

A FEW GOOD MEN – Pt 2 (1 Tim. 3:1-13 July 23, 2006)

I am sure that most of you are like me – the most difficult decisions you ever face are not theological ones but practical ones. *Decisions on how we should live as Christians in Brisbane in 2006.*

Does a Christian buy a house or not?

Does a Christian spend the extra dollars to send their kids to a private school or not?

Do you walk by faith and let your 17 year old son drive an 18 year old station wagon so you can give more to missions – or do you take out another mortgage and buy him a new car with a 5 star safety rating to give him a greater chance of turning 21?

Do you take the promotion at work or do you choose to work less so you can give more time to serving Christ?

What does it mean to be a Christian man in a secular workplace?

What does it mean to be a Christian mum in a society where 1.2 kids and 2 full time breadwinners is the norm?

Do you guys struggle with questions like this? I sure do.

And what is more – God knows we struggle with questions like this.

He could have given us a Bible that was ten feet thick containing detailed instructions about how Christians live in times of persecution – or in times of wealth – or in times of apathy. And then I could spend five years worth of sermons describing how this fleshes out for us – and the reality is that we would still struggle to know how we are to live.

So God did something astounding. He gave you a gift – a precious gift. He said this:

Members of *Grace Bible Church* – if you want to know how a Christian lives in Brisbane in 2006 – look at Murray Hudson, look at Dave D'Amour, look at your leaders.

The elders and deacons of churches are undershepherds. And the greatest leadership function any elder or deacon exerts is to model Christ. To show the congregation **how** Christians are to live in their time and place in history.

Jesus knew this. He said:

A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be *like* his teacher. (Luke 6:40)

What did Jesus do? He spent years displaying His life before His disciples and then said that He had left them an example to do likewise.

In the same way, Paul spent years displaying His life before men like Timothy and Titus and then in 1 Corinthians he commanded:

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1)

This is one of the greatest leadership verses in the Bible. Imitate me as I imitate Christ. Leaders show us Christ. They flesh out what it means to be like Christ.

Peter wrote to his fellow elders and exhorted them to be examples to the flock.

There is no doubt that the most powerful form of leadership is leadership by example.

It is no accident that after 13 verses on the qualifications for elders and deacons we come to verses 14-15 where Paul says:

I am writing you these instructions so that ... you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

Elders and deacons are a living picture of how Christians are to conduct themselves.

In this morning's paper – Wendell Sailor wrote an article entitled – *Stupid yes, but I'm no drug cheat*. In it he wrote this:

As a husband, father **and a role model** I realise I have let plenty of people down, including myself. But as for my penalty, I think it's grossly unfair.

A role model is one whose whole life is open to scrutiny – not just the hour and a half a week he plays football. If he was a real role model – he wouldn't whinge about the penalty.

It is like this with elders and deacons. It is not just Sunday morning – it is 24/7 that we need to be role models.

I know that by now our elders and deacons are cringing in their seats but here is the truth.

If you want to know what it means to be a Christian businessman with grown children? Look at Dudley.

If you want to know what it means to be a Christian architect with four young children? Look at Dominick.

You want to know how Christian men treat their wives and raise their children – look at Scott or Rodney.

You want to know how Christian men should spend their time and money – look at Tony or Dave Campbell or Dave Shepherd.

On the front of our bulletins every week we have listed our elders and deacons – your servant leaders at *Grace Bible Church*.

The reality is that **the** most important leadership function every one of those men performs is modelling before you **how** a Christian should live.

Do I like that? No. Do those men like it? No. We are imperfect and make mistakes.

But as I reflected on our passage this week – it struck me how important this is.

How I live is more important than any decisions I make in an elder's meeting or any theological pronouncement I make. How I treat my wife or raise my kids is worth more than dozens of sermons on these topics.

