Romans, chapter 7, Paul talks about how someone whose spouse dies is free from the law of

- marriage. And they are free to remarry, no longer being bound to that covenant from the first marriage. (Rom. 7:2)
- e. Also in 1 Corinthians 7 Paul clearly states that it is not a sin for widows to remarry. In fact, he encourages it for those who still burn with passion. (1 Co. 7:9)
  - f. It would be difficult to balance out how Paul says there is nothing wrong with remarriage for widows or widowers, but then hold to the idea that someone is disqualified from a position of leadership if they enter into a second marriage.
  - g. I think the same would apply for someone who had Biblical grounds for divorce. While God hates divorce, it is permissible under certain Biblical grounds, such as marital unfaithfulness.
  - h. Again, it would be hard to hold to an interpretation that something is Biblically permissible, and at the same time, it is something that would disqualify you from spiritual leadership.
4. Another interpretation to this verse is that this is only talking about the practice of polygamy, having multiple wives at the same time.
- a. This would be a very loose interpretation that doesn't hold much merit to it either. While the Bible does give examples of polygamy, it was not a prominent thing during this day and age, and it was never something condoned by Jesus or His followers.
  - b. So while it would be accurate to say elders cannot have multiple wives, I do not think that is really what Paul had in mind when he said an elder must be the husband of one wife.
5. So what did Paul mean by saying an elder must be the husband of one wife?
- a. Well, the literal way it is written in the Greek is that an elder is to be a "one woman man". The idea being that this man only has eyes for his own wife; there is no hint of sexual immorality or marital unfaithfulness, no marital impurity; that this man's love, care, and devotion belong to one woman, and one woman only, and that woman being his wife.
  - b. This really gets to the matter of sexual purity.
    - i. When it comes to a married individual it speaks of being faithful to your wife.
    - ii. For those who are not married, it would lend itself to the idea of living a life free from sexual immorality and impurity.
  - c. So, being a one woman man should not be seen as a prerequisite for spiritual leadership, but a qualification towards sexual purity for those who are married.
  - d. It would seem that this is the best interpretation to take when looking at the Greek and the rest of what the Bible has to say about marriage and our service to the Lord.

- D. Back to our text. Verse 6 continues speaking about the children in the home of an elder stating that elders need to have “faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.”
1. Again, I don’t think this is a prerequisite for having children, as if those without children could not serve as spiritual leaders, but a qualification for those who do have children.
  2. If an elder has children they ought to be faithful children. The word faithful means trusting or trustworthy. These kids trust their father and follow in his instructions.
  3. They are not accused of either dissipation nor insubordination.
    - a. Dissipation carries the idea of living a prodigal lifestyle, of extravagant squandering, or reckless living.
    - b. Insubordination carries with it the idea of children who are disobedient to authority and rebellious.
  4. The basic idea here is that an elder that has children should have children who are trustworthy, reliable, self-controlled, and obedient to their father.
  5. When we look at Paul’s list of qualifications for spiritual leaders in his letter to Timothy we are told the reason for this need for these kinds of children.
    - a. He writes, “for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?” (1 Tim. 3:5)
  6. If you can’t lead your own household in teaching them to live a life in accordance with the standards of right living, what makes you think you will be able to lead God’s household in doing the same?
  7. And so this qualification makes sense in a very practical manner.
- E. From verse 6 where we looked at the private life of a potential elder candidate, we move more towards his public life in the beginning of verse 7. Take a look and read with me the first few items of verse 7.

#### IV. Titus 1:7a; Public Life

- A. Paul does something interesting here in referring to these potential elder candidates by referring to them as bishops at the start of verse 7.
1. The title bishop is the word “episkopos” and it is commonly translated as bishop, or overseer. This is where we get the word episcopalian, or the Episcopal church.
  2. The word “elder” in the Greek is the word “presbyteros”, which is almost always translated as elder. This is where we get the word “Presbyterian” from and the Presbyterian church.
  3. These two words are seemingly used interchangeably by the apostle Paul to simply refer to spiritual leaders within the church.

