

A Checklist For Choosing A Pastor

1 Timothy 3:1-7

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I'm going to read the whole seven verses and then come back and unpack it, beginning in 1 Timothy 3:1. "This is a true saying," or faithful saying or literally a faithful word, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt," or able "to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity," or dignity, "(For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without," nonbelievers, "lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

Spiritual leadership is so important. The church can only rise as high as its leaders. The church can't go where the leaders do not lead. As the leaders are, so goes the church; and when leadership is on decline in the church, so the church is on decline. I actually believe that in America today we see a decline of biblical spiritual leadership in the church, that we have forsaken God's model, precepts, design, and pattern for the church in that we are reaping what we've sown. Spiritual leadership is so important.

Paul's writing to Timothy who is a pastor. Remember, he was in Ephesus (Ephesus was a wicked city) and the church had been around a long time, actually about 12-13 years, so it was well-established but in need of making sure that those who were the leaders or the pastors had the character and the qualities that God wanted in spiritual leadership. Paul writes in these first seven verses, before he moves into the qualities of a deacon, he first talks about the qualities of an elder, or in our text tonight (verse 1), a bishop, or what we would most commonly refer to as a pastor. He tells us that it's a "true saying," verse 1. This "true saying" is a phrase that's found only in the pastoral epistles. It literally means a faithful word or faithful is the word. Paul used it in 1 Timothy 1:15 and 4:9, 2 Timothy 2:11, and Titus 3:8. Those are all what we call the "faithful sayings." Basically, what that means is that it's true, it's dependable, it's reliable, it's trustworthy. You could take what I'm going to say to the bank. What does he say? He says, "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

I want you to note that first off there are two offices (and only two) in the church. Those two official offices are that of the elder or bishop, overseer, or pastor; and the second one is that of the deacon. We're going to look at deacons and their qualifications next week as we wrap up this chapter, but so importantly (verses 1-7) we have the checklist for choosing a pastor and the qualities that should be desired in that man. I want you to notice that it's a man who desires the office of a bishop, and he desires a good work. The word "man" there does not mean mankind or humankind. It actually means male. Both the qualifications for an elder and the qualifications for a deacon are masculine. They're for men. We talked two weeks ago about the

role of women in the church where Paul said, “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence,” or subjection to the man and to learn in silence. They are to be learners. Now, they have ministries. They have opportunities to minister, but I do not believe that the Bible teaches that a woman can fulfill the office of a pastor or of a deacon.

The word “deacon” is sometimes found in the feminine, which is the word that’s used for the women that served, but there’s no indication that there was an official office of a deaconess. I thank God for the women that do serve in this church. It’s such a vital and important role, but I wanted to point out that the men were the ones who were called to be the spiritual leaders of the church, and he points out that a man (that would be a male) desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work.

The word “desireth” indicates a strong calling from the Lord, a desire, a yearning. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher, in his marvelous book, *Lectures To My Students*, talking to a group of young men aspiring to be pastors said, “If you can do anything else, then do it!” If you can do anything, and you can do it happily, other than ministry, do it; but only go into the full-time ministry vocationally, as far as being a pastor, if you can do nothing else. If you’re so constrained and so called and so clear that you can’t do anything else, you have to be obedient to the call. I believe that the ministry of a pastor, and I’m going to explain that this is not just a bishop, this is a pastor or an elder, that those terms are synonymous, so hang with me for just a moment. I wanted to point out that it is a desire at which I believe is a call from God. I don’t believe that any man should be a pastor apart from a sense and an assurance and a deep conviction that he is called of God. You have to know that God has called you. You say, “Well, how do you know if God has called you?” Well, He’ll give you a desire to do that—a very strong desire, a compelling desire—a desire that you can’t do anything else.

I have to admit, after 45 years in the ministry, that I’ve experienced lots of times of discouragement and have wanted to kind of walk away from ministry, but I can’t. I’ve even like, “Lord, if I could just become a professional surfer, Lord, please,” which ain’t gonna happen. “If I could just do something else, Lord, please,” but I have to be obedient to the call, to know that I can’t be really happy or fulfilling, and I would be out of the will of God if I were to leave the ministry because it’s a call that God places upon your life.

The Bible says that if you delight yourself in the Lord, He gives you the desires of your heart. That doesn’t mean that He gives you what you want, that means He puts His desires on your heart. If you love God and want His will in your life, then you start finding out that the things you desire are God-given desires, and then God will give you the ability. We’re going to see that one of the qualities that a pastor is to have is to be able to teach. I meet people, “We’ve got a wonderful pastor, and he’s just a loving guy but can’t preach or teach.” Well, a pastor has to be able to preach and teach because he is a shepherd, and the shepherd must feed the sheep. What does he feed the sheep? The Word of God, so he has to be a teacher as well. I’ll get to that in just a moment.

God will open the doors. You don't have to break them down. You don't have to make it happen. You don't have to promote yourself. Sometimes churches will pick a pastor because he is charismatic and popular, because he has natural charisma. Maybe he has a wonderful dynamic personality and is kind of a natural leader. Natural-born charismatic leadership does not qualify you to be a spiritual leader. It can help you when you're in leadership, but it can be a great detriment. Remember when David was chosen to be king of Israel, and Samuel the prophet had all the sons of Jesse line up before him? He saw Eliab, the oldest. He was tall, handsome, strong, good-looking, and he said, "That's going to be the next king of Israel."

By the way, with this election, I think you get elected to politics if you're good-looking or charismatic. I mean, if you're not very attractive and not a very good communicator, no one votes for you; but you might have someone that has really good character and can be a great dynamic leader but they don't have the charisma or the natural appeal. It is wrong. It is wrong. It is wrong, and it is so detrimental to the church to pick spiritual leaders based on natural charisma or good looks. Sometimes I hear people say, "Oh, he's fallen morally, but he's such a dynamic speaker," or "He's so charismatic," or "He's so positive," or "He's so uplifting." Those are not the qualifications. What we need to do is come to the Word for those qualifications. Sometimes it's political—who you know—and you become the pastor, and sometimes they pick based on a man's wealth. Sometimes men are in leadership because they have lots of money and donate to the church. That should never be a factor. So, he desires that. He's called of God, and you need to pray, seek the Lord, and wait on Him, and must be absolutely convinced of a divine call from God. It's not an occupation that you pick because you think it's comfortable and good pay, you know, kind of an easy life—you work one hour a week on Sunday morning and goof off all week and get paid really well, so "I want to become a minister." That's not the case. It's a divine call from God, but it is an office.

Notice Paul uses the word "bishop" in verse 1. There are three words in the New Testament that describe what we most commonly use today the term "pastor." It's actually not used that much in the Bible. It's used in the Old Testament only a couple of times. It's used in the New Testament when Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:11 that God has given "pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints," but I want you to take note. There are three terms that are synonymous for the spiritual leader in the church. First is our word "bishop" in our text. It's the Greek word episkope. We get our word Episcopalian from it. That word literally means overseer and has the idea of looking over or overseeing and keeping an eye on the spiritual well-being of the church. These are actually references to the one individual, the pastor, but it describes different facets of his ministry. One of them is that he oversees the church. It wasn't until the second century that a "bishop" was someone who was over a group of churches or over another group of pastors, but that's not what the Bible teaches. A pastor is a bishop in that he oversees the work of God. It's the word episkopos.

The second word in the New Testament that's used for the same individual is the word "elder." It's used quite often through the New Testament. That's the word presbyteros. We get our word Presbyterian from it. This conveys not his job or responsibility of overseeing the church but conveys the idea of his maturity and his respectability. He's an elder; he's to be mature. This is

brought into Christianity from Judaism in the Old Testament where they had the elders that oversee the 12 tribes and so forth, but this conveys the idea that he's to be a mature individual. It doesn't convey his age, so you can be a 20-year-old man and be a pastor if you are a mature individual. I actually was a pastor when I was in my 20's. I was a pastor before I was married, so I was very young. It's a quality of maturity and respectability found in this individual.