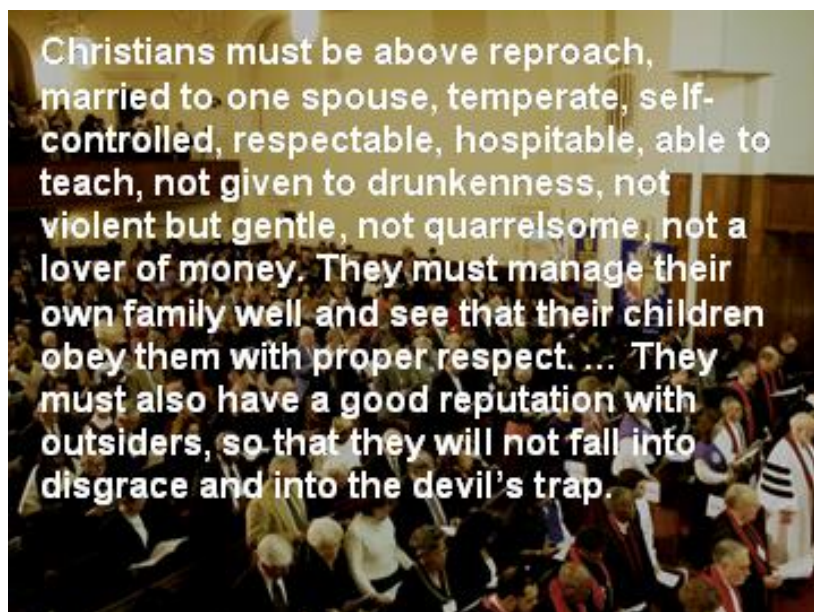
And it made me think seriously about some areas of my life I still need to work on.

And I also thought about our elders and deacons and I thank God for them precisely because they **are** men of character – the very type of men God wants leading His church.

We have been looking at 1 Timothy 3 – the qualifications for elders and deacons. And as I pointed out last time – the most remarkable thing about this list is that it is utterly unremarkable.

Have a look at 1 Timothy 3. If you take out – able to teach and not a new convert – from this list of qualifications for overseers – what you end up with is a list that seems to describe the general character traits of every Christian.

What if Paul had started chapter 3 by writing this?:



Christians must be above reproach, married to one spouse, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. They must manage their own family well and see that their children obey them with proper respect. ... They must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that they will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

No one would blink an eyelash – no one would have any problem with this being a list of characteristics fit for every believer. Nothing here seems to shout out – **leader!** But that is because too often we think of leaders in worldly terms – strong charismatic decision makers – rather than men who are like Christ.

Leaders are undershepherds. They show Christ to the world and to the church. How does Christ want us to live? In every church there are living breathing examples.

This is so different to the world. Over the past few weeks we have seen all the leadership speculation around Howard and Costello – deal or no deal?

Quite clearly both have had their character sullied by this episode, yet all the debate has been over who is a better leader – nothing about – who is a man of character?

But is not to be this way in the church. God's man must reflect God's character.

At this point – I have said all that I really want to say about this section. Anything I say now risks drawing you away from my point.

God's church is to be led by godly men.

I thought seriously about not dealing with anything in these 13 verses in detail and just pointing you to verses 1 and 13 where we find that being an overseer is a noble task and serving well as a deacon gains that man an excellent standing and great assurance in his faith in Christ Jesus. And then ending.

Yet, the reality is that I do need to dip my toe into these verses because despite the fact that several of these qualifications for elders and deacons have been incredibly contentious over the years – we as a church do have to make decisions on who should be an elder. What are the Christlike characteristics that set a man apart as an elder or a deacon?

We have to make decisions about whether a single man can be an elder? Or can a divorced man be an elder? Can a man with an unbelieving child be an elder? Can a man who is godly but can't teach be an elder?

These are questions we should grapple with because Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit felt it necessary to say more than – the overseer must be a man who is above reproach.

But I am concerned that you will leave here thinking about questions like – can a divorced man can be an elder – how good a teacher does a man have to be – instead of thanking God that He gives gifted, godly men to His church.

So let me make this clear.

It is more important to rejoice that God gifts His church with godly men – than to worry about whether we have made the right exegetical decisions on precisely what these verses mean.

For example – as you will hear in a moment – my understanding of verse 2 would lead me to the conclusion that a divorced man who has remarried should not be an elder.

But if I went to another city and joined a good church there and the elders had honestly grappled with this text and they decided that a godly divorced man who has remarried can be an elder – I would thank God for those men and wouldn't lose a minute of sleep over it.

We are not talking the deity of Christ here. We are talking – degrees of reflecting Christlikeness.

So with a fair degree of trepidation I will deal with the contentious parts of this passage.

But before I do – Let me remind you that I went into much greater depth concerning these qualifications in a four sermon series – *Servants of the Great King*.

If you want a more substantive discussion – get those sermons.