- a. However, from these two words have come different models for how churches are run. Some churches are run under the authority of a bishop or overseer; the “episkopos” model.
  - b. While others are run under the authority of a group of people known as elders, the “presbyteros” model.
  - c. Without getting into too much detail, we here at Calvary have a mixed model that leans more towards the episkopos model.
    - i. As the pastor of this church, I serve as the overseer of the church and am ultimately responsible for hearing from the Lord and leading this church in the direction I believe the Lord would have us go.
    - ii. However, I also have surrounded myself with a group of elders who are here to counsel me and advise me in the way we should go as a church. Their prayers, support, and counsel are very important to me, and they help to keep me accountable to my calling as an overseer of the church. I greatly appreciate these men and the service they render to the church.
  - d. If you should have any questions about our church governance, I would be happy to discuss those things with you whenever you have opportunity to do so. You can come see me after the service today, or email me, or call to set up an appointment.
4. But let’s get back to the text here and the qualifications for these elders, or bishops, or overseers, or quite simply spiritual leaders.
- B. Verse 7 reiterates the need for a spiritual leader to be blameless.
1. This is the same exact word Paul used when referring to the elder’s private home life, which speaks of yet another principle that is important for us to note.
  2. A spiritual leader should be the same at home as he is away from the home. **His character and qualities should be consistent.**
  3. He can’t be one way at home, and a different way at work, or in the community, or in the church. Basically, he cannot live a double-life, or a hypocritical life; he needs to be the same in his private life as he is in his public life.
  4. He can’t live as a Christian at home and at church, but as a heathen when he gets around the guys at work. He needs to be blameless, above reproach in both his private and public life.
- C. Verse 7 continues describing an elder candidate as a steward of God.
1. The word “steward” is the Greek word “oikonomos”. It is a compound word that comes from “oikos” which means “house”, not yogurt; and the word nemo which means to allot, or distribute. Putting it together the steward is one who distributes things as a servant in his master’s house; a household manager if you will.
  2. A steward was one who would managed the domestic affairs of a family, business, or minor.

