

## Selecting Elders

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Well, brethren, we are glad to bring to you the love and greetings of your brethren in Chicago. There are many more of them who are here who can each bring a portion of it, but we're glad to speak for all of the class to bring the love of the ecclesia.

One of the primary principles that is given to us in the scriptures is the principle of "*judge not, that ye be not judged.*" [Matt. 7:1] And yet there does come at least one place in our Christian experience, where we are called upon to make judgments. This may happen on a semi-annual or an annual basis in most ecclesias, and this is where we select the elders who will represent us in the study of the Lord's Word, who will be used in our ecclesias in the various official capacities of teachers and overseers of the flock. And the scriptures do not leave us without ample counsel on how we are to individually appraise the situation of who in our midst shall have the responsibilities of serving in this office. These are the scriptures that we like to look at this evening, and there are **three** purposes for our discussion. The **first** purpose is to assist each of us in that semi-annual or annual chore, and we'll put it as a chore, really it's a responsibility, of making a decision as to how we will express our conception of the Lord's will regarding who from our midst in our own ecclesias shall serve us as an elder. The **second** purpose is in the order and organization of the Church in the last, we once say hundred years, we'll say about the last 40, 50 years. It has become a custom, and we think a good custom, for brethren in one ecclesia to express their vote as to who of another ecclesia will come and serve them, even as we are sure the Jackson brethren have expressed their approval by a raising of the hand upon those who serve from the platform during this convention. And so there are many times in which we in our individual ecclesias have that responsibility. One to extend our hand, for, or not to extend our hand, for an individual who may be proposed or nominated for a service in our ecclesia. And here the same rule is applying, because the Jackson ecclesia as an example, by voting for the brethren who serve at this convention, for the duration of this convention have in effect voted upon them as elders of their ecclesia. The same way when we in Chicago vote on speakers for our conventions, approve brethren who are passing through, we are for the duration of that service, extending an approval upon that brethren as an elder of our ecclesia for that meeting. But there is a **third** reason we want to look at these qualifications, and it

by far is the more serious of all the reasons. In the sixth volume of scripture studies, a suggestion is made, and we believe it is an accurate interpretation, that the qualifications that are given by Paul in the book of Timothy and Titus for an elder are really the qualifications for a full, mature, perfect man. As a result, no one, but no one, measures up to those qualifications. What we are looking upon when we look to vote, an ecclesia meeting, is a certain percentage of those qualifications that we arbitrarily establish in each of our minds as what we think is a necessary minimum requirement. But they are fully lived up to the portrait of a perfect man. And as we look upon these qualifications, we are not looking upon them merely as a judgment line by which to decide who we are going to vote for, for an elder or a visiting speaker. But we should much more importantly look upon those qualifications as to how are we, brothers and sisters alike, how are we measuring up to that same standard in our lives? Are we applying these principles? Do we just expect them in some that we have respect to as leaders in the flock? Or are they principles that we are trying to apply individually as part of the character development that each of us must go through if we are going to be transformed into the likeness of our master?

Before we get into the outline of these qualifications, they are given basically in 1 Timothy the 3rd chapter and Titus the 1st chapter, we want to approach the basic question. We are speaking of these from the standpoint of our responsibility in selecting elders. What is an elder? What are his duties? What is expected of one in that particular position in the church? What do the scriptures outline as the role that an elder is to play in relationship to the rest of the ecclesia and to the other members of the church? There are many scriptures that go into this. We will be touching on a few of them. But first we should mention that in the New Testament, the English word elder is a translation for two different Greek words. Each of these words lays stress upon a different characteristic of the office of an elder. And you have to excuse my Greek pronunciation, it is no good. But one of these words is in my pronunciation, *presbuteros*. And this is a word that stresses the maturity of an elder. It is often translated “elder” from the standpoint of an elder person, a person of an older age. And it is stressing the mature qualifications, the maturity of character that one should look for in the role of an elder. The second word is the word *episcopos*. And it stresses the responsibilities of the elder in the oversight of the church, his responsibilities in relationship to the congregation as an overseer.

