

September 6, 2020 - I Timothy 3:2 / I Peter 5:1-4 - “The Qualifications of a Pastor”

Introduction

James Garfield was our 20th President of the United States and he was intensely religious as a youth. In fact he was a member of the Disciples of Christ and a lay preacher. However, James Garfield moved into secular and political concerns in the 1850s. He stated, “I am stepping down from the eldership into the presidency of the United States. It is an honor and privilege to serve as an *“under-shepherd”* to the Chief Shepherd who is Jesus Christ. (I Peter 5:4).

So, there must be a clear understanding of the qualifications for those leaders. In review we have learned that there is a tremendous problem in Ephesus relative to leadership. The Apostle Paul in writing this epistle to them exhorts the church through Timothy. Paul sets down the standards for leadership. Timothy, in setting things right in this church, will teach members how they ought to behave. He is going to have the responsibility of putting down the wrong leaders and putting up the right leaders. This sometimes is a process but it must be done for the betterment of the church and the growth of its people. We spoke last time about the calling and left off on an important concept of leaders being blameless. There are four areas of life in which he’s to be blameless first, moral character; second, home life; third, maturity; fourth, reputation.

I. He Must Be Faithful to His Wife.

1. We’re talking here about his moral qualifications. He is not a womanizer or a philanderer he is not constantly eyeing other women or someone else's wife. It is to be very evident that an elder is committed to one woman, his wife, whom he loves. He is a one woman man. The Greek text uses the word *“gynaikos”* which is woman. It uses the word *anēr*, which is man, and it simply says, “A one-woman man.” The emphatic is the word “one.” The issue here is a one-woman man.

2. What does that mean? It is a man devoted to one woman in his heart and mind. Timothy, when you put men in a position of leadership, make very clear that they are one-woman men, because that’s the only standard that God tolerates in His Church in terms of godly living. This is a man who loves only one woman, who desires only one woman, who thinks of only one woman, whose heart is for only one woman, and that woman is the wife that God has given to him. Proverbs 18:22 **Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.**

This passage is not talking about being a Polygamist. Among the Jews, polygamy was not tolerated so he is not talking about polygamy in this passage. Polygamy would disqualify you from even being in the church. This passage is not talking about in the event the wife dies. God honors a second marriage in the case of the death of a first partner. Widows should remarry we read this in Timothy chapter 5:9.

3. What about divorce? There are only two situations in Scripture which tolerated divorce. God hates all divorce, but is gracious to the innocent in these two situations: one, when a partner commits sexual sin, and secondly, when the unbelieving partner leaves. In those two situations, the Bible is telling us that a believer is free to remarry. However, the candidate must prove by his character he is a one woman man. Many churches will not even consider divorce men because it becomes very complicated and embarks on the characteristic of not being blameless.

4. The point I want all to understand is there is no issue here about polygamy or about a second marriage. Those issues are dealt with later and given in scripture for all to obey. Some have even said, "This means no single man can ever lead the church." That could not be true. Paul would be disqualified. The doctrine of marriage and remarriage is not address here but understood in light of others scriptures. It is his moral character that is the question in relationship to his wife if married.

5. The Greek text says "a one-woman man." That is not a phrase related to whether he's married or not; it is not a phrase related to whether he's ever been married before, whether he has previously been married before his conversion or after. It's not concerning status; it is concerning character. It is not a matter of circumstance; it is a matter of his virtue. Folks, the issue here is a man who is devoted to the woman who is his wife.

Imagine the agony the pastor's sin is creating in so many lives. What must his wife be going through? His children? His church? What about his own relationship with God? What about the lost people he was trying to win to Christ? What about the fact that his career may be over and he may lose his house? It's been said that sin destroys completely and completely destroys. It's a good time to reflect on the fact that sin is not something to be trifled with. Count the cost. Would it be worth it to you to commit the same sin in your own life? We move on to ...

II. He Must Be Temperate

1. Vigilant is the KJV word and it basically comes from a word that means wineless. The word *nēphalios* / na-fā'-le-os conveys the idea of unmixed with wine. He is not out of control of his faculties by being under the control of some excess, some other influence such as wine. He is unmixed with wine is the root idea. It is used metaphorically and it carries the idea of being alert or watchful, a man who keeps clearheaded. Nothing clouds his mind or his visualization.. He has a moderation of life in which everything is seen clearly so that he can control the diverse elements of life and be a model of virtue. Proverbs 20, verse 1, "**Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.**"

2. The word is sometimes translated temperate rather than having something to do with wine specifically is because in a metaphorical usage, it means to be alert, watchful, vigilant, clearheaded. You never allow yourself to get intoxicated. You're always thinking clearly. It is that inner strength that denies any excess.

III. He Must Be sober minded.

1. We learned temperate means self-controlled and thinking clearly therefore managing this is to be sober to be *sōphrōn*, *so'-frone*; this basically means to be well-disciplined. This is the leader who knows how to manage his priorities. He's got his priorities in the proper order. In fact, it carries also the connotation of a person who is serious about spiritual things. It carries the idea of a man with a sure and steady mind, who is not rash, but who is thoughtful and very serious and cautious in judgments. Judgments are made with great consideration.

Things have a proper place in time and in priority and he must have the ability of this to lead. His life is not disengaged, distracted, or disorderly. You must be saved first to even begin to qualify. --- Gospel

Conclusion:

A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way. John Maxwell once said, "Any person can steer the ship but it takes a leader to chart the course" These qualities are qualities every Christian should possess and be striving for. The leader is one with whom these qualities are evident in their life. Being a real leader is more than having a title; it is being able to inspire others to follow you. If a congregation wants its elders to be fruitful and successful in their work, they need to create an environment in which they may serve with joy. That is where we will pick this up next time Lord willing.

Communion: