

SCRIPTURAL ELDERS

THE NEED FOR ELDERS

Lesson One

Rules For This Study:

- Why lessons on this subject?
 - Part of the whole counsel of God
 - Planned by the elders
 - To protect the future of this church
- What do I expect of you?
 - To listen with open minds and open Bibles
 - To search the scriptures between lessons
 - To obey what God says; to do the right thing
- What can you expect of me?
 - To preach all relevant NT doctrine on this matter
 - To preach only NT doctrine on this matter

SCRIPTURAL ELDERS

- Four Lessons:
 - The Need for Elders
 - The Work of Elders
 - The Authority of Elders
 - The Qualifications of Elders
- Lesson on the Work and Qualifications of Deacons
- Lesson on the Work and Qualifications of Elders' and Deacons' Wives

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Duties They Perform

- Feeding the flock
 - *Acts 20:28 - “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”*
 - To feed - "poimen" - to pasture or shepherd a flock; to tend a flock
 - *1Peter 5:2 - “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly”*

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Duties They Perform

- Guarding the flock by watching for false teachers from without and false brethren from within
 - *Acts 20:29-30 - “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”*
- Watching for straying souls
 - *Heb. 13:17 - “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”*

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Duties They Perform

- Rule well
 - *1 Tim. 5:17 - “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.”*
- Lead diligently
 - *Rom. 12:8 - “He who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”*
 - Not with enforced inaction but by being pro-active

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Command To Have Them

- Command
 - *Titus 1:5* - “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.”
- Example
 - *Acts 14:23* - “So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”
- Divine implication
 - *1Tim. 3:1-7* - By giving qualifications, God implies that he wants qualified men to fill this office.

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Danger Of Not Having Them

- Voting in doctrinal matters is unscriptural.
 - Jesus Christ has all authority.
 - *Matt. 28:18 - “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”*
 - *Col. 1:18 - “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”*

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Danger Of Not Having Them

- Our responsibilities as Christ's subjects:
 - To accept His authority
 - *Col. 3:17 - "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."*
 - To obey Him in all things
 - *2Cor. 5:10 - "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."*

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Danger Of Not Having Them

- In the local church, Christ has given some authority to the elders
 - To oversee the congregation
 - *1Peter 5:2 - “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly.”*
 - But not to act as lords
 - *1Peter 5:3 - “Nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”*
 - The congregation's duty to the elders is to obey and submit to them
 - *Heb. 13:7,17*

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Danger Of Not Having Them

- The dangers of deciding any church matter by majority vote are many:
 - It makes the church subject to unqualified men.
 - It fails to distinguish experience and inexperience among members.
 - It encourages preachers to cater to the wishes of the majority.