3. It is in this sense that we understand this word. An elder is to serve as a steward of God; a manager of God's household and a faithful distributor of God's resources.
  4. I say the word faithful because of all the qualities that a steward could have the most important of them all is that a steward be faithful.
    - a. That is what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 4 where he stated, "Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful." (1 Co. 4:2)
  5. An elder must understand that he is simply a steward of God and His things. He doesn't own any of God's resources, they are not his resources to do whatever he desires to do with them, but rather he must use what the Lord gives him for the good and the glory of the Lord.
  6. As a steward of God, an elder ought to represent his Lord in all that he does, bringing glory and honor to God and God's household.
- D. Now, in the rest of verse 7 Paul lays out a list of five vices, or five negative characteristics that must not be present in the life of one who is to be considered for the position of an elder. Take a look at them with me.
- V. Titus 1:7b; Negative Characteristics
- A. In ministry there are certain things that can disqualify us from service as a leader within the church.
1. That is not to say that you can do something that is beyond the grace of God to heal, or to forgive, or to restore. But there are certain things that must be avoided and cannot be descriptive of one who desires to serve in a place of leadership within God's house.
  2. While all are called to serve within the church, **not all are called to serve as leaders within the church**. There are things that will disqualify us from serving in leadership role. And we'll note those things here in verse 7.
- B. Paul starts out by saying that an elder must not be self-willed; your translation may read arrogant or overbearing
1. The word self-willed is described in my Greek lexicon as "one who is pleased with himself and despises others. A person who obstinately maintains his own opinion or asserts his own rights but is reckless of the rights, feelings, and interests of others.
  2. This kind of person only thinks of himself and how to please himself. He does not care for others or their opinions, his only goal is to see that he gets his way.
  3. This kind of attitude in the church will quickly become toxic. Instead of being a faithful servant and leader, these types of people quickly become overbearing dictators. There's no place for this in the church, let alone in church leadership.
- C. The second negative characteristic to avoid is being quick-tempered.
1. An elder in the church of God cannot be a hot head that quickly loses his cool and is prone to outburst of wrath.
  2. A hot-headed person will speak and act without thinking—hurting people and damaging the church's work and reputation.
  3. James tells us, "my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God." (James 1:19-20)
- D. The third negative characteristic to avoid is that an elder cannot be "given to wine".
1. Proverbs 23 states, "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, Those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly; At the last it bites like a serpent, And stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, And your heart will utter perverse things." (Pro. 23:29-33)
  2. An elder cannot be one that is given to wine. The phrase given to wine is one word in the Greek; it is the word "paroinos" [par-oy-nos]. It is a very descriptive word that helps us understand the meaning of this phrase.
    - a. The word paroinos is a compound word; "para" means near or by, and oinos means "wine". The word picture it creates is that of a person who always must have wine close at hand or nearby.
    - b. It speaks of one who is addicted to alcohol; obviously this would include drunkards, but is not limited to that only.
  3. The Bible speaks very clearly that we are not to get drunk, and it warns of the dangers involved with the use of alcohol, but it does not teach total abstinence from alcohol as a whole.
  4. Some people are able to consume alcohol in a temperate and responsible manner that does not lead to drunkenness or sin. But my experience has seen that this is not many people.
  5. Now, the qualification here, as I mentioned, is not limited to just the idea of being a drunkard, but that of addiction. And it is my belief that one can be addicted to alcohol without being a drunkard.
    - a. Being addicted to something simply means that you become dependent upon it and can't live without it. When you are addicted to something, you just gotta have it.
    - b. If you have to have a glass of wine, or a glass of scotch, or a cold beer in order to relax and unwind you may be addicted to alcohol, even though you would never be accused of being a drunkard.
    - c. I friend at church once told me how their Grandma exemplified how to drink responsibly and in a God honoring way by never getting drunk. He described how his grandma would always, only have, one small glass of hard liquor each night before going to bed. She never got

drunk, but she never went a night without her one drink of alcohol. I told my friend, “your Grandma was an alcoholic”.

- d. If you can't go a night without having a drink of alcohol, you've got a dependency problem with alcohol. And you probably need to seek out help.
6. So, a spiritual leader, an elder cannot be one who is given to wine, one who is addicted to wine, where they just gotta have it. If you've got to have alcohol in your house and always close by, that may be evidence of a bigger problem that needs to be addressed.
- E. Moving on. The next negative characteristic to avoid is violence. An elder cannot be violent.
  1. This speaks of one who is a quarreler, or an abusive person. This obviously would include physical abuse, but is not limited to just physical abuse; it would include verbal abuse and emotional abuse as well.
  2. This kind of person is basically a bully. They like to fight and argue with people and are often led to abusive behavior. There's no place for this kind of person in church leadership.
- F. The final negative characteristic listed in verse 7 is that an elder cannot be greedy for money.
  1. This speaks of someone who is shamefully greedy. They will pursue dishonest gains and have no qualms about doing so.
  2. They are driven by their insatiable appetite for money. And do not care that their tactics in gaining such money erode and degrade their personal character and morality.
  3. An elder should not be involved in businesses or money making schemes that would erode their character or lead them into actions that are contrary to that which is expected of a man of God and a leader within the church.
  4. Now, this doesn't mean that an elder can't have money, or can't be rich. It also doesn't preclude someone that is involved in operations that are financially successful.
  5. What really matters is the means by which their gains come.
  6. If someone is a successful businessman and at the same time a man of integrity that runs a legitimate successful business there's nothing wrong with that. But if his business dealings cause him to be a shady crook, well then that would disqualify him for any sort of position of leadership within the church.
  7. As is often the case, money is not the problem. Money is amoral. It is neither good nor bad. Like what Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Timothy 6 stating, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” (1 Tim. 6:10)

8. It is the love of money that is the problem. The greediness that drives a person to constantly need more money, that is the problem; not money itself.
9. As has often been said, “you can have money, as long as your money doesn't have you.”

