

1 Timothy 3 (Part 1) :1-7 • The Qualities of a Pastor/ Elder/ Overseer

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Open your Bibles please to 1 Timothy. 1 Timothy is our current Sunday morning study, and we are in the 3rd chapter, 1 Timothy chapter 3. This is going to be kind of a challenging study for me, just from the standpoint that we're going to be talking today about the qualifications for pastors and elders and that sort of thing.

And yeah, so I'm a little bit under the microscope as long as, as well as our elders and that sort of thing. We're going to take the first 7 verses. So would you follow along as I read? I'm reading out of the ESV, it says this,

“¹ The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. ² Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, ⁵ for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷ Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.”

Let's stop there and let's pray. Heavenly Father, we open our hearts to Your Word today. We pray for your Holy Spirit to bring wisdom and understanding to our hearts so that we can come away from this study with a greater understanding, a greater insight of what you're saying to us in the Word and why it's important. So we give our hearts, Lord God, to You today that we might hear Your voice. Speak to us, we pray, Father, in Jesus name we pray, amen.

We've been making the point that the letters to Timothy and Titus, which we're going to take all together, were written by the Apostle Paul because these men had served under the Apostle Paul, and they were often left behind in certain areas to carry on the work.

Paul would come and share the gospel and gather together the initial church that were or that would become the church. And keep in mind, they didn't meet in church buildings like we do. They met house to house, and so often in an area like Ephesus, and Ephesus was a pretty good-sized area, there would be a lot of house churches, and so there would need to be a lot of pastors. There'd need to be a lot of elders, a lot of men who were going to lead in those individual house churches.

So, don't think of church like we do it today. They didn't come together in a central gathering spot. That didn't happen until many years later. So, it was a house-based church fellowship system. And often, Titus and Timothy would be left in certain areas, after Paul left, to go on to the next area to evangelize and start a fellowship or fellowships, but they would be left there to kind of do what needed to be done.

We saw it already in the first chapter that Paul told Timothy that he needed to silence some of the false teachers that were going on and there were other elements that he wanted to bring to his attention about how the church service ought to run, how it ought to be orderly and so forth and so on. We looked at that in chapter 2.

Now we come to chapter 3 and he begins to talk about leaders and their qualifications. And verse 1, if you look with me again, it simply says, *"The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task."* So if somebody senses the calling of the Lord and aspires to that place of ministering to the flock of God as he says here an overseer, Paul says, "It's a noble thing," doesn't necessarily mean that if somebody aspires to it, it doesn't necessarily mean they're called, but it's okay, it's a good thing. It's a noble thing to be in that position.

Now, I don't know if you have a new King James on your lap or you're looking at it maybe on your device or whatever, or maybe some of you might have an old King James Bible. Your Bible doesn't say overseer, it says bishop. And it literally says, *"If someone wants to be a bishop or aspires to the office of a bishop."*

And you're probably thinking, well, that's interesting. We don't have bishops in our church. I don't, I wonder if this is even relevant. Well, it is relevant. Let me explain the Greek word that is translated here in the ESV as overseer is the word "episcopos." And what the New King James and the King James Bible are doing in their rendering of that word as 'Bishop' is they're giving you a church title that is based on church tradition. It's not based on the Greek text.

And that's one of my... well, it's one of the problems, frankly, I have with it. I don't think things should be based on tradition. See, Bishop was a name that was given to people in certain positions much, much, much later on. And the Greek literally means overwatcher, overseer, somebody who oversees, watches over the fellowship, all right?

And so it's unfortunate that the word 'Bishop' actually appears there because we have connotations in our mind about what a bishop is. And frankly, that's not what the Bible says. The position that church history has given to bishops in certain denominational circles is frankly not consistent with the word. And that's what I want to show you. Because you see, there are three titles that are essentially given to leaders like this in the New Testament. And I'm going to put them up on the screen for you so you can see them with me.

- Overseer
- Elder
- Pastor (Shepherd)

They are the first one that we've seen, which is that Greek word, episcopos, and it is that word overseer. And then the other word is elder, and that's presbyteros, and it again, it is translated as elder. And then finally, we have the third kind of leadership title that is spoken of related to the leadership of the church and that is the pastor. And I put the word, shepherd, in parentheses there, because in the Greek it's the exact same word. You can translate it as pastor or shepherd and just depending on the context, it really because a pastor is a shepherd.