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Danger Of Not Having Them

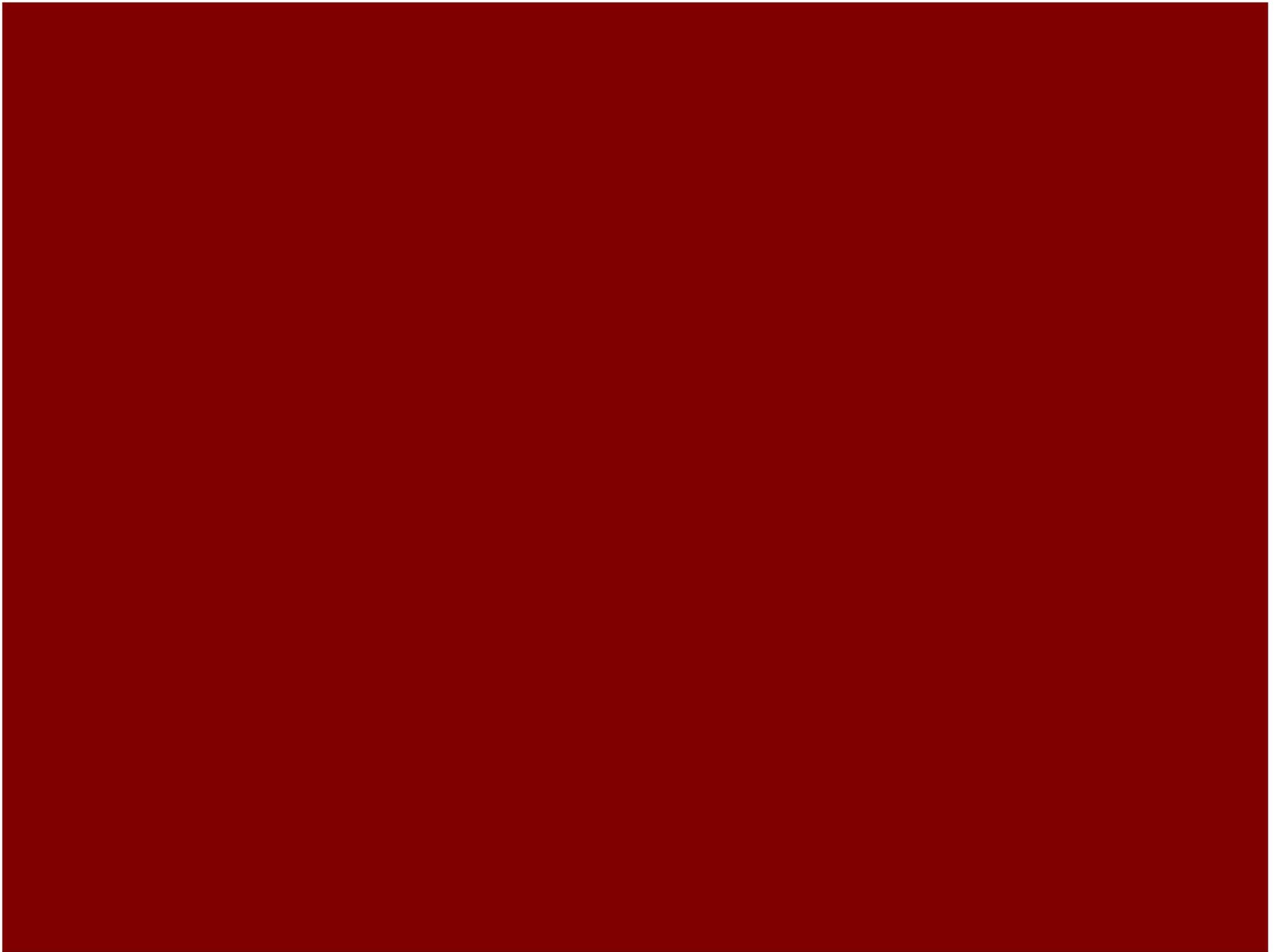
- The Lord does not want men-pleasers as a preachers or elders.
 - *Gal. 1:10 - “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.”*
 - *John 10:11-15 - “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. 15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.”*

The Need For Elders Is Seen In The Danger Of Not Having Them

- The dangers of deciding any church matter by majority vote are many:
 - It makes the church subject to unqualified men.
 - It fails to distinguish experience and inexperience among members.
 - It encourages preachers to cater to the wishes of the majority.
 - It provides occasion for politics and electioneering, resulting in division.
 - It breeds anarchy and bitterness in the church.

"But What If We Don't Have Qualified Men!?"

- The churches in the New Testament ordained elders within a few years of their beginning as churches.
- There are reasons why some churches do not have elders or find it difficult to appoint more.
 - Some people do not want to be in subjection to elders.
 - Some hobbyists elevate the qualifications above Divine intent.
 - Qualified men are too lazy or fearful to take up the task.
- The only scripturally organized churches are churches with elders and deacons.
 - We will do New Testament things for New Testament reasons in New Testament ways.



SCRIPTURAL ELDERS

THE WORK OF ELDERS

Lesson Two

Scriptural Names

- Elder - presbuterion: one who is older
 - Primary meaning is age (relative).
 - Speaks to one's years and experience in Christ.
 - *1Peter 5:1-2 - "The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:*
2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away."