As we begin, I do want to note two of the points I made in that series. Again, these are controversial – but this is how we understand the text.

First, the leaders of God's church are to be **men**.

It is part of the created order. It helps us understand the glory of God and our need to submit to Him.

It seems to me that the Scriptures are quite straight forward and you have to twist them to allow for women elders.

In 1 Timothy 2:12 Paul says – I do not allow a woman to teach or have authority over a man – leadership in the household of God is to be by men.

In verse 1 here in chapter 3 – the NASV says – If any **man** aspires to the office of overseer – and that is undoubtedly the correct translation. The indefinite pronoun – *tis* – is masculine – it speaks of men.

And in verse 2 we read the qualification – **husband** of one wife. This limits the office to men.

If you get those previous sermons I also spent quite a while on verse 11. Almost certainly the NIV gets it right here – the women spoken of are **not** deaconesses **or** women who assist deacons **or** some other official office for women – but they are the **wives** of the deacons.

Deacons are involved in ministering to the poor, assisting the saints, administering the daily chores of the church. These behind the scenes service roles are roles that the wives can and indeed *should* assist their husbands in. Thus, the need to have wives who are spiritually qualified to assist their husbands.

A *second* point I want to note concerns what the role of the deacons is to be.

If you look at the qualifications for deacons – they are nearly identical to those of elders – *except* for the requirement of being able to teach.

The main difference is *not* in the qualifications but in the task. Deacons are to be men of character.

But they serve the church by freeing the elders to their prime role of prayer and the Word.

Deacons are involved in shouldering the burden of the thousand and one daily calls and administrative duties that would distract the elders from prayer and the Word.

With this said, now we can move on to the qualifications that Paul lists.

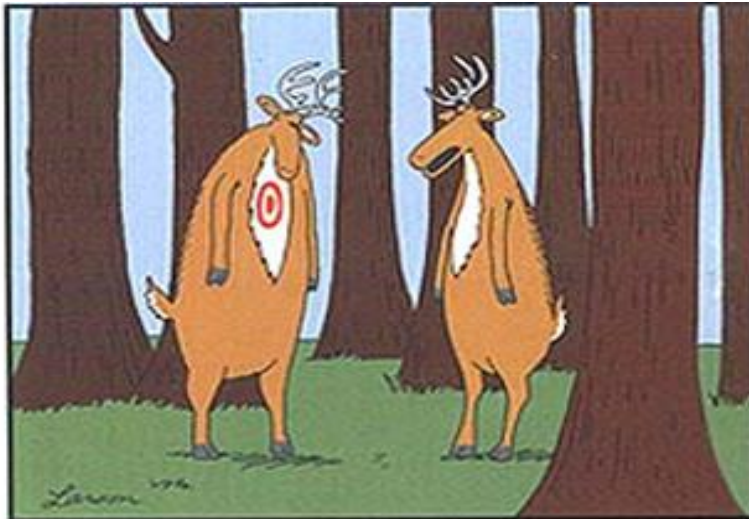
In general, when you read through these 13 verses – most of it is very straight forward – and I don't want to merely repeat what I have said in greater detail in those earlier sermons.

But a couple of points do need some degree of comment.

And one point that does need comment is found in the very first verse. Look at 1 Timothy 3:1 where Paul says this:

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.

One of my favourite *Farside* comics is this one:



"Bummer of a birthmark, Hal."

When I first saw this comic the elders were going through a tough time. It seemed to me that as soon as someone became an elder it was as though a spiritual birthmark target appeared on them and they became fair game for criticism.

You take a lot of flak. You set aside a great deal of time for the church that you could spend with your family.

Given all of this – why would anyone set his heart on being an overseer?

Paul says – it is because it is a noble task – noble because we are serving Christ – they desire to see Christ and His kingdom advanced and glorified. You set your heart on this – magnifying Jesus Christ – and it is a good thing.

Unfortunately some set their heart on this office for the wrong reasons – prestige, greed, earning spiritual credit.

It is not easy to desire the office of elder for the right reasons. The very nature of churches can obscure our motives.

Don Carson has visited churches in many different countries and he has noted that the way Christians view elders and pastors varies greatly in different cultures.

He spoke about a time when he preached at a large church in Seoul, South Korea. About 30,000 people attended – four congregations of 7,500 people.

At the end of the last service he and the pastor were led out of the church. Bodyguards flanked them and formed a path through the people and led them out to a chauffeur-driven limousine.