What is an elder? An elder is many things. 1 Corinthians 4:15 shows that an elder is a father figure to the ecclesia. *“For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.”* We think here that he may be stressing a particular role that

only certain elders play, but we think the ideal role in the concept of an elder. Of a father image, one who has the concern as a father for his children that the elder should have within the church. A concern to try to provide guidance and leadership. A concern not to provide lordship, but to provide example and direction to those who have entrusted him with this position.

The **second** thing an elder is, is he is an available communicator. Galatians 6:6. And as we look at Galatians 6.6, we want to acknowledge that there is a wide breadth of meaning possible in this particular passage. We are going to look at it from the very obvious surface meaning, recognizing at the same time that there is a deeper meaning in this particular verse. *“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.”* From just the English surface reading, we think there is a good principle laid down. Of communication between the teacher and the taught, communication between the elder and the ecclesia. And that the communication link is here laid upon the elder as much as upon the ecclesia. The part of the role and function of an elder is to be available to listen. To be available to communicate and to discuss, and not merely to present thoughts that must be accepted per se. But in the presentation of thoughts, whether they are the character concepts, the doctrine or the prophetic concepts of God's word, to present them in the manner in which it invites the listeners to communicate back, to correct if they see something that is missed. To question if they feel that the subject is not thoroughly covered. To talk about not only what he has talked about, but any other spiritual matters that may be of concern to them.

A **third** role of the elder is as the name applies and overseer. Hebrews the 13th chapter and the 17th verse. *“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”* The text here does not convey within its original language the thought of a ruler and a ruled. But it conveys within the language of one who has a responsibility for setting a pattern. And as one having that responsibility for setting the pattern of trying to uphold the principles of God's word, the responsibility for those of those who have chosen him, that if they are not following that pattern to be an encourager in an overseer to them, that they are not following that pattern to be an encourager in an overseer to them, that they have a responsibility as one who must answer as for their own souls. The various scriptures in the Old Testament that gave the responsibility to the office of a watchman in ancient Israel are very similar to the responsibility given here to an overseer. In fact the thought is the same. A watchman who stands at a wall looks over. Situation around, protecting the interest of those within. And so as an overseer, the elder should be on a position of looking

around the situation to protect the interest of those within. In the Old Testament, a watchman who did not give an alarm was responsible upon himself for the death of those who were killed by his failure to give alarm in case of approaching enemy or battle. And so the same responsibility is upon the ones that are selected in this office of an elder.

Another responsibility of the eldership is the eldership can form a consulting body, Acts the 15th chapter of the first two verses. *“And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. (2) When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.”* And then we have the meeting of the elders and the consul at Jerusalem, which was called to consult about a common problem in their midst. The problem was something which they uniquely, as overseers, shared. And sharing this common problem, they deemed it wise and profitable to meet together to see how they mutually could assist one another in handling the common problem before them. They did not have the authority to pass laws, but they had the authority to make recommendations as to their own actions amongst themselves, which were conveyed backward later to the ecclesias that had sent them for the purpose of consulting about this question.

Elders have the responsibility of assisting brethren in personal problems. James, the fifth chapter, and verse 14. *“Is any sick among you?”* And again, we think the thought of here is basically spiritual sickness, sin-weariness. *“Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”* We do not feel that the stress in this particular verse is upon a ritual, a ritual of prayer and pouring with oil. That may have been used in the early church we do not know, but we do not think that is the stress. We think the stress here is upon the spiritual meanings involved. That if one is spiritually sick, the greatest remedy that one can have is a fuller input of the Holy Spirit. That this is the solution for all sin sickness. But many times we come to a place where we can't draw upon that Holy Spirit, or we feel just sufficiently alienated. That we don't feel that we can reach the spigot to turn it on, to come to us. And this is where he gives the responsibility to the elders in watching over the flock. When they notice that, to pray with such a one, to take such a one and to mutually take it to the Lord for his assistance. And to anoint such a one with the Holy Spirit through counsel, through good words, through discussing a mutual situation so that the applicability of Scripture to a specific situation can be realized and realizing it, the Holy Spirit may flow upon that situation.

In summary, Peter describes the office of an elder in 1 Peter 5:1 to 3. *“The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: (2) Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; (3) Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.”* There are three basic principles that Peter uses in his summary. His **first** one is feed the flock. Before one can feed, he must be fed. Before one can teach, he must be taught. Before one can instruct, he must be instructed. This involves much study, not just of the word of God, but much study also of Christian living and of Christian life and of his own character and his own development by the elder. This is where the stress will be laid as we look at the qualifications upon this individual development. The **second** thing is taking the oversight, not of constraint but willingly. In other words, it is the thought of one who desires to utilize that which has blessed him, and blessing others. There is a scripture, I'm sure you're familiar with it, whereas he says *“he that desireth the office of an elder, desireth a good thing.”* [1 Tim. 3:1] Here is the concept of a desiring of the office, taking it willingly. Another may say, but such thing is pride. It is pride to have ambition for the office of an elder. It is pride to have ambition for the glory of any office, but it is consecration to have ambition to use what we have individually each of us for the helpfulness and the assist of one another. It is in this vein we think he is saying that it is well to seek the office, but in seeking it, one should realize that it is upon the basis of when the Lord selects, and not upon the basis of when one is ready, and that being then selected to take the office willingly, not of constraint, not to be forced into it, not saying, well, no one else would do it, so I will. But taking it willingly from the standpoint of realizing the blessings the Lord has poured upon an individual, desiring them to in turn share to others.

When I was first starting in the newspaper field, one of my first jobs was as a newspaper editor for a small paper in Brookfield, Illinois. And one of the first things that came across my desk was something I wish I had kept. It was a poem, a poem written by a high school senior at Riverside Brookfield High School, on why she wanted to become a teacher, and it was beautiful. And the refrain of the poem that came in at the end of every verse was “because I have much to give,” because she had realized the blessings upon herself, and she didn't want to hold them to herself. She wanted to share them. And I'd like to meet that person today. I bet she's a great teacher. One who would enter in with that enthusiasm because they want to share themselves is the same thing that we think Paul is speaking of here, when he said, take the oversight, not by constraint, but willingly, not for a filthy

lucre, but because the mind is ready.

And the **third** point is not as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. It is much more important how an elder lives than what he says. It is much more important that his direction to the flock be by example, by involvement, by totality of consecration, by trying to apply Scriptural principles, than it is by the enforced vocal insistence of conformity to his patterns. The one, the latter, is lording it over God's heritage. The former is being an ensample to the flock.

In this portrait of the role of an elder, I think everyone in the audience, including the speaker, should feel and will feel totally inadequate. It is a realization that it is an office that is far too ideal for any one of us who are merely striving to serve the Lord of what we have. It is an office that is above our best human endeavors. And the qualifications for that office likewise are qualifications that cannot be attained fully in this life. And this is why we appreciated so much the counsel in the 6th Volume that these are the qualities of a perfect human being, not that each other will live up to all of these qualities, but the standard toward which they must strive. What is it then that we must look for as we look over those in our midst to select them for the responsibilities, the awesome responsibilities, of the office of an elder, the office of a visiting speaker, or more importantly, what is it that we must look to in the Word of God to apply in our lives to have the Christian maturity that will bring us into the perfect man, Christ Jesus. They are given as we mention in 1 Timothy the 3rd chapter and in Titus the 1st chapter. Also, some are added in 1 Peter. There are 32 qualifications in all. And we are talking strictly about the qualifications for an elder at this stage, not the additional qualifications that are for a deacon. There are 12 additional ones or separate ones that are mentioned for a deacon. Now sometimes we distinguish between these two offices by saying the qualifications are the same except an elder must be apt to teach. But on the contrary, there are 15 qualifications for an elder that are not there in the list of qualifications for a deacon. There are many more than those that are listed. And one of the things we want to notice as we go through these qualifications is how the great preponderance of these, the vast majority, deal with the Christian character and the very few deal with the intellectual conceptions and the ability to use the intellect. And we think that it is a disservice to the Word of God to take the one or two and to exalt these above the 25 or 30 that list the other qualities, that it is a balance of the qualities that are given in the accounts that we must strive for. As we're going through these qualifications, we are going to relate to many other translations of the Scripture. And the reason we're going to relate to these various translations is not necessarily because they are more accurate. In this case, we're

more than just looking for a more precise definition. We're looking for the broadest possible definition to get the full scope of each of the qualifications.

Starting then in 1 Timothy, the third chapter with verse 2, "*a bishop then must be blameless.*" First qualification is blamelessness. One translation has it, "*he must be irreproachable.*" A translation we enjoy and this one is, "*he must be unaccusable.*" One whose life does not give that which would lay one open to a justifiable charge against his character development. That by itself disqualifies every one of us. Because every one of us has something in our lives that is not just right, something for which we can be justly accused. But if that's the basic, the primary goal under which all of the other qualifications fall, it sets the highest of the standards. And these other qualifications elaborate what makes one blameless. It is the description of his overall character. That as one looks at him overall, he is a person that one can respect. That, I think, is the key word. You can look up to the person as being one with whom you would say, yes, I respect that person as an individual. Not that I respect him as a teacher or as a leader, but I respect him as a man, as a brother. I respect him for what he stands for, what he is striving to attain and that's important. Not for what he has attained, only, but more primarily for what he is striving to attain. Because that is God's standard of blamelessness. "*If there be first a willing mind, it is accorded to a man by what he hath and not what he hath not.*" [2 Cor. 8:12] The Lord's judgments are upon the attempt to attain. So he must be blameless.

"*The husband of one wife.*" This we think is a very poor translation. It fits the words in the Greek beautifully. That's what the word says, the husband of one wife. But the words in Greek are in idiom. What we mean by idiom is they are a set of words that literally have one meaning but have a larger connotation in their usage. Wuest translates this, "*a one wife kind of man.*" We think that's getting much closer to the translation. Basic thought is a man of continent and faithful character. In other words, it is not describing the literal relationship of whether he's got one wife or whether he's never been married. That isn't the point. The point has to do with his character attributes. Is he a person who can restrain himself and confine himself and hold back the natural desires of the flesh? Is he a person that is overly tempted by the trait of lust, which is a characteristic of the human race in his present fallen condition? Or is he a person who is striving to contain this characteristic and is showing a faithfulness, not just literal faithfulness, but a mind faithfulness to his spouse? And as we apply this individually, we could just as easily translate this then, for the standpoint of the characteristics, "a one man kind of woman." That to the sister also, that it has the thought of the constancy of character, the thought of faithfulness to the maid. And as Jesus elaborates in

Ephesians [Matthew] 5, the sin of unfaithfulness is not merely an action, but can also be a pattern of thought. "*Mat 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: (2)8 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*" So it is this type of character that is described under a husband of one wife.

The **third** characteristic, vigilant. Circumspect is what many translations have. We like the Syriac here. It has "*an elder must be alert mentally.*" Mentally alert. Watchful. In other words, it is the thought of one who is alert to the dangers. Those of you who have been around enough years to remember Brother Don Copeland may remember the talk that he gave on Circumspection of the Heart. And it was one of the first talks I remember. I must have been 12 or 13 years old when Brother Don died. His illustration was one that I never forgot. He described the cat crossing the muddy street. And how after each step, he looked carefully where the next paw would go down. So that he didn't step in the mud because he didn't let to lick it off afterwards. And he was describing that kind of watchfulness in our walk. A watchfulness that looks ahead for dangers instead of just looking around and trying to devise a quick way out of the trap once we find ourselves in a trap. They have to avoid the dangers as they come. Not overly cautious, but watchful as it progresses. Progressively watchful. Moving but watching. Moving but trying to see that it is careful of what dangers a certain course of conduct, a certain line of thought, certain tendencies may have. Not being so quick as to jump ahead of the tendency. But once he sees the tendency develop to keep an eye on it. So that as it develops, if it becomes a danger, he is alert to warn others.