And what's interesting about those terms though is only two of them tell you what they do, right? Overseer, that's a wonderful word. A wonderfully descriptive word. It means one who watches over. And frankly, shepherd is a very descriptive word too, one who shepherds. And we know essentially what shepherding means taking care of, feeding, protecting the flock, right? What does an elder tell you about what that person does? It doesn't say anything, it's not a descriptive term. It was taken from, really, the history of Israel, where elders would lead in any given situation. They originally were men who were raised up to assist Moses in the wilderness.

Remember, we talked about this last week? When his, Moses' father-in-law said to him as he watched him go through a day, he said, this is too much for you. You need to raise up men who are going to come alongside. And actually, we talked about this last Wednesday when we were dealing with elders in our study of Ezekiel.

And so Moses raised up men to come along and carry the burden and they were called elders, right? That's a Jewish term, but it doesn't really tell you what they do. But we see from the Bible what they do, it was honestly kind of a term saying that the person was older. And it, the connotation, or the assumption is that they are wiser because of their more advanced age and that sort of thing.

Now, the interesting thing about all the titles that you see on the screen there is that even though they are represented by different Greek words, they're all talking about the same person. They are used completely interchangeably in the New Testament, and I'll show you a couple of examples. The first is from Acts chapter 20. Now this is when Paul the Apostle called for the elders of Ephesus to talk to them, and it tells us there,

Acts 20:17, 28 (NIV84)

From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

“From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church (and here's what he said to them). Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (episcopos). Be shepherds (or if you will, pastors) of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.”

In fact, if I take those terms and highlight them now in the same passage,

Acts 20:17, 28 (NIV84)

*From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the **ELDERS** of the church. Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you **OVERSEERS**. Be **PASTORS** of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.*

You can see you've got elders, overseers, and that pastor/shepherd, all in the same passage, he's talking to the same group of people. Paul called for the elders, said be overseers while you pastor or shepherd the flock of God. And that's an important thing for you to see, and it's not a fluke. When Peter wrote his first letter, he said,

1 Peter 5:1-2 (NIV84)

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be

shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers— not because you must, but because you are willing...

And if, we'll once again highlight the words that are there in that, you see them all present,

1 Peter 5:1-2 (NIV84)

*To the **ELDERS** among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be **PASTORS** of God's flock that is under your care, serving as **OVERSEERS**— not because you must, but because you are willing...*

"To the elders among you...Be Pastors (and I put pastors in there because again, it's the same Greek word as shepherd and then he said), serving as overseers..." So you can see in the Word of God, scripturally speaking, a pastor, an elder and an overseer are all the same, there's no difference.

Some people say, well, now what about deacons? I was in a church once where the deacons led the church. Well, then you, I'm sorry, that was an unbiblical church government system. We will get to deacons next week. By the way, deacons are servants. It means to do. We'll talk about what it means next week. Deacons don't run the fellowship. They don't have a spiritual oversight of the church. That's for elders, overseers, and pastors. They oversee on a spiritual basis. Deacons are doers, servants, okay? It's more of a practical, pragmatic, get it done sort of a function, rather than a spiritual oversight.

But you can see, again, from these two passages that I've shown you, that although there are these different words that are used for these leaders, they are essentially the same person. So the next question, I suppose, that would naturally arise, you know, why do we in the church today make distinctions between pastors and elders when biblically speaking, there really isn't a distinction, right?

We don't often even use the term 'overseers'. I use it when I talk about what they do, but we don't technically refer to ourselves as pastors or elders as overseers, even though that's what we do.

But here at Calvary Chapel we have pastors, and we have two of them. As a matter of fact, myself and one other, and Aaron was up here doing announcements. He's an assistant pastor. And then we have two elders.

And over the years the church has kind of adopted the title "pastor" singularly to describe individuals who are full-time Christians within, or full-time servants I guess I should say, within the body of Christ. And the term "elder" is used really in much the same way as it was used in the Old Testament, when the elders were raised up to come alongside the leadership of Moses. That's kind of the way we apply "elder" in the New Testament church today, although it really is the same term.

So technically, our elders are pastors, and our pastors are elders, and they are all overseers. But, you know, the fact that we might use them differently is really kind of irrelevant. I mean, we might say pastor versus elder just so you know what we're talking about. But you know, biblically speaking, we're all essentially doing the same thing. It's just that in our case, elders are also typically working outside in a regular job, whereas the pastors are doing this full time.