They got in the back together and the limousine took off. For blocks around police stopped the traffic to usher them through and then stood at attention and saluted.

He felt like royalty or at least presidential.

Carson reasoned that part of the reason for this high view of the ministry was a residual mindset left from the Confucianism that affected the country in its past. A mindset in which teachers were afforded great respect and deference – and this elevated the way pastors and elders were viewed.

In a country like this – you have to be careful that you desire the office for the right reasons.

Carson then contrasted that with his time preaching in the churches of a sub-Saharan African nation. In those churches a common expression he heard again and again was this:

The pew is higher than the pulpit.

In this country, urbanisation and industrialisation has led to a rapid growth of universities and in the cities most Christian young men and women were tertiary educated.

On the other hand, almost all of the pastors and elders had a basic education – grade 4 to grade 8 – plus a year or two of basic Bible Institute training.

The pulpit was looked down on as being beneath other occupations.

The result is that parents actively discouraged their children from becoming pastors – the ministry is for those who can't make it in a real job – medicine, industry, education.

In countries like that you have to be careful you do not turn your back on becoming an elder for the wrong reasons.

So, where are we at in Australia? How do we view the pastorate and the eldership? Do we desire it as a noble task?

In terms of pastors and missionaries and those in full-time ministry – certainly we don't put them on a pedestal. Not even the archbishop has police clearing a path for him after church. We are not even like many churches in the US that view pastors perhaps too highly.

And at the same time, I have not heard the ministry being despised.

But all in all, I am less than certain that we see becoming an elder or pastor as a noble task.

When your children reach grade 9-10 – you begin to start talking with them about their future career. You do this because their choice of classes begins to narrow the scope of their future opportunities.

You talk about whether they are cut out for university or a trade or another career. You talk about what kind of OP they might need for certain courses.

And I am sure there is a tinge of living vicariously through your children as you picture your baby as a nurse or lawyer or teacher.

But, I wonder – how many Christian parents actively encourage their children to think about the ministry – missionaries, pastors, evangelists, elders – as a noble task?

In fact I wonder if that thought scares some parents. Perhaps there is a degree of thought that the pew is higher than the pulpit.

If they can become a dentist or an astronaut – why settle for preaching or taking the gospel to the Congo?

Would there be some disappointment if your child entered the ministry or even if they chose a vocation with less hours and less pay so they could give real time and effort to the church?

We need to listen to Martin Luther who declared:

If I could today become king or emperor, I would not give up my office as preacher.¹

What do you think of your child choosing to be a pastor or missionary? Do honestly encourage them to consider it as a noble task?

Whether you have actually talked about this with your children – tells a lot about how you see this.

As well as vocational paid elders – Paul includes non-vocational elders as a noble task. Men who have paid work and volunteer their time.

Do you see this as a noble task – for you or for your children?

It may mean you or them taking a job with less hours that will leave time to serve in the church – as elders, deacons, in women's ministry.

I thank God for our elders and deacons – who work full time and then give an extraordinary amount of time and effort voluntarily to serve the Lord.

It is not easy. Sometimes you have to make choices. Less hours worked, turning down promotions, changing jobs.

When so much of our prestige and place in society revolves around our job – to choose to be a pastor or to take a job that leaves enough time to be an elder or deacon – can be a tough task.

And it isn't easy. Being an elder is not a career path – it is a calling.

¹ John Piper, *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2000) p. 86.

You do it because of a desire to see Christ glorified. You can be a part of making the church the pillar and foundation of the truth.

You are an undershepherd – one who represents Christ Himself to the world.

That is why Paul says it is a noble task.

Men – I trust you aspire to be an elder or a deacon. To have that character than marks you as a man raised up by the Holy Spirit to lead His church and to take on the responsibility of guiding His church.

Parents – I trust that you would want to plant that seed in the minds of your children – ministry, service, missions – these are noble tasks – this is living for eternity.

Any man can be an engineer – so few can be an undershepherd of the Creator.

Any woman can become a physiotherapist – so few can take the gospel of the King to the outermost parts of the world.

Having said this, Paul gets into the qualifications. Verse 2:

Now the overseer must be above reproach.

In a sense this is the overarching qualification.

This word ‘above reproach’ literally means, ‘not able to be held.’ Originally it meant that a man was not able to be held as a criminal. There was no proof of any wrongdoing by which to hold him in custody. It then came to refer to one whose character was unassailable or beyond the accusation of reproach.

