

CHARACTERISTICS OF ELDERS – I

1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

INTRODUCTION

- A. When we think of elder's characteristics, we often think of just four.
 - 1. Husband of one wife.
 - 2. Has Christian children.
 - 3. Is regular in attendance.
 - 4. Can teach.
- B. Our aim this morning and next week is to look at all that are given.
 - 1. We will not follow the order as given by Paul – we will look at them by subject.
 - 2. Consider your life as compared to these standards.

I. “ABOVE REPROACH – BLAMELESS”.

- A. Paul is not talking about sinless perfection.
 - 1. Reference to not giving evil man occasion to accuse or blame him.
 - 2. There are those who suggest “blameless” is the only qualification.
 - 3. All the rest describes what it means to be blameless.
- B. 1 Timothy 3:7, “Good Reputation”.
 - 1. At work.
 - 2. What do his neighbors think of him?
 - 3. Does he meet his financial obligations?
 - 4. What do his employees or employers think of him?
 - 5. What kind of language does he use away from Christians?
 - 6. How does he conduct himself toward his family?
 - 7. The private life of a bishop is the business of the entire church. 1 Thess. 5:12-13
- C. “Temperate, Self-controlled, Respectable, Disciplined [NIV].” 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8
 - 1. These words describe the orderly, controlled, spiritual, gentlemanly character of an elder.
 - a. He must be observed in many situations.
 - 2. Control of self.
 - a. Anger, gluttony, use of tongue, hobbies.
 - b. This self-control is actually “God-control”, 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
 - 3. Dignified – sober – orderly.
 - a. Characterized by “sane, safe and steady thinking.”
 - b. One who can keep the activities of life in proper perspective.
 - c. He can do and say the right thing at the right time, Eccl. 3:1-8.
 - i. A time to laugh and cry.
 - ii. A time to praise and rebuke.
 - iii. A time to express emotions and a time to control them.
- D. “Just, Devout” [Upright, Holy – NIV].
 - 1. Moral and spiritual character.
 - 2. His life must be a constant effort to please God. Romans 12:1-2
 - 3. Purity of character and devotion to God are evident in his life.

II. CHARACTERISTICS FREQUENTLY OVERLOOKED.

- A. 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7
1. “Not given to much wine”. Literally, “Tarrying at wine.”
 - a. Paul is talking of the one who becomes intoxicated.
 - b. In our modern society with the growing alcoholic epidemic, is there a way a Christian can drink without compromising his influence?
 - c. Not as regarding if the Bible “rules” against it, rather what positive impact does it have on a Christian’s life/influence?
 2. Not “violent, quarrelsome, overbearing, or quick-tempered.”
 - a. “Violent, quarrelsome” – chip on the shoulder, always ready for a fight.
 - b. “Overbearing” – arrogant.
 - i. Self-centered, self-willed, self-pleasing, determined to have his own way.
 - ii. An elder is to be properly contentious. Jude 3.
 - iii. Not wrongly:
 - aa. 1 Timothy 6:3-5
 - bb. Titus 3:9-11
 3. “Gentle”. KJV says “Patient”.
 - a. Word means “equitable, fair, moderate”.
 - b. Does not indicate a compromising attitude toward sin and error.
 - c. Jesus is a good example of gentleness.
 - i. Considerate and sympathetic.
 - ii. Yet, able to judge right from wrong.
 4. “Not a lover of money.”
 - a. Matthew 6:24
 - b. 1 Timothy 6:10
 - c. Should be an example of unselfish giving, service and sacrifice.
 - d. Another side of this: the elder who is overly money conscious will see the dollar signs and not souls as far as the work of the church is concerned.