The third word is the word that we understand and use most often, that's the word "pastor." That word is actually latin for shepherd. It means to feed. Sometimes the word is actually translated "feed" in our Bibles. The word "shepherd" also means to protect and to guard, so we use the word "pastor." When we say "pastor," we're actually using that word "shepherd." This conveys the idea that he is to feed, lead, protect, guard, and to watch over the sheep. A shepherd worth his salt protects the sheep from the wolves. What would you think of a shepherd that just allowed wolves to come eat their sheep? He needs to go in another job. What would you think of a shepherd that didn't feed his sheep, take them to pastures and feed them? What would you say of a shepherd that didn't lead the sheep? He has to be a leader by example, and we're going to see that in these qualities. So, he is a bishop or overseer. He is an elder, a mature respectable individual, and he is a pastor or a shepherd as we're going to see, who feeds, protects, guards, watches over, and leads the flock.

Verse 1 is just an introduction to the office of this bishop, elder, pastor, or overseer. Notice that he desires what is a "good work." Believe me, it is a work, but it is a good work and a blessed work. As I was reading that over this morning and studying for tonight, I just stopped and gave thanks to the Lord that for all these years that God has privileged and blessed and allowed me to be a pastor. He, I believe, called me, that He's equipped and enabled me, all by His grace—not because I deserved it, not because I earned it, not because of any merit or anything of myself, it was all the grace of God—and God has kept and sustained me by His grace, and it's a privilege.

The church belongs to God. It's the family of God. It's not my church, it's God's church, and you're God's people. The church is not a building of bricks, mortar, stone and metal. The church is people. Amen? It's the family of God, so the family needs the spiritual oversight and leaders that are mature, that care, feed, and lead the flock of God. It's a work, and it's a good work.

There are four divisions to these qualifications I want to give you. The first is his personal life (verses 2-3), the second is his family life (verses 4-5), the third is his spiritual life (verse 6), and the fourth category of qualifications is in verse 7, his life before the unbelieving or unsaved world. Let's look at them individually. First, is his personal life, and hang on. There are 13 qualities (verses 3-4) that are to be found in this spiritual leader, this pastor. Let's read verses 2-3 again. "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous." Here's quality number one. Let me say that the focus in this passage is on the character not the job description. That always should be the priority. The priority should be a man's character, not the job that he's to do. There's a lot in the

Bible about what a pastor is to be and do, but the focus in the Scriptures is on his character. I think in church today, if we paid more attention to the character of our spiritual leaders, we would see the church prosper and flourish. Number one, he's to be blameless. How's that for the top of the list? Blameless.

Blameless does not mean sinless, okay? The pastor doesn't have to glow in the dark. The pastor doesn't float over the ground. He's not perfect in all ways, but he's to be blameless. Actually, this is the one overarching quality. All these other qualities are aspects of his blameless character, so they grow out of his blamelessness. Now, what does the word "blameless" mean? It means literally without reproach or can't get a handle of. What it means is—listen to me carefully—it doesn't mean that you can stop people from accusing the pastor of something but means that he lives in such a way that the accusations don't stick. It means any accusations that come against him have no basis, and that does happen. People say, "Oh, the pastor this," or "The pastor that," but if the pastor is living a blameless life—it's a life above reproach—it will not stick. The word literally has the idea of nothing to hold onto or grab ahold of. When people examine the life of the pastor, there's no real faults or problems or sins that they can really hang onto or get ahold of. Daniel was a man who lived blamelessly as we read in the book of Daniel. He was a man of blameless character, and there was no fault found in him. In 1 Timothy 6:14, the word is translated "unrebukeable," so there's no rebuke that can be brought against him because they're living a blameless life. Again, remember, as Christians, we are to live a blameless life.