What does this mean? Let me begin by saying what it does *not* mean. It does not mean sinless perfection. The elder boards of churches would be vacated overnight.

What it does mean is this. When we place the list of elders and deacons before you there should be no obvious character flaw in these men.

The very next qualification Paul gives is one that has caused no end of disputes:

The overseer must be the husband of but one wife.

Without doubt this qualification and the one in Titus – having children who are faithful – are the most contentious of the qualifications.

Because this is *the* qualification that causes the most angst – it is the one I want to deal with most fully. What does this mean?

An elder cannot be single or widowed



- ***An elder cannot be single or widowed***

Some put the emphasis on *husband*. **Husband** of but one wife.

They believe that this qualification forbids men who have *never married* from being elders.


They believe that experience as head of a family is needed before one can lead a church.

Similarly some would forbid a man whose wife has died from being an elder.

But nothing in Scripture indicates that this is what Paul was talking about. Jesus was never married. Paul was not married at the time he ministered as Apostle to the Gentiles. Timothy was most likely not married.

If you choose to stay single so you can devote more time to Christ – I think this enhances your character.

Paul is not saying leaders have to be married.



An elder cannot be single or widowed

A widowed elder cannot remarry

- ***A widowed elder cannot remarry***

Another interpretation that has had many supporters throughout church history, is that a man whose wife has died *and* who has then remarried cannot be an elder.

They put the emphasis on **one** wife. In this view an elder can only ever be married once.

Personally, I find this view to be utterly without merit – yet I mention it because it has the support of most of the church fathers and many of the church councils.

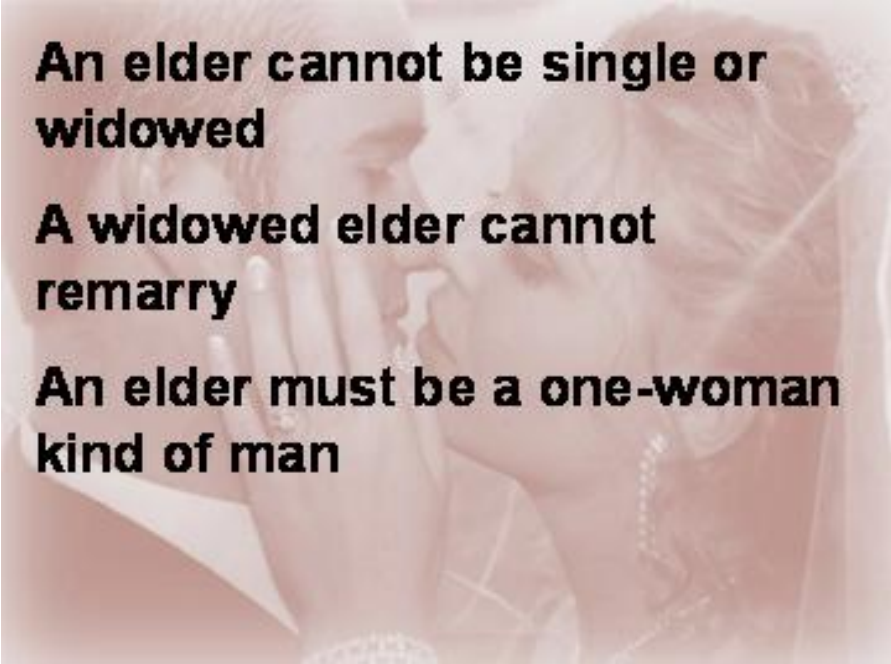
They argued that elders are to be disciplined, self-controlled men. The need to remarry shows a distinct lack of such discipline and would be viewed as a sign of weakness which would render a man not above reproach.

When you look at these councils – they misunderstood the nature of marriage. They advocated singleness and had a low view of marriage which affected the way they viewed marriage.

There is no doubt that both the Old and New Testaments allow for remarriage for anyone whose spouse dies.

Nowhere is there a hint of censure for this.

In fact in 1 Timothy 5:14, Paul says, “***I want younger widows to get married.***” Paul has no problem with remarriage.