G. Paul completed his list of negative characteristics and turns to a list of six positive characteristics in verse 8. Take a look at verse 8 with me as I read it again for us.

#### VI. Titus 1:8; Positive Qualities

- A. Before we look at the six positive characteristics listed here by Paul, I want to draw attention to the fact that all of these things really are matters of character and not abilities or giftings.
  1. Being a spiritual leader is mostly about our character, not about our abilities. Abilities can be taught, but character takes time to mold and shape and is at the core of who you are.
  2. This is what is **most important to God** when it comes to spiritual leadership. You can be the most gifted person in the world, but if you don't have these sorts of character traits, you won't be a good leader.
  3. Too often churches place an emphasis upon abilities when what they really need to focus in upon in appointing spiritual leaders is a person's character. Abilities can be taught, but character is what defines a person.
  4. Here in verse 8 Paul lists out six positive character traits that should be evidenced in every spiritual leader.
- B. Verse 8 begins with the positive characteristic of being hospitable.
  1. This carries the idea of being kind to strangers; being willing to open up your home to others and extend the right hand of fellowship to them.
  2. The key to being hospitable is not trying to impress people with an immaculate house, fancy cooking, or fine china. It is simply being real with people and inviting them into your everyday life.
  3. The goal in hospitality is not to impress people, but simply to love them.
- C. Paul continues in verse 8 with the positive trait of being a lover of what is good.
  1. This person enjoys simply being kind and compassionate towards others. They love the things that are good.
  2. This kind of person surrounds himself with good things; whether it be good people, or good music, or good books, or good causes; they just love being around all things good.
- D. Next is sober-minded; your translation may read self-controlled, or sensible
  1. The idea here is that an elder must be one who wisely keeps self-control over his passions and desires. He is not overindulgent; whether that be in food or drink, or any other thing that he may enjoy.