The **fourth** characteristic. An elder must be sober. This doesn't mean undrunk. Thought of sober here is a much different thought. One translation has it sensible. We like the one that says "*he must be a master of himself.*" Discrete. In other words, he must be one who is not rash, given to extremes. And this is a mark of maturity in each of our lives. It is very easy to ride the pendulum. Because we all find ourselves extreme in one thing or another. And when we do, we try to counterbalance by going to the other end. And as a result, we become swinging back and forth because then we see we're extreme over here and we come back over here. But to rather to seek a middle course. And therefore not being rash or extreme. To hold soberly and sensibly to what the Lord's word teaches. It has within it also the thought of not being a reactionary. One who reacts to stimuli upon it. We all have plenty of stimuli. They're all times when somebody is going to come up to each one of you. It comes to me at times. And they're going to disapprove perhaps rather strongly of me or something I've done or of you or

something you've done. And then this sensible, this sober person. Instead of defending self, will realize, I will think it over for what good there is in the criticism. And as for what's over, that's your problem. My problem is only to apply what there is in your criticism that is applicable. And so one is not pushed to an extreme. Pushed to a defensive position by criticism but rather alerted to the middle ground. And the same thing is equally true of flattery. Flattery can be a stimuli that can push us very quickly. Somebody comes up and say boy I sure appreciate what you did there. And we say I thought something. I'm going to do it again next time. We started getting ready to really appreciate that position. When we do we're reacting to that and we're being pushed to an extreme. But to rather take flattery with just a grain of salt and say well I'm very glad it was helpful to you brother or sister. But you know too there's plenty of things that weren't right about it. And to hold us within yourself and to appreciate the compliment for the help it can give. But at the same time not to be pushed to an extreme through it.

The **fifth** characteristic of good behavior. The Phillips translation says "*living a disciplined life.*" And we think that is a precise translation on this particular verse. Kenneth Wuest translation has it "*living a life in accord with one's position.*" And this fits well. The word good there is more the word fitting. A fitting behavior. A behavior fitting to your position in your office. To an elder. There's a certain responsibility of maintaining, especially, a character that is fitting to that position. But for every one of us as a son of God there is a responsibility living up to a life that is fitting to that position. We must be an example of the believer, and this requires studying to know what that position calls for. In worldly circles, the single greatest responsibility of an ambassador is to present to the people of that country the image of what people of his country are like. And he's trying to create that in the most favorable way possible. To show that his country is a country that produces good people. Friendly people. People who want to communicate with the people of the other country. "*And ye are ambassadors for Christ.*" [2 Cor. 5:20] And as ambassadors it must be this kind of life that is fitting to an ambassadorial post. That represents to those to whom you are ambassadors the world around you. The kind of life that those of your native kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, live. And as a result the good behavior is a very high characteristic.

The **sixth** qualification given to hospitality. Frequently we take given to hospitality as meaning having an open home. And that is good. That's a part of it. But it's only a part of being given to hospitality. Some of the most hospitable people I know are individuals who have no home at all. They don't even have a place to entertain. But they are hospitable. They are hospitable with one thing that is harder to give than the key to your home. And that is they give the key to their heart. They share

themselves with each other. They talk about who they are. Not who they are trying to be. They share their experiences. They talk with virtually any and all. And as a result they are talked to. And as a result they do the one thing that is probably the hardest thing for two human beings to do. Communicate. To get from this heart to that heart. What's in this heart so I can get what's in that heart. This is a difficult procedure for each of us. And this is part of given to hospitality. It is the individual who is looking for the brother or sister on the sidelines. Who is sitting alone. And making time to sit and to talk. It is the individual who is keeping their ear open for trials that the brethren are going through. So they can pray about those trials without busy-bodging. But at least keep it in mind in prayer. It is the individual that is trying to develop one characteristic above all others. And that is the characteristic that expresses itself in two words. I care. I am interested. I want to know you as a person and I want you to know me as a person. It is a person who may at times seem to be just a little bit of a bragger because he may be talking about some of his good points. But who at other times will see in a little bit like a person who came and has no good for himself. Because you also share his bad points. So that he can communicate to you who he is. That he has got some good points and he has got some bad points. And you are being to see a whole person because they are sharing one another. And this is part of the qualification of given to hospitality.