I want you to notice the second quality or character; that is, he is to be the husband of one wife. We're going to get to the requirements for his family as that of a parent watching over his children in his household, but right off the bat he's to live blamelessly and to be the husband (verse 2) of one wife. Now, this one statement is probably of all the statements made about a pastor, the most difficult to interpret, and I confess that. I've studied it. I've preached it. I've looked at it. I've dealt with it for many years, and it's probably the one quality that has caused the most debate, discussion, tension, and even division over. Here are some of the views of what does it mean a husband of one wife. There's a Roman Catholic view, that is, that the pastor should not get married, that he should be married to the church, that the "one wife" is the Catholic church. I reject that view for obvious reasons. I don't think that's what's being said there. There is no indication that a pastor cannot be married, "Marriage is honourable in all." Marriage is the divine institution, and I would say the Catholic church has made a huge, huge error in requiring celibacy of priests that God actually would like to have a wife. The Bible says, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD," so I don't believe it's talking about you gotta be married to the church by any means.

The second interpretation is that it says "one wife" so it means that he should not be a polygamist. I believe that this is just to be taken for granted. I believe it's unnecessary to make a statement like that. God has ordained that a man should "...leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." God's design for marriage is one spouse—husband and wife. Polygamy is not taught, encouraged, or endorsed in the Bible. Obviously, for obvious reasons, the pastor should not be a polygamist, which, of course, the

Mormon church has erred in this category.

The third view is that a man must be married to be a pastor. That's not, again, what the text is saying. It says, "...the husband of one wife," not the pastor must be married. It doesn't say that. I was a pastor for five years before I got married. I'll never forget the Sunday I got up and announced that Kristy and I were getting married. Everybody clapped, "Praise God! Our prayers have been answered! Our pastor's finally gonna get hitched," you know, "He's gonna be a married man." It's okay if a pastor is single. One of my favorite authors and pastor and spiritual leaders is a man by the name of John R.W. Stott. He's gone to be with the Lord, but he chose, by call of God, never to marry to devote himself to the ministry; and that was a call and a gifting that God had given to him—certainly not one He'd given to me. I've been married now going on, in a few weeks, 41 years; and I thank God for my wife.

Another view is, and I probably shouldn't waste my time telling you all these views I don't agree with, that he should only have one wife in his lifetime. This is where it gets a little sticky, that if a pastor's wife dies, he can't remarry—husband of one wife. No where in the Bible does it say that if your spouse dies you can't remarry. It's encouraged in the Bible. I mean, you're just reading that into the text that he can only have been married once, which means obviously that a pastor cannot have been divorced or married multiple times. That is the fifth view, only one living wife, so no divorce. They teach that if you have been divorced you cannot remarry, and that you should have only one living wife.

I do believe that it's ideal that a pastor has been married only once. If his wife dies, he's free to remarry. I also believe that if you were married and divorced for biblical reasons, and it was before you were saved, and you were born again, that old things pass away, all things become new. This is where it gets pretty sticky. There are things that can come from a man's past that can cause people to stumble or be an offense. I do thank the Lord that having called me to pastoral work, having called me to ministry, that I have married only once, and I've been married only to one woman my whole life. I haven't been married any other time. I haven't been divorced. It's not a part of my life. Again, I don't take any credit for that, it's the grace of God and the goodness of God. I don't believe that it's really saying that. There are denominations that will not allow a man to be a pastor, a bishop, or an elder if there's any divorce for any reason anywhere in his background or in his past.

The phrase (and this is where it gets to what I believe to be the interpretation) literally means a one-woman man. The husband of one wife literally could be rendered a one-woman man. That means that he is devoted to his wife and only his wife. He has eyes only for his wife and is committed to his wife, so he's married and devoted to his wife. I believe that as a man's marriage goes, so goes his ministry. I don't believe it's possible for man to minister the gospel and to be an example to the church if his marriage has failed. He may be innocent. He may not be a part of it, but I believe that it's best for him to step back lest he be a stumbling block and an offense to other people if his marriage does dissolve or his marriage is in strife. There are times that pastors have had to take a sabbatical or leave of absence or step aside to work on their marriage, and I've always encouraged pastors that if your marriage isn't what it's

supposed to be, then you need to pull out of ministry and focus on your marriage until your marriage becomes what God wants it to be so that you can be the example that God wants you to be in the flock. You know, when you look at 1 Peter 3 where it talks to the husbands "...dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life," it says, "that your prayers be not hindered."

Again, that doesn't mean that the pastor's marriage is absolutely perfect. I chuckle a little bit there because neither he nor his wife are perfect. You take two people and put them together in marriage, what do you got? You've got sometimes problems, right? Nobody wants to say, "Amen." "Amen! Preach it, brotah!" You don't want to get in trouble. I know that if I'm not treating my wife properly or in harmony with my wife or in proper fellowship with her, I can't preach the way I should. I can't pastor the way I should, so it's a motive for me to stay right in my relationship to my wife in ministry. It's so very important.

So, "...blameless, the husband of one wife," and we need to move along. There's 13 qualities here, "vigilant," verse 2, which means temperance in all areas of life. It has the idea of living moderately or living a cautious or winsome life, that you're vigilant. You look around and you're watching what's going on. You're living cautiously or you have an ordered life. Then, "sober," vigilant and sober are closely related to each other, so we're living moderately, we look around, we know what's going on. We have an ordered life, as some translations have, and they are to be "sober," verse 2, or sober-minded. It's an attitude that is prudent or thinks straight. They're not intoxicated by either alcohol or the things of the world. They think biblically. They think soberly. They think clearly.

Notice also in verse 2 that they are to be "of good behaviour." That's the fifth quality. This means respectable or an orderly life. We actually have our word "cosmos" from this concept. When it spoke of the women two weeks ago, it spoke of them dressing modestly. The same Greek word is used here, so we're to live a modest life. We're not to be given over to crazy extremes. As a pastor of a church, you shouldn't be extreme in any area or imbalanced in your life. You should be an organized person in all areas of life, in your planning and in your purpose.

Sixthly, "given to hospitality," verse 2. Now, "given to hospitality" doesn't mean that you invite people over to your house that are your friends that you like. It can involve that, but the phrase literally means (by the way, this is a quality that all Christians should have) loving strangers. That's literally what the phrase means. I believe that at church we should love people that are different than we are and people who come new to the church. Some churches simply don't grow because they don't want to. They have this kind of, "Us four, no more, shut the door" mentality, and when someone new comes in, it's like, "Who are you? What are you doing here?" You come to church on Sunday, "Well, they're sitting in my pew. Excuse me, but that's my spot." They have this idea of, "Well, you know, we have our little group and our little kind of fellowship, and we don't want anyone to rock the boat or anyone new to come, especially if they're different, odd, or out of the norm."

God wants us to love strangers, and we need to do that. We need to reach out in love to those.

I believe, to apply this, that not only the pastor but we as the people of the church should be reaching out to newcomers and to strangers, that you ought to actually invite people over to your house for a meal, for fellowship. You should reach out to them, show yourself to be friendly, and open your heart and your home. That's what hospitality means, and especially to be a spiritual leader in the church, you have to have an open home and show hospitality to people that are even considered strangers because the church is the family of God.

Seventhly, we come (verse 2) to, "apt to teach," in the King James Bible, or able or have an ability to teach. (We will get moving a little faster here. Don't freak out.) A pastor must have an ability to teach. You can be a pastor without having pulpit ministry, but you can't be a pastor without being able to open your Bible and explain the gospel or to teach the Word of God or to communicate it to others or explain the things of God. You need to know your Bible and be able to communicate God's Word to others. That's an evidence of a calling. In Ephesians 4:11 where the word "pastor" is used, it actually is hyphenated in the Greek. It's actually pastor-teachers, so it's not just pastors but actually one person who is the pastor-teacher, and I don't believe that you can be a pastor without being a teacher. You can be a teacher without being a pastor, but you can't be a pastor without being a teacher. If a shepherd has to feed the sheep, he does that by teaching the Word of God. Paul tells us it's for the perfecting or the maturing of the saints, so he teaches the new believers and deepens their understanding. He grows up believers in Christ.

In 2 Timothy 4, Paul tells Timothy as a pastor to preach the Word, to herald the Word, to proclaim the Word—nothing more, nothing less. He says, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." In 1 Peter 5, Peter is writing to pastors and actually says, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder...Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof," so it's important that a pastor be a teacher of the Word.