An elder cannot be single or widowed

A widowed elder cannot remarry

An elder must be a one-woman kind of man

- ***And elder must be a one-woman kind of man***

An interpretation that has gained much support in recent years suggests that this qualification should be translated, "An overseer, then, must be ... *a one woman **kind of man.***"

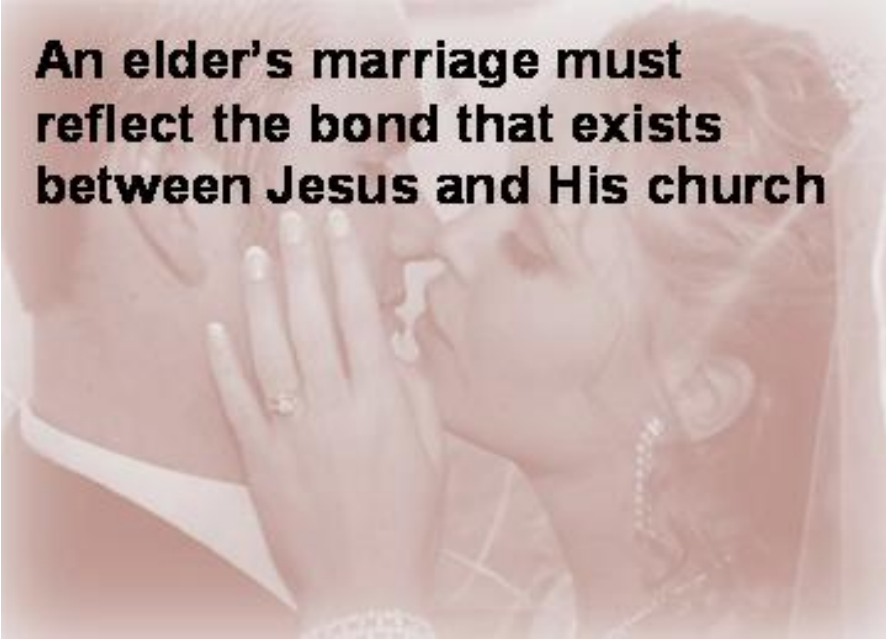
The idea is that if the elder is married, he is to be devoted to the woman he is presently married to. His desires and passions are directed to this one woman. He does not lust after other women or flirt with them or desire to move on to a younger, sexier wife.

In this view, the qualification Paul gives refers mainly to the quality of the elder's relationship to his *present* wife.

Let me say that I would wholeheartedly affirm that absolute devotion to one's wife is to be a part of an elder's character. I just don't see that this is the point Paul is making here.

Grammatical and Scriptural evidence make it very unlikely this was Paul's major concern here.

I think the answer to why Paul included this qualification lies in Paul's theology of marriage.



An elder's marriage must reflect the bond that exists between Jesus and His church

- ***An elder's marriage must reflect the bond that exists between Jesus and His church***

The main characteristic of an elder is that he be like Christ. And in his marriage he has to reflect Christ.

Listen to Ephesians 5:25:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and ***gave himself up for her.***

And Ephesians 5:23:

For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, ***of which he is the Saviour.***

Marriage displays the type of exclusive relationship Jesus has with His church. Jesus is utterly committed to the church. He is not joined to many churches and the church does not join itself to many gods.

So what is Paul forbidding here? He is forbidding a marriage that has more than one marriage bond – a marriage that is not exclusive – because elders are to mirror Christ.

Quite obviously he forbids polygamy. Having more than one wife distorts this picture of Christ and His church.

We know that polygamy was common among the nobility of the first century Roman Empire.

Men with many wives would distort the picture of Christ's exclusive devotion to the church – so Paul wants it clear that polygamists can't be elders.

But as well – this verse brings the question of remarriage after divorce into view.

This is not the time to go through this whole issue. The Scriptures and arguments involved are incredibly difficult.

But suffice it to say – many scholars would allow remarriage after divorce on several possible grounds such as desertion and adultery.

Others have understood the Scriptures to teach that the only ground for remarriage is the death of a spouse.

Romans 7:2-3:

By law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.

1 Corinthians 7:39

A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.

Remarriage after divorce is a difficult and emotive issue. Where we stand here is this. The elders feel that the best way to understand these verses is that Scripture allows remarriage only when your spouse has died.

This is a view held throughout church history and by many today. But, this is such a difficult area we don't want to say we have it right. We don't want to disparage anyone who honestly studies the Scriptures and comes to a different view.

We have members here who are divorced and some who are remarried – and we have no problem with this. Those who have looked at the issues and honestly come to a different view – we are fine with this.