The **seventh** one is he must be apt to teach. There are many ways in which an individual may be apt to teach. Here too Paul is talking about the office of an elder. But he is not limiting himself to an elder. Because every individual, brother and sister alike, despite the fact that Paul says I suffer not a sister to teach. Brother and sister alike should both learn to be apt to teach. That is the qualification that we think is good for all. The method of teaching will differ between brother and sister. Paul and his sense of the reading of the scriptures, and we agree with him, did not see that to give the pulpit to the sister. But there are many ways in which the sister can be very helpful in a teaching way by her comment in a study. By her thought and fellowship. By the sharing of what she has studied with other sisters and with other brothers and with the elders and with the consent of everyone.. And this is a way of teaching because she is communicating something that she has learned to someone else. I always recall with the faint smile the opportunity had once of leading a study meeting in which this question came up as the sisters role in the church. And we were discussing the point should a sister ever disagree with the elder. And I help as a leader of the meeting but she should. And one sister said, “no she should not.” It was a little hard to reconcile a little hard time holding back my smile at the time. But the attempt should be to try to find the meaning of the word of God. And there may be times that each of the elders may overlook it. And a

sister tactfully, helpfully putting in a comment not as a “this is the way it is.” But rather “what about this point?” can be extremely helpful as a teacher. And that same principle of how a sister can teach from the audience in an ecclesia is how an elder should teach from the platform. Not “this is the way it is.” Because pretty soon each of us say, “yeah so you say.” But rather “this is what we gather from the word of God,” and we share it. Not shared dogmatically to impress. Spoken with conviction because it represents one's thought. But spoken with the realization that each of us as imperfect beings are interpreting the word of God. And as such it is an interpretation. Another good principle in teaching is the principle that Brother Deifer brought out years ago. We thought was very helpful. He said that an elder should have two pockets. One pocket for his facts, one pocket for his opinions and the wisdom to know which pocket is which. And we think this is the part we often lack as we get our notes mixed up and I do this frequently I go my opinion pocket and I pull out something that is true. And I pull out my my fact pocket and I pull out a pure opinion and I read it as fact. And this is where in teaching we should separate and have the knowledge to separate that which we are trying to understand with that which we are convicted as being true because we have a thus the word of God.

The **eighth** qualification. Not given to wine. And here again we think the qualification is far greater than alcoholic beverages. We think the point here is not intemperate in all matters of earthly appetites. That the Lord would have a person who in the treatment of the flesh is immoderate. And not a person who is given to excess whether it be of wine or whether it be of anything else. Remembering that in the scripture wine is a symbol not of that which is evil. Wine is often a symbol of that which is good. Back in the book of Judges in the parable Jotham [Judges 9:7-15] wine that make glad the heart of God in man. Wine a symbol of doctrine. The Lord giving you spice wine to drink in the symbols of the Song of Solomon. But it's the excess and not the wine that is being spoken of in this character qualification.

Must keep moving or time is moving - the **ninth** qualification. No striker. We like Rotherham here, “*not ready to wound*.” Not combative. This is when I have to work on very hard. I'm a competitive person by nature. And if I get into a place where I am challenged I love it because I want to come right out slugging. And I think there's quite a few of you who are like me. I don't think I'm alone. But this is saying that we should learn to curb that. This is saying that we should learn to curb the combativeness. And being combative for what is true we must be careful in defending what is true that we are not wounding another. That we're doing in such a way that we are arguing softly. Speak softly but carry a big sword. Let the word

of God be that which will get across the point. And not being quick to wound the other person to say “boy are you wrong on that.” And try to emphasize, we don't say it in those words, we say it much more subtly and being much more subtle we're much more cruel. But it is the point of being interested in the other person maintaining their dignity while disagreeing with their position. We do not wound.