2. A spiritual leader must be temperate and reserved in his freedoms. Self-restrained when it comes to things he may enjoy. He avoids extremes and lives a balanced life.
- E. An elder is to be just.
1. The word just speaks of the need for an elder to be a man of integrity. It speaks of his actions and how they honorable among men and God.
  2. A spiritual leader must be just, he must practice what he preaches; his conduct is to be that of which is right for men of faith.
- F. They are to be holy
1. While being just often correlates to our actions towards other men, the idea of being holy correlates to our actions before the Lord.
  2. An elder is to be holy, set apart for the Lord and His will. The meaning of the word holy carries with it the idea of being different, set apart from the rest of the world.
  3. This need for holiness is something that is expected of all who name the name of Christ. The Scriptures repeats a common refrain from the Lord who declared, "Be holy, for I am holy" (1 Pt. 1:16)
  4. This isn't just for pastors, or elders, or spiritual leaders. We should all live a holy life that is pleasing to the Lord.
- G. The sixth and final positive attribute Titus was to look for in an elder was that they were to be self-controlled.
1. This is very similar to the idea of being sober-minded.
  2. I think what draws my interest here is the fact that having self-control is one of the evidences of a man that is being led by the Spirit and not be the flesh.
  3. In the book of Galatians Paul lists out the fruit of the Spirit and the final descriptive fruit in that list is self-control.
    - a. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and last but not least, self-control. (Gal. 5:22-23)
  4. This leads me to believe that an elder needs to be a person that demonstrates that he is being controlled not by his flesh, but by the Spirit of God; he is spirit-led in his walk with the Lord and amongst God's people.
- H. Let's take a look at our final verse for today, verse 9. Read it with me.
- VII. Titus 1:9; A Man of the Word
- A. Here in verse 9 we see that a spiritual leader must be **a man of God's Word**.
- B. He must hold fast the faithful word as he has been taught.
1. And this brings up an important point. Before a man can become a spiritual leader, he must first be a spiritual follower.
2. The spiritual leader must hold fast the faithful word *as he has been taught*. This means that a spiritual leader must first sit and learn, before he can stand and teach.
  3. I think this correlates to what Paul wrote to Timothy when he said that a bishop, or overseer, must not be a novice, or a new convert. (1 Tim. 3:6)
  4. Sometimes people get saved and are so excited about their newfound faith that they feel like they are ready to go out and win the whole world for Christ.
    - a. And that is awesome. We need that sort of energy and excitement when it comes to serving the Lord.
    - b. But spiritual leaders need to first learn the basics of the Word of God before they can be raised up into places of authority. You need to know what you believe, why you believe it, and take the time to sit under faithful teachers that will train you up in God's Word.
  5. You can't give out what you haven't first taken in and received. And so spiritual leaders need to be those who have been taught the Word of God.
- C. And as they are taught the Word of God they then must cling to it. That is what is meant here when Paul writes that they must hold fast the faithful words that have been taught to them.
1. This reminds me of the account of one of David's mighty men named Eleazar whom we read about in 2 Samuel 23.
    - a. The men of Israel had retreated from the Philistines, but David and a few of his mighty men defied the Philistines and came out against them. One of them was a man by the name of Eleazar.
    - b. And it tells us in 2 Samuel that Eleazar "arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The Lord brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to plunder." (2 Sam. 23:10)
    - c. Eleazar grabbed his sword and would not let go of it. He continued to wield it over and over again in his attack against the enemy. As the day went on his hand grew weary, but his hand stuck to his sword, other translations use the word clung or froze in describing Eleazar's grip upon his sword. And God brought about a great victory that day.
  2. The picture is quite clear. We too must grab hold of our sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and continually wield it over and over again, never allowing ourselves to let go of God's Word. And in doing so, we'll see that God will continue to bring about great victories in our lives.
  3. If you want to be a spiritual leader, used of the Lord, cling to God's Word. Hold it tight and don't ever put it down and don't ever let it go.
- D. Now Paul lays out here a two-fold application of God's word for God's spiritual leaders.

1. For one, a spiritual leader is to be able to use sound doctrine, healthy doctrine, correct doctrine to exhort other believers.
  - a. The word exhort is the word “parakaleo” and it speaks of the idea of coming alongside someone and encouraging them, comforting them, providing help and aid to them, exhorting them in the things of the Lord.
  - b. Elders have a responsibility to care for and assist people in growing in their understanding of God and His Word. They are to use sound doctrine to encourage and build up the body of Christ.
  - c. A much needed work for the body of Christ to help us in our mission to bring the gospel to the world around us.
2. And number two, these elders are to use sound doctrine to convict those who contradict.
  - a. An elder has a responsibility to stand upon God’s Word when people try to come against it. He is responsible for sternly admonishing and proving to those who contradict the Bible that they are in error and in need of repentance.
  - b. This isn’t necessarily a fun job to do, but it is a needed thing. As shepherds of God’s people, you have to protect them from false teachers and from heresies that can easily make their way into the church.
  - c. And as we’ll see next week, Lord willing, this was something that was happening there in Crete even though they were just getting started.
  - d. Wherever God sows his seed of faith in the lives of His people you can be sure that the enemy will come along and sew his counterfeit.
3. God was doing an amazing work there in Crete and was going to use Titus for great things, but the enemy was there and doing what he could to stop the work. We’ll continue our study next week as we take a look at the rest of our text and why it was so important that Titus appoint these elders and spiritual leaders throughout the cities of Crete.
4. Read ahead and come back next week as we continue to make our way through God’s Word. Let’s pray.