Scriptural Names

- Bishop - episcopos: overseer, a man charged with duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done correctly
 - *Acts 20:28 - “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”*
 - *Phil. 1:1; 1Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1Peter 2:25*

Scriptural Names

- Pastor - poiman: to keep sheep
 - To feed
 - *John 21:16; Acts 20:28; 1Cor. 9:7; Jude 12*
 - To rule, to govern
 - *Rev. 2:27, 12:5, 14:15*
 - To shepherd
 - *Matt 9:36, 25:32, 26:31; John 10:2, 12*
 - To pastor
 - *Eph. 4:11; 1Peter 2:25*

The Duties Of Elders

- Take heed to themselves
 - *Acts 20:28 - “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”*
- To be guided by the word of God
 - *Acts 20:32 - “So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”*
 - *Titus 1:9 - “Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”*

The Duties Of Elders

- Be examples to the flock
 - *1Peter 5:3 - “Nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”*
- Take the oversight
 - *1Peter 5:2 - “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly.”*

The Duties Of Elders

- Take heed to the flock
 - *Acts 20:28*
- Rule well
 - *1Tim. 5:17 - “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.”*
- Feed the flock
 - *Acts 20:28*
 - *1Peter 5:1-2*

The Duties Of Elders

- Watch for grievous wolves
 - *Acts 20:29-30 - “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”*
- Stop the mouths of vain talkers
 - *Titus 1:11 - “...whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.”*

The Duties Of Elders

- Settle differences in the church
 - *Acts 15:6 - “Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter.”*
- Admonish the church
 - *1Thes. 5:12 - “And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.”*
- Support the weak
 - *Acts 20:35 - “I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak.”*

The Duties Of Elders

- Pray for the sick and minister to their needs
 - *James 5:14 - “Is anyone among you sick? 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.”*
- Establish churches where needed and to help with such work
 - *Acts 16:4-5 - “And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.”*
- Watch for the souls of the church
 - *Heb. 13:17 - “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account.”*

Duties Of The Church Toward The Elders

- Know the elders
 - *1Thes. 5:12 - “And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.”*
- Esteem the elders highly in love
 - *1Thes. 5:13 - “And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.”*
- Be submissive to the elders
 - *Heb. 13:17*

Duties Of The Church Toward The Elders

- Be at peace among yourselves
 - *1Thes. 5:13*
- Obey the elders
 - *Heb. 13:17*
- Do not rebuke an elder, but speak to him as a father
 - *1Tim. 5:1 - “Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren.”*

Duties Of The Church Toward The Elders

- Do not accept an accusation against an elder except by the testimony of witnesses
 - *1 Tim. 5:19* - “Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.”
- Remember and imitate the elders
 - *Heb. 13:7* - “Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.”

Duties Of The Church Toward The Elders

- Count the elders worthy of double honor
 - *1Tim. 5:17-18* - “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. 18 For the Scripture says, You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer is worthy of his wages.”
- Call on the elders when in need
 - *James 5:14* - “Is anyone among you sick? 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.”

The Work Of Elders

- No wonder Paul told Timothy: *“If a man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work,”* for it is WORK indeed (1Tim. 3:1).



SCRIPTURAL ELDERS

THE AUTHORITY OF ELDERS

Lesson Three

Scriptural Elders

- Lesson One - The Need for Elders
 - Commanded, vital for church work and organization, and the alternative leads to weakness and error
- Lesson Two - The Work of Elders
 - Shepherds, guides, watchmen
- Lesson Three - The Authority of Elders
 - The source of authority is Jesus Christ

Source Of Authority For Elders

- Is it from themselves? Are elders the final authority answerable to no one?
- Is it from the congregation? Is the church a democracy?
- Is it from the preacher? Must the elders consult with the preacher for his approval on all decisions made?
- It is from Christ. The eldership derives its authority from the Head of the church.

Source Of Authority For Elders

- *Eph. 1:22-23 - “And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”*
- *Col. 1:18 - “And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”*

Source Of Authority For Elders

- *Matt. 28:18 - “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”*
- *1Cor. 15:27-28 - “For He has put all things under His feet. But when He says all things are put under Him, it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. 28 Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”*

Nature Of Authority Of Elders

- It is not one man rule. It is an Eldership.
 - Decisions to be made must be made by the whole.
 - Every New Testament example shows a plurality of elders.
- Two areas in which authority is administered.
 - Divine rule - the making of laws
 - Human judgment - deciding how to act in agreement in practice of established law.

Nature Of Authority Of Elders

- Do elders function in both areas?
 - Elders cannot make any laws for the church. The making of laws belongs exclusively to Deity.
 - *James 4:12 - "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy."*
 - *James 1:25 - "...the perfect law of liberty..."*
- Can the elders make new laws for church work, discipline, or organization?
 - NO! The elders guide the flock by helping the members to keep laws already given by Christ, not by making new laws.