Now, of course, there's a lot of churches where the pastor works a full-time job, or maybe a part time job in addition to his ministry as the pastor of the church. And that's usually because the church is not yet at a place where they can financially support a full-time pastor, so he does what he has to do. It's like, Paul used to do that, would call it tent making today. After Paul, who made tents, he was a tent maker and so he did that to support his ministry.

But you know, there were also times in Paul's ministry where he accepted the support of a local fellowship, when they would send it. He never asked for it, but he would accept it, and then he would be able to devote himself full time once he received that support.

So, again, the function of these men is the same, whether it is full time or part time or whatever. And so what is that function? Again, what is the function of a pastor, elder, overseer? Where once again, we go back to Acts 20:28, we already read it, and we put it up and it's,

Acts 20:28 (NIV84)

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

And the reason I put this up here, I think this is probably the best description of a pastor, elder, overseer that you're going to find in the Bible. It is a beautiful description. So now we know what a pastor, elder, overseer does. And now that

we know that Paul begins to highlight the qualities that we ought to see in such a person who is brought into that role.

So if you look with me in verse 2, he goes on to say, “*Therefore an overseer must be above reproach...*” And interestingly enough, this Greek word, it's one single Greek word that is translated "above reproach," and it occurs three times in the New Testament, guess where? All in this letter. It does not appear outside of 1 Timothy, but it appears three times in this letter of 1 Timothy. And it essentially means that this individual has nothing in his behavior or his conduct for which people could bring a charge or an accusation. There's nothing going on in his life for which people could point the finger.

And I mean, somebody could point the finger if they wanted to, but it would be a baseless accusation, if this person is living the way he ought to live and is showing the qualities that he ought to show as that leader.

Now, as we go on in these following verses, Paul is going to describe a life that is lived like this, a life lived above reproach. And he's going to use different sorts of descriptive ideas of what it means to live above reproach. We're still in verse 2. The first element is this: He must be “*...the husband of one wife...*” And this statement is one that simply speaks to the pastor's heart of faithfulness toward his wife. Paul isn't saying that a pastor must be married. He's simply saying that if he is married, a pastor, elder, overseer, if he is married, then he needs to be a faithful man to his wife.

Faithful in all of their marriage relations and so forth. And by the way, he's not forbidding a pastor to remarry by this statement if his wife were to pass away. When he says, “*... the husband of one wife...*” that's not a, he's not forbidding remarriage in the case of a woman passing. He's simply saying when he is married to, to whom he is married, he is, you've heard this before, it essentially means in the Greek, a one woman man, sounds like a country western song, I know. But that's really is the essence of it, he needs to be a one woman man. He is devoted to his wife.

Next, he is “*...to be sober minded...*” And this speaks of a man who is able to think clearly, even in difficult situations, without being adversely affected by either the circumstances or other people. Because you got to know that a pastor, elder, overseer, always has people chirping in their ear. And there's always people who are coming up with suggestions, and thoughts, and ideas about how things ought to be handled. And a pastor needs to be sober minded so that he can think clearly.

Next, it says he must be “...*self controlled*...” And what that means is he's a man who can control his temper and he can control his passions. It is inappropriate for a pastor, elder, overseer to be the kind of a man who has a short fuse, who flies off the handle quickly and easily, who jumps down people's throats when they oppose him, or say things in a harsh or uncaring manner just because somebody's gotten under his skin. He needs to be a man who is able to exercise the fruit of self-control. And that's something you ought to see in someone who is called to that kind of ministry.

He also, it says, “must be *respectable*...” that's the ESV rendering. If you have a new King James, your Bible says, “*of good behavior*.” And the Greek word simply means orderly and proper. He must be orderly and proper and respectable because of that.

Next, he must be “...*hospitable*...” The Greek here means loving strangers, literally. And as you know, hospitality was hugely important in the early church particularly, as people traveled from church to church. Believers would travel, and many times there was no place to stay outside of people's homes. And so opening up your home to people was incredibly important and so much so that Paul said that quality ought to be seen in one who is a pastor, elder, overseer.

And then one of the... I think primary functions is found here at the very end of verse 2, he simply says, “...*able to teach*...” And honestly, I think this is critical. I think it's critical that a pastor can teach. Because when we look at Ephesians 4:11, which talks about various gifts that are given to the church. You'll notice it says,

Ephesians 4:11 (NIV84)

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers.