The **tenth** characteristic. Patient. Very poor translation in this particular case. It's the same word that in the scripture in James 3:17 is translated gentle. It means sweetly reasonable. That's Wuest's translation we think is beautiful. That a mature Christian and elder must be sweetly reasonable. Moffatt puts it lenient. And that's not too far off. That's quite close to the meaning. He must be lenient. Vine puts it not insisting on the letter of the law having a considerateness that looks humanely and reasonably at the facts of the case. That's so good I'm going to repeat it. Not insisting on the letter of the law. A considerateness that looks humanely and reasonably at the facts of the case. In other words it is a characteristic that does not insist on strict compliance by others with my standards and my rules. It is that kind of a gentleness that is a qualification of eldership. That kind of gentleness that is one of the characteristics of that perfect manhood that we are to strive for.

The **next** [11] characteristic is very similar. Not a brawler. The Diaglott puts it this way - not quarrelsome. Picking a quarrel. Looking for something that you can disagree on so we can get into an argument. Rotherham puts it “one who is averse to contention.” And it was he strives to avoid contention. He strives rather to communicate on a friendly basis rather than on a sharp basis. Goodspeed puts it “a man of peace.” Phillips says “no controversialist.” That's rather good. No controversialist. Moffat says “conciliatory.” Putting them all together. What they're saying is it is a person who when he has a disagreement looks for the good and the part he disagrees with rather than looks at the disagreement. Doesn't ignore it. Doesn't whip it under the rug. But discusses it as the previous qualification says sweetly reasonably. But then at the same time he looks for that which he can praise in the person with whom he is estranged at some point.

The **next** [12] qualification and one that's emphasized because there's more words given to it. Not covetousness. Not covetous is the thought of not fond of money. But again we think like the one about wine it needs to be broadened. Thought of not being covetous. We think has to do not just with money. But not desiring any accumulation of earthly possessions. It isn't strictly a financial. In other words to put it into our present context. The 21st century. 21st or 20th. 20th century. Not materialistic. Whose basic primary interest is not in the accumulation of the things of this world. But whose basic consideration is in the laying up for himself.

Treasures in heaven. And at the same time setting a pattern for others. Sometimes we can be very easily led by false reasonings into materialism. Some may have a job that requires very nice clothing and this may be a part of their uniform. They need to have this for their employment. Very much a part of their standard living expectations. And then they may say well now I have to have this for work. And I certainly can't dress any less good for the Lord than I would for work. So I should have at least this good of dress for church, not realizing that by doing that they set a pattern for the other sisters. Or if it's a brother for the other brothers. To use them as the standard well really. She feels that this is the best way to show that she respects the dignity of the meetings. I should have one just as nice and pretty soon gets into a contest as to who can be the most materialist. But rather it is the realization that the Lord looks upon the inward person and not the outward a person. And there may be times as more respectful, there may be times as more respectful to the Lord to wear less good clothes to meetings than to work. There may be times we may be doing a greater service by wearing something a little poorer at the meeting so we do not set an example for others even though our secular job may require a certain standard of apparel.

The **next** [13] one. One that ruleeth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. Notice how he puts two phrases here. He emphasizes this one. We like the wording in Knox translation on this,. "One who gives good heed." Good head to his own family. In other words one who is concerned and cares about raising his family in the correct scriptural principles. One who has a definite interest in trying to raise up the family the children in the way that they should go so they shall not depart. Results may not always be the same. But it's a characteristic we're looking at again. The characteristic is giving attention to the responsibilities that one has assumed. And this is both spiritual and moral. It is both raising them to try to have high standards themselves. So as they go about their lives. They will be running their lives by the highest of ethical principles. The next part of this. Having his children in subjection with all gravity. We think is a very very important part of the characteristic that's here. It does not mean. Having his children quote "in the truth." This is to be desired by all means. But it is not the it is not the father or the mother that calls but the Lord. And there are instances where that is not true. But it means establishing them the principles of living a good life regardless of their relationship to the scriptures during their adult life. It also has within it in this verse the thought of the manner in which the children are in subjection. The New English Bible puts it this way. "Who wins the obedience of his children. A man of highest principles." Knox, "who keeps his children in order by winning their full respect." Notice the higher standard it is. - It is not one who says okay these are the laws we will obey these laws period. Any infraction. It's

strict punishment. That's it. That is enforced obedience. The qualification here is much higher. It is obedience that is won. It is obedience that is won by example and by earning the respect of the child. It is not describing the authoritarian parent, but it is describing the concerned parent.