Nature Of Authority Of Elders

- In matters of human judgment and decisions concerning the church and its course of action, elders are to exercise authority in the local church.
- Individual members submit their personal judgments on collective matters to the oversight of the elders.
- Examples:
 - Meeting times for worship
 - Who will preach?
 - Who will teach Bible classes?
 - What Bible subjects will be studied?
 - When and who to have for a gospel meeting?

Nature Of Authority Of Elders

- Members may disagree with the judgment calls, but there should be no murmuring unless the elders clearly violate the scriptures.
 - If a member disagrees, it is most likely that he is mistaken.
 - If elders are unreasonable or unapproachable, then they were improperly ordained. However, one still must follow the NT pattern in correcting them.
 - *1Tim. 5:1, 19*

Some Misconceptions About The Authority Of Elders:

- “An elder can rule by example only.”
 - False - *Heb. 13:7* - “egoumenon” (the ones having the rule) has to do with following the words and faith spoken by those who have a rule. This extends beyond example.
- “Elders have no authority outside of the church assemblies.”
 - False - Elders must “watch in behalf of your souls” - *Heb. 13:17*.

The Scope Of Authority Of Elders

- Members of a local church must submit to the eldership in order to obey God.
 - *Heb. 13:17; 1Tim. 5:17*
- However, the eldership must rule according to truth.
 - *Titus 1:9; Heb. 13:7*

The Scope Of Authority Of Elders

- What are the areas of elders' responsibilities?
 - Arranging orderly worship and all its essentials.
 - Directing the teaching program: classes, teachers, materials, etc.
 - *Phil. 4:16-17*
 - Initiating discipline.
 - *Heb. 13:17*
 - Directing deacons in the work of benevolence for sick and needy saints.

The Limit Of Elders' Authority:

- “Tend the flock of God which is among you” - *1Peter 5:2*.
 - The autonomy of the local church must be respected.
 - Autonomy - “right of self-government; a self governing state; an independent body.”
 - No local eldership has the right to oversee or rule over the affairs of any other local church under any circumstances.

Authority Of Elders

- There is wisdom in doing this God's way. There will always be strife and failure if we attempt to alter it. Let us simply say amen to God's plan for the church and fully comply without wavering or murmuring.



SCRIPTURAL ELDERS

QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

Lesson Four

Qualifications Of Elders

- To become an elder in the Lord's Church, one must be selected by the Holy Spirit.
 - *Acts 20:28 - “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”*
- The selection process is done through the agency of the word.

1 Tim. 3:1-7 - “This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; 4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); 6 not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Titus 1:5-9 - “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you-- 6 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, 8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, 9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.”

Qualifications Of Elders

- The Holy Spirit gave the qualifications of elders - *1Tim. 3:1-9; Titus 1:5-9*
 - To ordain men according to these qualifications is the equivalent of having them appointed by the Holy Spirit.
 - There are 23 qualifications mentioned in these texts.
 - Not 23 disqualifications.

Qualifications Of Elders

- Twenty-three qualities are needed by a man who would help lead a local congregation as an elder.
 - The need for elders does not authorize churches to dismiss or reduce any of these qualifications.
 - We must not permit self-will, stubbornness, jealousy, ignorance, or animosity to make them stricter than God stated them.
- Eighteen are qualities every Christian man should have.
 - Only five of the 23 listed are required only of elders.
 - While all Christian men should have these eighteen qualities, elders should have them to the extent that they are models for others.

Eighteen Qualities Needed By All Christian Men

- **WITHOUT REPROACH** (Blameless - KJV)
 - To live in such a way that charges of wrong doing are not believable and cannot be proven.
- **TEMPERATE** (Vigilant - KJV; self-controlled - ASV)
 - Watchful over himself by restraining his appetites and passions; uses all things in moderation. He has the power to control himself in the use of what is lawful.

Eighteen Qualities Needed By All Christian Men

- **SOBER-MINDED** (Prudent - NASB)
 - Calm, even tempered, cautious, circumspect, wise; sees all sides of an issue before acting; uses good sense in all judgments. He is stable enough mentally and emotionally to make sound decisions.
- **ORDERLY** (Of good behavior - KJV; Respectable - NASB)
 - His conduct in business, home, recreation, dress, and manners demonstrates modesty and propriety.

