

August 30, 2020 - I Timothy 3:1- 7 - “The Qualifications of a Pastor”

Introduction

Jerry Falwell Jr. has resigned as president of Liberty University after a series of personal scandals involving the revelation of a sexual relationship between his wife and a business partner along with his inappropriate behavior. Pastors and spiritual leaders are failing their churches by falling into all kinds of sin. Others take the position of pastor, elder or overseer who are not equipped or qualified for such. Some were never called into ministry.

The leadership of the local New Testament Church is vitally important. The late Dr. Lee Roberson use to say remember, “Everything rises or falls on leadership”. British Field Marshal Montgomery stated concerning this subject: Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose and having the character which inspires confidence.

We need leadership that is consecrated to God. We need leadership that is pro God and uncompromising when it comes to God’s word. We need God-called men in the leadership of our churches. We need leadership to follow the mandate of scripture and not the world.

In Jeremiah and all through his prophecy he indicates the failure of the pastors, the apostate people of Israel, and their leaders. Chapter 10 vv. 21 of Jeremiah reads “**The pastors” or shepherds are become stupid, and have not sought the Lord: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.**” Tragic judgment falls on all the people because of the failure of the pastors. Chapter 12, verse 10: “My shepherds have destroyed my vineyard, they have trampled My portion under foot”.

In I Tim. 3:1-7 there are sixteen characteristics of godly leadership and only two offices in the structure of leadership that of pastor and deacons. The author of I Timothy the Apostle Paul expresses the importance of...

I. The Noble Calling vv.1

1. It is a serious matter in the church of Jesus Christ to deal with the issue of spiritual leadership. And no person should aspire to that position without a very serious consideration of what is involved. We know from this epistle that the leadership of this church apart from Timothy had dreadfully departed from the Word of God.

2. First, we note the calling is to a man. The point that has already been made in verses 11 to 15 is reinforced in the masculine form of all the adjectives in Greek from verse 2 through 6. The intent of that is that these all refer to men, to the masculine gender. Furthermore, it would be impossible for a woman to be a one-woman man, as indicated in verse 2. So, this is a limited calling. We come to the heart of the matter: it is a compelling calling.

3. The main emphasis is in the word “desire” he desires a very noble occupation. What you have here is someone who desires to lead in the church, and pursues it externally because he’s driven internally; he is compelled in his inner most spirit on the inside by God’s Holy Spirit.

*** Patrick Fairbairn a Scottish minister and theologian once said that, “This desire is not the prompting of a carnal ambition. It’s the aspiration of a heart which has itself experienced the grace of God, and which longs to see others come to participate in the same heavenly gift.”

4. The desire is for the office of bishop, now that is the same as overseer, or elder or pastor. It is the responsibly to rule the church, teach the church, pray for the church, care for the church, set policy for the church, ordain others into the ministry, and be the example of godliness for all the people to follow.

II. He Must Be Blameless. Vv. 2

1. This most noble office is a worthy vocation, and it is good to aspire to that worthy task. However just because a man aspires to this office does not means he qualifies for it; it’s something else to be qualified to receive it. As much as a man is to desire being a pastor, it is the church that must qualify that man, or to affirm his qualifications. This is the church’s responsibility. Pastors, elders, overseers are set aside by the church, and ordained to ministry.

2. It is an unequivocal prerequisite that this man be blameless; blameless mean one “cannot lay hold on”. That is the basic overall requirement. It means not able to be taken hold of. In other words, you can’t grab him as if he were a criminal or a malefactor. He is irreproachable. You can’t charge him with anything. He is beyond accusation - that’s the idea. There’s nothing to accuse him of. He is not perfect but he has a good reputation outside the church.

3. This “man” must be a man whose life is not marred by some grievous sin, some vice, or an incident, or be it an attitude. It could be anything that will cause him to be accused. He is to be beyond accusation. That is, in his present or in his past, there is not to be some blight upon his spiritual life. I’m not talking about what he did before he was ever born-again. Now, that doesn’t mean he’s going to be perfect, and that doesn’t mean that there won’t be times when he fails, when he does something wrong. But it’s not something in his life to which everyone points, as an obvious flaw in his character. --- Give e.g.

III. He Must Be Faithful to His Wife.

1. He is not a womanizer or philanderer, not attracted to every skirt that walks down the street, not constantly eyeing somebody 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.”

We’re talking about his moral qualifications. The issue here is a one-woman man. What does that mean? It is a man devoted to one woman in his heart and mind. Hey, Timothy, one thing you’re going to have to do at the very beginning, when you put these men in a position of leadership, it will be made 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.

2. This passage is not talking about being a Polygamist. Among the Jews, polygamy was not tolerated so he is not talking about polygamy here. 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 women man. Many churches will not even consider divorce men because it becomes very complicated and embarks on the quality of not being blameless.

The point I want you to understand is there is no issue brought up neither about polygamy nor 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.

4. Also, we note temperate, being sober minded, of good behavior, given to hospitality, skilled in teaching, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous." These all are qualifying characteristic we will Lord willing work our way through the list the next time. However the pastor's blamelessness is first of all identified by this characteristic: he is to be a one-woman man.

Conclusion:

In my experience as a pastor for some 30 odd years I have notice this matter of a man's life that most often puts men out of the ministry more than any other issue. I have personally known a few pastors that this has happen to. This is why it is first on such an extensive list. This is a matter of serious concern, and such a mark of moral character. If a congregation wants its pastors to be fruitful and successful in their work, they need to pray for their pastor and his wife. Satan is always ready to destroy by any mean the shepherd of the sheep. ---Gospel