Charles Erdman, the great Princeton theologian who has written an excellent set of commentaries on the New Testament says about this. He said,

It was necessary, therefore, that those officers who were given oversight of the larger congregations should be "apt to teach." Only thus, by placing upon these leaders responsibility for doctrine as well as for discipline, could the rising heresies be rebuked and the purity of the gospel preserved. Nor is there less need today for a teaching ministry. One who presides over the spiritual interests of a modern congregation should possess not merely the moral and spiritual qualifications Paul here enumerates, but should also be "apt to teach." A shepherd must feed his flock; a pastor must break the bread of life for his people and must rightly divide the word of truth. Ability for this sacred task is the supreme requirement for those to whom is entrusted the care of souls.

That's so important. Again, God calls the pastor to feed the sheep the Word of God and the importance of sound doctrine.

Notice the eighth quality in verse 3, he's "Not given to wine." Again, this is a touchy issue in our culture today where alcohol is so prevalent and people will point out that it doesn't say that he can't drink wine but he's not to be given to wine. The phrase in the Greek literally is not beside the wine. The inference is, some translations have, doesn't tarry long at the wine. In other words, he doesn't drink a lot of wine. In those days everyone drank wine, and wine came in all different shapes and sizes. They would water the wine down so that it wouldn't be alcoholic or have any potency, but it was a dangerous thing to drink too much wine or to tarry long at the wine. He's basically saying that they should not be given over to alcohol or to drinking.

In Ephesians 5:18, Paul tells the believers there, all Christians, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." Today it's a big issue, and Christians are exercising more and more of their liberty to drink. They forget the principles of not stumbling other people, walking in love toward other people, and to be careful that they're not brought into bondage. My conviction (and this isn't from the Scriptures, this is just my conviction) is that a pastor should not touch alcohol at all. I don't touch it, and I don't want our staff here to do that. You say, "Well, you can't really restrict them because the Bible doesn't," but I believe that lest we stumble someone, lest we offend someone, lest we're brought into bondage. It's a very dangerous thing. There's plenty of things that you can drink that are non-alcoholic. You don't need to drink alcohol. It's a very dangerous thing, so I practice and I promote total abstinence. If you want to have a glass of wine, that's between you and the Lord, but you shouldn't do it in the way that should offend someone else or cause someone else to stumble. You have to ask yourself, "Am I doing it for the glory of God?" in practicing Christian principles of liberty and making sure that you're walking in love and that you're doing it for the glory of God. Certainly, spiritual leaders are not to tarry long at wine.

Notice what's next, and I like to think the two go together, in the King James is, "...no striker." There's a series of "not's," but here's the "no," "...no striker," not pugnacious, some translations have, and some have, not violent but gentle. Basically, do you know what that means? Pastors shouldn't go around punching people out. It's not a good idea if you see Pastor Miller at the store saying, "I saw Pastor Miller, and he got in a fight in the parking lot and punched a guy out." It's not a good idea if I come to preach on Sunday and I got bruises, a tooth missing, "I got in a fight this week! But, you should've seen the other guy!" "Alright, go get 'em, Pastor Miller," not pugnacious, not a striker, and not getting in fights. Years ago, I was with a pastor that one time almost got in a fist fight. It's a very dangerous, dangerous thing. Many times alcohol leads to fighting, so he starts with not given to wine, not a fighter, not a brawler, but gentle.

The next quality (verse 3), "...not greedy of filthy lucre," not only does satan use women to destroy men in the ministry but also uses money, and we know that's very common. So, he's to be the husband of one wife, a one-woman man, and he's not to be greedy of filthy lucre, which is money. No pastor should ever go into the ministry motivated by a desire for gain, and that should never be the issue. If God's called you, you preach the gospel and trust Him to take care of your needs. When Paul wrote to Timothy, he told him that he's not to be greedy of filthy lucre. In 1 Peter 5, again, when Peter wrote to the elders or the pastors, he said, "...not for filthy lucre," sake. When Paul was preaching the gospel, he labored with his hands night and

day so he wouldn't be chargeable to anyone. Not only do a lot of pastors get in trouble with women, they get in trouble with money, and I stay as far away from money as I can.

I have no idea who gives or what's going on in that department. I oversee the overall spending of the church, but it doesn't have anything to do with my salary or compensation or what comes to me. I'm just paid like anyone else, and I keep a distance from it. I never count the offering. I never see the offering. I never touch the offering. I'm never around the offering. I've nothing to do with that, and I never know who gives or what is being given by any individual. Certainly, the ministry is not a place to get rich. When we get to 1 Timothy 6, it says there are those that teach that godliness is a way to get rich. Paul says to Timothy, "...from such withdraw thyself." It does tell us in 1 Timothy 5:17, though, that a pastor should be compensated. He should be provided for, he should be supported, and it should be based on his commitment to sound doctrine in his teaching of the Word.

Then notice eleventh (verse 3), "...but patient," that means ready to forgive. It's gentle toward people. It's getting along with, forgiving, and loving people. Notice twelfth, (verse 3) "...not a brawler," so there's a striker, now there's a brawler, translated that in the King James Bible; but it has the idea of peaceable not contentious. It doesn't argue or fight with people. Some translations have literally without war. You know, what good is a spiritual leader if he's arguing or fighting with everybody. Even when it comes to theological or doctrinal issues, you're not to be arguing or fighting with people. You're to be seeking to walk together in love and unity.

Lastly, as it pertains to his personal life, a pastor is "...not covetous." Not a lover of silver is how that should be literally translated, not a lover of silver, covetous. The tenth of the decalogue or the Ten Commandments is, "Thou shalt not covet," anything that is thy neighbor's. I love when Samuel the prophet came to the end of his ministry and said, "I haven't coveted anyone's house, land, donkeys or cattle, or anything; and that's the way a pastor ought to end his ministry, that he has not coveted anyone's things. In Hebrews 13:5 it says that all of us believers should "...be without covetousness," because the Lord has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Let's move through these next three qualities of the pastor. The next one is family life (verses 4-5). He is "One that ruleth well his own house," he's to manage or to lead his house well, "having his children in subjection with all gravity," dignity, and he gives us the reason (verse 5) "(For if a man know not how to rule his own house," then the question is, "how shall he take care of the church of God?)" That's a good question, so a man is to be—first priority—taking care of his family. This is kind of a famous scenario, too. A lot of pastors lose their own children. I've always considered that if I lose my wife or my children that I lose my ministry, that my priority is my relationship to God, my marriage, my children, and being committed to and leading them. That doesn't mean that you're perfect. Again, it doesn't mean that your family glows in the dark, but it means that you are committed to leadership in your family, committed to leadership in your home, that you manage well your family, and you oversee the things of your home.

The word "ruleth" has the idea of to manage or to lead his own house and that his children are

in subjection. The word “children” there means dependent children, underage children. Once your children are adults and they go off and live their own lives, you can’t really hold a pastor responsible for all the conduct of adult children, and it’s difficult. Teenagers will be teenagers. PKs, or pastor’s kids, are human beings just like anyone else. We get this idea that the pastor’s kids, again, should glow in the dark and quote Scripture, you know, and be part of the “Deeper Life Club.” It’s a wonderful thing when a church can love a pastor’s children and let them be children and encourage them.

I’m thankful for the church that I pastored for so many years that my kids grew up in that church and had friends, had accountability, and others that ministered to them, watched over and loved them, and encouraged them in the Lord. We’re blessed in that way, that all our children married in the Lord, are following the Lord, and didn’t really give us major problems. I’m not saying there weren’t sometimes some tension in the home because they were sinners that needed to be saved, but a pastor needs to make the priority of his home. There are too many times that pastors find their kids are neglected for the work of the ministry. They don’t make a priority their wife and their household. It’s in the present tense. He’s to be constantly managing his own home, and the children must be in subjection (verse 4) which means that they basically respect and submit to the authority of their father in the home, and his parenting must be “with all gravity.” That’s referring to the pastor, or the parent in this case who is the pastor. It means he is to do it with dignity. He’s not to be a tyrant, but he’s not to be lax, and it’s, again, that balance of overseeing their home.