Well, the Greek sentence structure of that verse is some...is one that causes us to take that idea of pastor and teacher and to understand that it's a single gifting. It's not saying, people call this "The 5 Fold Ministry" all the time. It's not. You have an apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor/ teacher.

If you have a shepherd who doesn't know how to feed the sheep, you have dead sheep. Because nourishing them through teaching is absolutely essential. Absolutely required. And you know, we talked last week about the fact that teaching is not the same thing as preaching. We talked about the fact, you'll remember that there are two different words that are used in the Bible to describe preaching and teaching.

And preaching is more of that announcing and exhorting, where teaching is instructional, it's breaking down the Word of God and sharing it in a didactic, instructional sort of a way. And that is something that is absolutely essential for a pastor to be able to do.

Now, let me just say one other thing. When we think of teaching today, we often think of what you're seeing me do right now. And that is talking in front of however many people happen to show up on a Sunday and just kind of giving a lecture style study that lasts somewhere between, you know, 25 and 45 minutes or something like that. And you've got to be able to do that if you're a pastor.

Well, you guys understand that the way we do things in church today are not the way they did things necessarily in the early church. To teach is to instruct and it doesn't necessarily have to go on for a certain period of time and it doesn't even have to be a lecture style where people can't talk back.

I love teaching in small groups where people are talking back to me and giving me interaction and asking questions. "Ah, but pastor, I don't get that. Tell me how, da, da, da, da." It's still a teaching situation, you see. And you might have a pastor, elder, overseer who never ever gets behind a pulpit, never ever gives a lecture style teaching, but who sits down on a regular basis with other people and shares the Word of God, maybe with two or four or ten or one person, one on one, you can teach one on one. You see, we've got to be careful not to cram it into a certain style where it has to look just like this in order for it to qualify, you know. So I think that's really important.

Next, we see that a pastor, here in verse 3: must "... *not be a drunkard*..." And isn't that funny? We don't call people drunkards anymore, do we? I mean, that would be pretty offensive, right? If somebody, you know, drank a lot, we'd go, 'he's a drunkard'. It's just kind of in your face, isn't it? We say he's an alcoholic or he's got a drinking problem or something. We don't say drunkard.

I love how the Bible just kind of calls it like it is. And a pastor must not be a drunkard. And you might wonder why Paul didn't just say, well, he shouldn't drink at all. Well, the fact of the matter is, consuming wine was very common in that culture, and largely because they had a hard time finding good drinking water, sometimes it had a lot of bacteria in it, and it could cause all kinds of nasty intestinal issues. And so drinking wine was frankly a safer way of hydrating your body. But of course, you let the grape juice sit around long enough and it ferments, right? And then you drink too much of that fermented stuff, and you get a little loopy. And you start, you're no longer able to think with a sober-minded approach to things and all kinds of other things can happen

as well. And so a pastor, at that time, needed to be someone who exercised self-control and knew when to quit.

Now, we have an abundance of good drinking water today. And, you know, honestly I encourage whenever I get a chance to encourage pastors or whether they're functioning specifically as a pastor over a church or they're coming alongside as an elder, overseer, I just tell them, just don't drink at all. Just don't do it. And that's not a legalistic command on my part. It's just don't do it because number one, it's a danger to you, ultimately, but it is also a danger to other people.

See, pastors, elders, and overseers are an example to the flock. And you know, there are a lot of people in the body of Christ who can't take even one drink. They can't, because if they were to do that, there would be a second drink and a third and a fourth, and they wouldn't be able to stop. And they know that they have that weakness in them. And they're looking to leaders to show them the way. And if they look to a leader and that leader is drinking, you know, they could become emboldened to say, well, you know, he can do it and has self-control, so I can do that too, and then they fall into sin because of your liberty.

Now, do you have liberty to imbibe on occasion? You know what? Biblically, you do. You do. The Bible always condemns drunkenness. Please understand, it does not condemn all drinking. But if you've ever dealt with an issue related to drinking, just don't do it. You know, like they say, if you don't want to fall off the cliff, don't play around the edge, right? Just don't go there. Don't go there.

And I think it's important for Christians to be careful about not causing someone else to stumble. I've said this before, I'm going to say it again, if you're on social media, do not post pictures as a Christian of you drinking.

Can you drink? Yes, you have liberty. But don't do it. It's reckless of you because you probably have people who are seeing those pictures who can't drink. And they may be emboldened by you doing it. So just don't do it, you don't need to raise your glass of whatever in front of the camera. Just be circumspect.