Eighteen Qualities Needed By All Christian Men

- **HOSPITABLE** (Philoxenia - one who loves strangers)
 - Cordially receives guests in order to supply their needs. Devoted to hospitality and derives pleasure from it.
- **VI. NO BRAWLER** (NASB - not addicted to wine; KJV - not given to wine)
 - One whose reputation and mind are both free from all influences of evil and intoxication, or any other thing destructive to objectivity and influence.
 - This would include social drinking, drinking in the privacy of one's home, any abuse of drugs and the use of tobacco.

Eighteen Qualities Needed By All Christian Men

- **NO STRIKER** (Not pugnacious - NASB)
 - One who is not quarrelsome, nor disposed to lash out at opposition. Even tempered, not easily excited, angered, or provoked.
- **GENTLE** (KJV - Patient)
 - Epieikes - "Seemly, fitting, equitable, fair, moderate, forbearing."
 - Patient and humble with those in weakness or distress, not inconsiderate, bitter or disagreeable with those in a poor station in life.

Eighteen Qualities Needed By All Christian Men

- **NOT CONTENTIOUS** (Adverse to fighting)
 - Not a nit-picker or domineering, nor one who likes to have feuds going all of the time, locally or in the brotherhood.
- **NO LOVER OF MONEY** (KJV - not covetous)
 - Grounds for discipline in *1Cor. 5*; one who loves money has the potential to be bribed or influenced by material concerns.
 - *Titus 1:7* - forbids one who obtains money in an unlawful manner.

Eighteen Qualities Needed By All Christian Men

- **ONE THAT RULETH WELL HIS OWN HOUSE, HAVING HIS CHILDREN IN SUBJECTION WITH ALL GRAVITY**
 - (NASB - HE must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity)
 - His role as a husband and father is a basis for judging him capable of leading a local congregation.
 - A man with a domineering wife is not elder material.
 - A man with unruly children is not elder material.
 - He is responsible for his own household, not another's.

Eighteen Qualities Needed By All Christian Men

- **GOOD TESTIMONY FROM THEM THAT ARE WITHOUT** (NASB - he must have a good reputation with those outside the church)
 - He must be known to be a moral and honest man.
 - A local church's reputation and influence often depends on the elders' good names.
- **NOT SELF-WILLED**
 - Cannot be stubborn, headstrong, or self-pleasing, and expect to get along with others in the local church.
 - Must make decisions based on what is good for all concerned, not on what he personally likes or wants - *1Peter 5:2-3.*

Eighteen Qualities Needed By All Christian Men

- **NOT SOON ANGRY** (Not quick tempered - NASB)
 - Does not allow difficulty to impact his composure; even tempered and at peace under stress.
- **LOVER OF GOOD** (Loving what is good - NASB)
 - He doesn't do well from a sense of duty, but loves goodness for its own sake. Imparts this love for goodness to others by example.
- **JUST**
 - Fair, impartial, without prejudice.

Eighteen Qualities Needed By All Christian Men

- **HOLY** (Devout - NASB)
 - One who religiously observes every obligation to God and man; spiritually minded. Continues to pray and study all of his life.
- **HOLDING FAST TO THE FAITHFUL WORD**
 - Must adhere to sound doctrine in order to:
 - Keep himself right - *Acts 20:28*
 - Teach others to be right - *Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17*

SCRIPTURAL ELDERS

QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

Lesson Five

Previously

- The Need for Elders
- The Work of Elders
- The Authority of Elders
- The Qualifications of Elders
 - 18 Qualities required in all Christian men
- Today: Five Qualities Uniquely Required in ALL Elders

Eighteen Qualities Needed By All Christian Men

- **VI. NO BRAWLER** (NASB - not addicted to wine; KJV - not given to wine)
 - One whose reputation and mind are both free from all influences of evil and intoxication, or any other thing destructive to objectivity and influence.
 - This would include social drinking, drinking in the privacy of one's home, any abuse of drugs and the use of tobacco.