One of the most common problems that pastors have is their own families, their own children; which, by the way, I’m getting ahead of myself, but in conclusion tonight, it was an exhortation, a reminder, for us as a church to pray for pastors. We have pastors on staff here that still have young children, and we should write their names down and pray for them and be an encouragement to them and do all we can to help them.

The third category is the pastor’s spiritual life, verse 6 (one verse, one quality), “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.” What does that mean? The word “novice” literally means newly planted. It has the idea of a new convert—not a good idea for a baby Christian to be a pastor. Again, you can be young, but it’s important for him to have some time to ripen, to grow, to get roots in God’s Word, and to get an understanding of sound doctrine. I confess, this is one of the things that’s hard for me, being an older pastor and pastoring for many years. I’m sometimes like, “Ohhh,” to be able to entrust the younger guys or the younger generation, you know, it’s like I want you to be 65 before you get to preach on Sunday when, in reality, I should be moving out and they should be moving in. Age isn’t really the issue, but the spiritual maturity and the length of time to walk with God and to prove your walk with God, that you are strong in the Word and in the truth of God’s Word, and that you’re a mature believer.

You know, sometimes the church has made mistakes, even when a movie star gets saved they throw them on the stage too quickly and they haven’t had time to prove the reality and the validity of their conversion. Many times they come into the limelight and stumble or fall away.

Many times we push men into a place of leadership where they ought not to be and then they stumble and fall. We need to take our time, not be in a hurry, not newly planted, not a novice because the danger is (verse 6) that they could be lifted up with pride, so the opposite is important, that they be humble; but a new believer getting a place of authority and leadership in the church can become proud and fall into the condemnation of the devil. It was satan that allowed pride to come into his heart. He wanted to exalt himself above God, so he was going to be kicked out of heaven. This is a common problem. First, many ministers are destroyed by satan because of women; secondly, because of money; thirdly, because of pride. Those are the three areas that Billy Graham warned pastors of: women, money, and pride. Never take the glory, and I think it's so important for you to trust God to raise you up slowly and to stay humble. The moment you become proud, the Bible says the proud God knows afar off. God can't use a person who is proud, God uses the humble and the broken; so it's important that his spiritual life be grounded and humble.

Lastly, notice verse 7, his life before the watching, unbelieving world. Here's the conclusion, "Moreover he," the pastor, "must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." In verse 6, you have the condemnation of the devil. Now, in verse 7, you have the snare and the reproach of the devil. Believe me, the devil is real, and one of his number one targets is the pastors or the spiritual leaders of the church. The reference to those "which are without," is a reference to non-Christians, to the world. What it's basically saying is that when a pastor does business with non-Christians in the community, he needs to pay his bills. He needs to be honest, kind, a good person so that if you talk to the person that mows his lawn or fixed his car or works on his house or that he interacts with and say, "Does the pastor pay you for the work? Does he expect to get freebies? Is he honest? Is he trustworthy? Is he commendable?" That even non-Christians would say, "Yes." That you can not only interview their family (by the way, that's an important thing to do when you're considering a pastor—talk to his wife and kids and make sure that what he professes to be in the church, he is also in the home) but go out into the world. How does he treat people in the world? How does he get along with others in the world, the unbelieving world, that he has a good testimony, he gets a good report of them that are non-Christians lest satan bring a reproach and a snare.

Basically, for believers, what happens is we lose our testimony; and you, as a believer, need to think about that. Do you pay all your bills? Has someone rendered a service to you, and you never paid them? Do you get along with people that aren't Christian that you do business with, the people you work with? If we were to go to your job and ask the people you work around what they think about you, what would be their comments about you? So, it's important that we have a witness.

As I said, all of these qualities are to be true of every Christian, and we are to also take them as how the church chooses its leadership. We're not to compromise for the sake of popularity or because we like them or they're charismatic or because they're growing a big church. They are to be men of godly character. Last, but not least, having covered these verses tonight, you have a ton of ammunition to use to pray for the pastors in this church. Every one of these

qualities, you can go down the list, and you can pray for every one of the pastors in our church.
Amen?