But we have to decide what Paul is saying about elders. Since Paul's writings do say that only death releases you from the law of marriage – the one flesh bond created by marriage, we do hold that men who are divorced and remarried are not to be elders or deacons.

It is not so much their character that is at issue – just the model of Christ and the church.

I know some here understand this verse differently. I have no problem with that. I just ask that you accept that this is a difficult issue and one where we must practice what we believe the teaching of Scripture to be.

Here is the bottom line. You have to decide what this qualification means and act on it. But, as I said earlier – a man's overall character is more important than exactly how we understand this qualification.

Fortunately, most of the rest of the qualifications Paul lists are pretty straight forward. He continues in verse 2:

Temperate – He not addicted to anything. He is clear headed and ready for the task at all times.

Self-controlled – He leads a disciplined life. He is focussed on his task of leading the sheep.

Respectable – An elder is to be a righteous man who conducts himself according to the principles of divine truth.

Hospitable – literally this means to 'love strangers.'

This mainly applied to opening your home to other Christians in New Testament times when there were no motels and the inns were notoriously evil.

But the principle remains. The door of the elder's home needs to be open to the saints and the lost.

Able to teach – there is debate as to whether this should be translated – teachable. I am with the majority who take it to refer to an elder being able to communicate the deep truths of the Word of God.

Paul puts it this way in Titus:

[An elder must hold] fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

This is the qualification that sets elders apart from deacons. Elders must be able to teach. It is the Word of God that equips and protects and guides the church.

Remember, Paul is writing to Timothy concerning the very elders from Ephesus he met at Miletus a mere five to seven years earlier. There he had given them this warning in Acts 20:28-32:

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. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. "Now I commit you to God **and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.**

What protects the church from wolves is the word of His grace. Elders have to know it and hold to it and proclaim it. We cannot have elders who are weak in this area.

It doesn't mean they have to be like Spurgeon – it means they know the truth, can convey the truth and will not budge from the truth.

Verse 3:

Not given to drunkenness – Literally it means not alongside of wine.

Alcohol itself is not the problem – drunkenness is.

No man who becomes drunk or uses alcohol freely is to be an elder.

But, this must go further. Addiction to other substances, other drugs would also disqualify a man from being an elder.

Not violent but gentle – Not a fighter. Not a man prone to physical or verbal assaults. Such men are clearly unqualified for the board of elders.

Not quarrelsome – We have all met those men who are spoiling for a fight, a debate, to stir the pot. But they are not to be elders.

Not a lover of money – Loving money and the things it provides is a form of idolatry.

Wealth in itself is not the problem – loving it is.

Verses 4 and 5:

He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)

Families are a testing ground. How a man runs his family – treats his wife and children – how they view him – this tells an awful lot about the man and his character.

Verse 6:

He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.

To some degree, this has to be a relative statement. When you read through Acts – Paul visited cities – led men to the Lord – and then months later as he came through them again he appointed elders.

But Ephesus had been an established church for well over a decade.

In a church like that you don't want new converts. It takes time for a man to mature and experience life and develop character.

Verse 7:

He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

We can all put on our Sunday best faces and attitude for a couple of hours on the Lord's Day.

But our neighbours and our workmates and those around us see us in all our exposed glory.

If we are not real – they will see it.

And if we are not real – our testimony of the power of Christ is destroyed.

And the qualifications for deacons echo those of elders. Verses 8-13:

Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Every time I teach on this section of Scripture – I want to resign.

I would imagine most of the elders and deacons feel ready to resign. Who is adequate for such things? Whose life can stand total scrutiny?

But then I realise that Paul is not speaking of perfection.

What God has done is to place in every church sinners – who struggle and fail and make mistakes.

But the Holy Spirit works in them and conforms them more and more to Christ – and gives them as gifts to His church.

And they become living examples of what Jesus does for every Christian.

Elders and deacons are not special – just examples of the power of Christ in every Christian.

They are living examples of what Jesus wants to do in all of us.

I thank God for my years at seminary. But even more – I thank God that he allowed me to be a pastor at *Grace Community Church* in the US. Because for the years I was

a pastor – every day I worked with, ate with, watched and learned from some of the godliest men you could hope to meet.

That was an even greater education. And that is the plan of God for every church.

Pray for me. Pray for all our leaders that we might be the examples to the flock that you deserve.