Five Qualities Required In Elders

- **HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE**

- Must be:

- A man
- Lawfully married

- Both restrictive and positive:

- Prohibits more than one wife
- Demands one wife

- Demonstrates:

- That he can communicate with women
- That he can treat them with respect
- That he can empathize with those who are married

- Controversies:

- Widowed man who remarries?
- Scripturally divorced man who has remarried?

Five Qualities Required In Elders

- **NOT A NOVICE** (Not a new convert - NASB)
 - Will draw heavily on the experience, wisdom and knowledge that years as a Christian will bring.
 - The length of time depends on the individual.
 - Paul told Timothy and Titus to ordain elders in Churches in existence for just a few years.
 - Controversies:
 - “How old does a man have to be?”
 - This qualification speaks of length of experience as a Christian, not of chronological age.
 - Age is addressed in the name “elder.”

Five Qualities Required In Elders

- **APT TO TEACH** (Able to teach - NASB)
 - Must have:
 - Comprehensive knowledge of God's will.
 - The ability to impart that knowledge to others.
 - Controversies:
 - “He must be a dynamic teacher.”
 - Teaching abilities vary; this qualification does not refer to eloquence or speaking talents, but of knowledge of truth and ability to express it.

Five Qualities Required In Elders

- **DESIRES THE OFFICE OF A BISHOP**
 - Wants to do the work, and it is work!
 - A man who does not desire the office should not be imposed upon to lead the congregation.
- However, what of the condition of a man who meets the other requirements, but is unwilling to serve? Can one refuse duty to the Lord with impunity?
 - *Rom. 12:6-8; 1Cor. 12:28-31; Eph. 4:11-12; Matt. 25:14-30*

Five Qualities Required In Elders

- **HAVING CHILDREN THAT BELIEVE; NOT ACCUSED OF RIOT OR UNRULY** (Having faithful children, not accused of rebellion)
 - An elder must be a man who has demonstrated his ability to lead and teach.
 - “Believing children” is the qualification that gives Christians more difficulty than the other 22 qualifications.
 - “Believing” or “faithful” - obviously means that they are Christians.
 - “Not accused of riot, unruliness or rebellion” is self-explanatory

Believing Children

- The question of the number of children often arises:
 - “‘Children’ is plural, so he must have more than one.”
 - The Bible is self-consistent. YOU must give a reason from the text or context for interpreting the same word two different ways.

Believing Children

- Assume that when a command specifies children that it only applies when one has a plurality of children.
 - *Gen. 21:7 - “She also said, Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age.”*
 - *Matt. 22:24 - “Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.”*
 - *Acts 2:38-39 - “Then Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”*

Believing Children

- Assume that when a command specifies children that it only applies when one has a plurality of children.
 - *1Tim. 5:4 - “But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.”*
 - *v9-10 - “Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man, 10 well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.”*
 - *v16 - “If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.”*

Believing Children

- Assume that when a command specifies children that it only applies when one has a plurality of children.
 - *Eph. 6:4* - “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”
 - *Col. 3:21* - “Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.”
- How does one justify interpreting “children” as both singular and plural in all scripture passages except for Titus 1:6? He cannot have it both ways.

Believing Children

- Objection: “It takes more than one child to qualify, because he cannot get enough experience with only one child.”
 - The object is to demonstrate his ability to guide a home, not to show how prolific he can be.
 - If more than one child gives one experience, then why did God ask a man to have only one wife?
 - If a man with two children is more qualified than a man with one, then a man with ten children is more qualified than a man with two.

Believing Children

- The Bible often uses the plural for the singular.
 - *Gen. 19:29* - “...God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt.” (**Lot only lived in Sodom**)
 - *21:7* - “She also said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age.” (**Sarah only nursed Isaac**)
 - *46:7* - “His sons and his sons' sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.” (**Jacob only had one daughter**)

Believing Children

- The Bible often puts the plural for the singular.
 - *Jer. 6:16 - “Thus says the LORD: Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’” (There was only one path)*
 - *Gen. 1:20 - “Then God said, Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.” (There is only one water and heaven)*
- What justifies allowing the plural to also indicate the singular in all passages except Titus 1:6?

Qualified Men Must Be Ordained As Elders

- *Titus 1:5 - “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.”*
- *Acts 14:23 - “So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”*
- By the authority of the word of the Lord, I admonish you to heed this command and to do this good work.