Care about your brother and sister in Christ who are the weaker vessel. Care about them, care more about raising your glass to the camera. Care more about them than posting your picture on social media. End of rant. Alright.

Next, he goes on, we're still in verse 3, and you've got to wonder, if he's thinking about the somebody who would drink too much here, when he talks

about these next things: “...*not violent, but gentle, not quarrelsome...*” You know, I mean, some of those descriptions are what happens when people get drunk, you know? They can easily become violent and, you know, quarrelsome and so forth. There's no place for that for a leader, a pastor, elder, overseer, they are to be gentle. They are always to be gentle with people. And that means that a pastor, elder, overseer must not be harsh or severe. And this kind of goes along with that other thing about, you know, exercising self-control, right?

I love this next one too, he must “...*not be a lover of money.*” Money must not be on the top of his list of things that he cares about. And I think that statement is pretty clear, but Paul actually later on in this very letter explains why the love of money is a danger. Look what he says in chapter 6, 1 Timothy chapter 6. Did we put that up? Yep.

1 Timothy 6:10 (ESV)

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

“*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.* (I mean it says it right there, doesn't it? And he goes on to say) *It is through this craving* (a desire for money) *that some have wandered away from the faith* (altogether) *and pierced themselves with many pangs.*” Or as the NIV says, “*many griefs.*” And that's what money will do for you. The love of money will do that. And it is not to be seen in a pastor, elder, overseer.

Can I brag on the Lord for just a moment? You guys know that in 30 years as a church, we have never once taken an offering. Not once. We've never asked for money. And we did it, specifically because we don't want to bring up money. We don't want to sound to you like this is really important to us that we get your money. In fact, we've tried to even go overboard and tell you God doesn't need your money. The church may need some to go on to pay bills. God doesn't need your money. All right.

And so, what we've done is we've just quietly put offering boxes and we let you decide when you want to give and how much you want to give, and it's completely up to you. In fact, we've had people who've come to us and said, how do you give around here anyway? Because they like just missed them for some reason.

But please understand, that was purposeful. And it was really purposeful going along with this idea. We don't want you to think that money is this big reason

we want you to be here. But here's where I get to brag on God. We have never once ever struggled to pay our bills around here or to be able to give money to other missions or something like that.

In fact, God has blessed our fellowship so incredibly that I stand in awe of what He has done. I mean, He is just flat out amazing. And it's I feel like the Lord's just kind of saying like, you know, if you seek first the kingdom of God, make that the focal point, and that's what we've tried to do here, worship and the Word, and just, not just leave the rest of it out.

I mean, I've been to churches where they took two or three offerings because the first one wasn't enough. I'm serious. I was down in Oklahoma. And I went to a church, they took an offering early in the service, and it wasn't enough, and they got up and told everybody, so, that wasn't enough. We're going to pass the plate again, and then they did it a third time at the very end, and I was shocked, and I thought, those poor people. Because you know what they just conveyed to the folks? Money is important. It's really important around here.

People, the Word of God is important, right? I mean, that's what's important. So... God is so good. Just don't, and in your own life, don't worry about money. Don't worry about it. Just like Jesus said, "Is it going to change anything? Is it going to change the color of your hair?" (Matthew 6:25-34) Well, I guess it might. I guess it could make you gray. It's not going to be a good thing, unless you think this is a good thing. But this isn't because of worrying about money. This is all DNA. You know the LeBoutillier men go gray, and that's just the way it is. Thankfully, we don't lose it, though, so that's the good thing. It stays, but it's just gray. Anyway, but just don't worry about money, because it's not going to, it's not going to help. Trust the Lord. Trust God. You got money issues? Trust the Lord. God, I trust you.

And then in verse 4, he says, concerning a pastor, elder, overseer that: *"He must manage his own household well, with all dignity, keeping his children submissive, ⁵for someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?"*

You know, there's really nothing surprising here in these two verses because he's basically telling you to inspect a person's fruit. Because a person's fruit is always a good way of finding what's really going on. When you go out to an orchard and you want to know what kind of a tree you've got, you look at the fruit of the tree. And you can tell. There's no question about it. That's not a pear tree, it's an apple tree. It's because it's got apples on it. It's not rocket science. But this is the way we're supposed to determine what's going on in somebody's

life. And so he says, look at the man's fruit. And in this case, he's saying, look at the fruit of his family. And do you see that he has managed his family well, or do you see that he has not?

