

5. Learning to Become Qualified for Spiritual Leadership – Part 1

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to help women to minister effectively in the church and in the home. We saw that God has a great ministry for godly women who desire to allow the Lord to work through their lives as they follow the instructions of the Lord. In our next two topics, we are going to see that Paul told Timothy how to help men become qualified for leadership in the church.

In 1 Timothy 3:1, we read, “This *is* a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.” The first word that is translated “desire” means *to reach out for something* and describes an action. The second word that is translated “desire” means *to have a strong inner desire for something* and describes an attitude. If it is a negative desire, it is translated “lust”. If it is a positive desire, it means *a strong desire to please God*. This word is used in a positive sense in Luke 22:15 where Christ said, “Then He said to them, ‘With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.’” Here, we see that if a man has a strong desire to please God (the inner attitude) that it will cause him to work to become qualified for spiritual leadership (the outward action). We want to help our children work to become qualified for spiritual leadership.

In Titus 1:5, Paul wrote Titus, “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—.” One of the most important questions that we should ask is, “Was Titus left to qualify people for spiritual leadership or disqualify them?” Since the island of Crete is 160 miles long and had quite a number of cities, we see that the primary ministry of Titus was to help people become qualified for spiritual leadership. That is still the primary responsibility of every godly leader. This means that our goal as a spiritual leader is to help new Christians grow and mature until they become full partners in ministry. Timothy was given that same responsibility in Ephesus and the surrounding area. As a result, the rest of this topic and the next topic will explain our goal as we help our physical and spiritual children grow to spiritual maturity and full partnership in ministry.

Acts 14:23 says, “So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” Here, we see that Paul and Barnabas had qualified a group of two or more men to lead every church that they had established and they were called elders. In Acts 20:17, Paul began his farewell to the elders in the church at Ephesus. Then Acts 20:28 says, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” In Titus 1:7, Paul used the word “bishop” to describe the same people that he called “elders” in Titus 1:5. The words “bishops”, “elders” and “overseers” are used interchangeably because they are all talking about the leadership team of a local church. As a result, the qualifications that we will study in this topic are the qualifications for the leadership team in a local church.

In Exodus 18:20, Moses was given the three things that he was to do to develop godly leaders for Israel. That verse says, “And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the

way in which they must walk and the work they must do.” Here, we see that Moses was to qualify leaders by:

1. Teaching them the Word of God – knowledge
2. Showing them the way to walk – godly character
3. Showing them how to do the work – ministry skills

The first thing that we notice about the qualifications for spiritual leadership in the church is that they are primarily character qualifications. We show people the way to walk by our example, but they must also choose to follow that example. In contrast, knowledge and ministry skills can be taught once people choose to follow our example.

In 1 Timothy 3:2-3, we read, “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous.” The very first qualification listed here for spiritual leadership is that a man must be blameless. This qualification really summarizes the entire list as the rest of the qualifications all explain what it means to be blameless. The word translated “blameless” means *that which cannot be laid hold of*. This means that there is no obvious sin with which the person could be charged.

The first institution that God established was marriage. Genesis 2:24 says, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” “The husband of one wife” means that a man demonstrates his oneness with his wife by his thoughts, attitudes, words and actions because he is faithful in all ways to his wife or to the future wife that the Lord might give him if he is not yet married. We might call him a one- woman man.

“Temperate” means *free from wine*. Proverbs 31:4-5 says, “*It is not for kings, O Lemuel, It is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted.*” A godly leader is to be free from wine so that he can think clearly. That way he does not forget the Word of God or change justice toward those suffering from affliction or poverty.

“Sober-minded” means *one who exercises self-control in all areas of his life*. The word that is translated “of good behavior” means *orderly* and speaks about a person who disciplines his personal life so that the things that he does will bring glory to God. “Hospitable” means that *a person uses his home to make people comfortable* so that he can minister to them effectively.

The word that is translated “able to teach” is only used here and in 2 Timothy 2:24. In 2 Timothy 2:24-25 we read, “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.” Here, we see that a spiritual leader is to be able to teach with humility so that he can correct those who are in opposition to the Word of God without arguing with them. This is a key difference between the qualifications for an elder and those for a deacon.

The next several things listed all point out the way that a godly leader is to lead by example.

Growing Godly Family Series – Helping Our Children Learn to Grow in Leadership 5. “Learning to Become Qualified for Spiritual Leadership – Part 1”

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Ephesians 5:18 says, “And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit.” In order for a godly leader to provide an example, he must be controlled by the Holy Spirit, instead of being controlled by wine. “Not violent” means a godly leader is *not a person who fights or argues*. 1 Timothy 6:10 says, “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.” “Not greedy for money” means a godly leader provides an example because *he is content with what the Lord provides for him and is not greedy for more*.

A godly leader is also a godly leader with his family. 1 Timothy 3:4-5 says, “One who rules his own house well, having *his* children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?).” The word that is translated “rules” means *one that has been set over something as a protector or guardian*. In addition to the places where the word is translated “rules”, this word is also used in Titus 3:8 and 3:14 where it is translated “maintain”. Titus 3:8 says, “This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.” As the protector and guardian of his family, a man is to show his family by his example how to lead through good works.

When a father leads his family through good works, it becomes much easier for the children to respond to his leadership with submission and respect. Ephesians 5:21 says, “Submitting to one another in the fear of God.” Then, it gives six illustrations of what it means to submit. The fourth illustration tell fathers how to submit to their children when it says in Ephesians 6:4, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” When fathers provoke their children to wrath, they are failing to follow the Biblical requirement to submit to one another in the fear of God. If a father leads his children by love and example, they will learn to lead others by love and example. When a father drives his children by his anger and their fear, his children often become rebellious. The same will happen in the church.

Two final qualifications are given in 1 Timothy 3:6-7 where we read, “Not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the *same* condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.” A “novice” is a person that is “*a new or immature Christian*”. The sin that caused Satan to fall was his pride. Pride is the very thing that Satan has used to bring about the downfall of many powerful leaders including Babylon (Isaiah 14) and Tyre (Ezekiel 28). Satan and his pride are described in both passages. Ezekiel 28:17 says, ““Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you.”” Satan continues to use pride to try and get Christian leaders to fall.

The final qualification for godly spiritual leadership is the fact that leaders in the church must have a good reputation among those who are not Christians. Otherwise, such a person will be caught in the trap of Satan and have no impact for the Lord. We want to be an example to our physical and spiritual children to help them develop these characteristics so that they become qualified as spiritual leaders. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children develop and become

godly spiritual leaders.

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