The **15th** qualification. Not a novice. Not a recent convert. And while primarily this has relationship to years of acquaintance with the truth, it is not limited to that. It may be a person who remains a novice even though he's been around for years. Paul speaks to those who by that time ought to be having meat and all they could take was milk because they had not been using the meat. It is one who has had their senses exercised by reason of use.

The **16th** and last qualification in Timothy, a good report from without. Being well thought of by outsiders. And we think that when it comes to one of the three categories we mentioned. The category of visiting speakers. That it is this qualification that brings in also the respect that an individual has in his own ecclesia. Now sometimes the question comes up whether or not a person is automatically disqualified as an elder in one ecclesia because he is not an elder in his home ecclesia. And we think that the principles are very well laid down. That he is not automatically so disqualified. Because he is voted on by the ecclesia that he is going to serve as their elder for that meeting. But we do think that if he is not an elder in his home ecclesia. That this is one of the qualifications that needs to be considered. That has he measured up to the qualification of having a good report from without my ecclesia in his own class. Those who know him so much better. And it is a caution sign. It is a low point on that qualification that may be overwritten by his high point and all other qualifications. But in that qualification it is certainly one that would mark him in my estimation somewhat down. Our chairman is here so we are going to refer you to Titus 1:6 to 8. And we are going to give you just the reading of various translations to expand the breadth of your mind on these qualifications in Titus without elaboration. Titus 1:6 to 8. *"If any be blameless,"* we covered that, *"the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly."* Taylor, *"their children must love the Lord."* That puts it beautifully. It does not say that their children will necessarily be consecrated. It may not be the door may not be open for that person. The Lord may not have called that individual, but they must love the Lord. Knox puts it *"not accused of reckless living or wanting in obedience."* It is the same type of thing that describes the characteristics of the person and not their actual condition. "Not self-willed," Diaglott says *"not self-indulgent."* Another translation is *"not obstinate."* In other words, one who accepts defeat, gracefully. Next qualification, *"not soon angry."* One translation is that *"not quick tempered."* Then it has a parenthesis, *"even in*

*righteous indignation.*” And we like that parenthesis. Not quick tempered, even in righteous indignation. “*Not given to wine*” that's the same as we had, “*no striker,*” “*not given to filthy lucre.*” Rotherham, “*is not seeking gain by base means.*” The ethical conduct one has in his job, scrupulous. “*But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men.*” One translation has “*a lover of goodness.*” One who looks for the best in his brethren. “*Sober,*” Beck's translation has “*one who uses good judgment.*” “*Just,*” Phillips has “*fair-minded.*” One who listens to both sides. “*Holy,*” Knox has “*unworldly.*” One who is more interested in the spiritual things. “*Temperate,*” the Diaglott has “*self-governed.*” “*Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught.*” The New English Bible. “*He must adhere to the true doctrine.*” And finally, the 27th one. “*That he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gain sayer.*” That he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and refute the objections raised by any. Then you'll notice the qualifications in Peter are to feed the flock, shepherd the flock, to seek the oversight not by constraint but willingly, Rotherham, “*not by compulsion but by choice.*” “*Not for filthy lucre but of already mind.*” New English Bible puts it, “*not for gain but out of sheer devotion.*” “*Neither as being lords over God's flock.*” Revise standard, “*not as domineering over those in your charge, willing to accept change.*” “*Being examples to the flock,*” that's the fitting closing because as the opening being blameless. Is the only way we can be an example to one another.

May the Lord add His blessing.