You know, Jesus used this same thing when it came to false prophets. Do you remember that? Let me show you, from Matthew. This is a great verse, he says,

Matthew 7:15-20 (ESV)

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.”

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. (And then he says) You will recognize them by their fruits. (And then he goes on to talk about how, you know, inconsistencies, and then ends the whole section once again) Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.”

The fruit is what the tree produces. And if this test can be used to recognize a bad tree, why can't it be used to recognize a good tree? And oh, and by the way, that does require a judgment on your part, okay?

You can't test fruit without judging it. Oh, but pastor, we're not supposed to judge. No, you're misreading that. The Bible says that you are not to judge hypocritically. You are not to condemn in your judgments, but you do need to judge to make an assessment. You have to, don't you? When you go to the store, don't you judge the fruit before you put it in your cart? Don't you look at it and judge it? Don't you smell it? Don't you feel it? See how it feels? What if somebody put a sign up there, Thou shalt not judge the fruit. How dumb would that be?

But Christians put up that same sign over all judgements, Thou shalt not judge. And it's this over, you know, arching sort of a thing that is not biblical. You have to look at somebody's fruit to judge it. You're not going to, you're not condemning the person. You're assessing. What do I see here? What do I see when I look at this man's life? And because, you know, I want to see good things.

Next, he says in verse 6, “*He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.*” Instead of a ‘recent convert’, the New King James says, “*not a novice.*” And in the Greek, it literally means newly planted, he must not be newly planted. I kind of like that. We would say today, not a newbie.

But it's not talking about him being a newbie pastor. It's talking about him being a newbie Christian. He is not to be a recent convert. You could have a man who's pastoring a church, maybe it's his first year of pastoring a church. That's fine, as long as he's a mature believer. He's been walking with the Lord for a period of time. And so, you know, to bring somebody into a leadership position too quickly, Paul says in these verses, is a dangerous thing. Because he, if he's young and he's raised up too quickly, he can swell with pride. And of course that can, that puts a huge target on him for the enemy. And so a pastor, elder, overseer needs to be a mature believer.

Finally, in verse 7, he says, “*Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.*” And when he talks about outsiders in this last verse, he's talking about unbelievers. He's talking about people outside the church. And so he's saying that he must be a godly man outside the church as much as he is inside the church.

And that just speaks of a man's consistency, the consistency of his life. In other words, he can sound all Christ like in the pulpit, but is he Christ like out in the world? Where the rubber meets the road. When somebody cuts him off in traffic, does he lose his Christianity for a moment? And become this worldly example of anger and that sort of thing. So how a man is in the pulpit, in the fellowship, he should be outside as well.

I mean, good grief, guys, how many times have we heard about pastors or leaders of some kind who have, just like Paul says here, “*fallen into disgrace,*” not because of the ministry they had, but because of what was happening outside the ministry? What was happening in their private lives behind closed doors or out in the world and the kind of a life they lived or led in the world and so forth.

So Paul is telling Timothy, as you're raising up pastors, elders, overseers for the church, Timothy, check their reputation with outsiders. Make sure that they have a good reputation with outsiders, people outside the church as well, because that is going to make a more stable church when the pastor has walked in these areas of quality and requirement for being in that position.

We're going to stop there and we're going to pick it up in verse 8 next time. And we're going to talk about deacons, what they are not, and talk about the qualities of a deacon. So, let's go ahead and stand together and we're going to close in prayer.

If you need prayer this morning, we'll have some people down front here, or you can just grab somebody that is sitting near you, perhaps someone, a friend or so and so, an acquaintance who's nearby, just grab them and say, I need prayer this morning, because we all need prayer from time to time.

Father, thank you so much for Your Word. Thank you for the wisdom that we get from Your Word. Thank you, Lord, for helping us to understand what we ought to look for in these people who are leading in the fellowship, in this position of the shepherd, the elder, the overseer.

Father, raise up godly men for your church. Godly men to lead and to bless and to encourage who don't have a personal agenda, but simply want to serve the Lord with all of their hearts and Lord make the church a safe place for people to be a safe place to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, a safe place to serve and to love, and to be connected.

Lord, we need this today, especially today in a world that is turning increasingly dark, it seems every day. We need to stand together, band together, walk together as the body of Christ. And we need godly leaders in the fellowships. Thank you, Father, for this Word. Continue to strengthen Your church until the day You come for her. For we pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, amen.