

# Receiving an Accusation Against an Elder

1Timothy 5:17-21

# Understanding The Scriptures

- 1Tim. 5:17-21 - “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. 19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. 20 Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. 21 I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.”

# Understanding The Scriptures

- “Receive” - paradechomai; to receive beside, give ear to, entertain
- “At the mouth of” - Num. 35:30; Deut. 19:15; John 8:17
- “Paul applies the principle of the law to Timothy's dealings with presbyters who might be accused of not “ruling well.” He was not to encourage delatores, secret accusers and defamers, but if anyone had a charge to make against a ruler, it was to be done in the presence of witnesses.” (Pulpit’s Commentary)

# Understanding The Scriptures

- “There are always people eager to falsely accuse a man of God. They may do so because they resent his office, reject his teaching, resist biblical authority, resent virtue, or are jealous of the Lord’s blessing in his life. Ultimately, however, they demonstrate by making such accusations that they have become messengers of Satan. Such false accusations are one of his most dangerous weapons. Joseph, Moses, David, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, and our Lord Jesus Christ all suffered from false accusations. Therefore, any member of the church or leader in the church who accepts an accusation against their pastor in a private setting without hearing it before the pastor himself is guilty of sin.” (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1Timothy, 221).

# Understanding The Scriptures

- 1Tim. 5:19 - “Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.”
  - “do not receive” - paradechomai; to receive beside, give ear to, entertain
  - “an accusation” - kategoria; a speaking down, as an accusation before a tribunal

# Understanding The Scriptures

- 1Tim. 5:20 - “Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.”
  - “are sinning” - hamartano; err, miss the mark
  - “rebuke in the presence of all” - elegcho; to convince, convict before all
  - “fear” - phobon; to have fear, alarm, fright

# Understanding The Scriptures

- 1Tim. 5:21 - “I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.”
  - “observe” - phlasso krrp; to guard, keep watch
  - “without prejudice” - prokrima; preference
  - “partiality” - prosklino; to incline towards one, a bearing toward

# Understanding Safeguards On Elders

- Personal responsibility of all
  - At no time are elders above the evaluation of the people they serve.
  - Every person in the pew has this responsibility.
  - As family members, we are to be accessible enough to receive and to speak the truth in love
    - Eph. 4:15, 25-26; Luke 17:3-4; Gal. 4:16; Matt. 5:23-24; Col. 3:13
  - However, it must be done in an orderly and biblically prescribed manner

# Understanding Safeguards On Elders

- Held to a stricter judgment
  - James 3:1 - “My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.”
  - With greater responsibility comes greater accountability, and greater vulnerability to public rebuke.

# Understanding Safeguards On Elders

- Multiple witnesses required
- Partiality must be avoided

# Understanding Safeguards On Elders

- Accountability for sins and weaknesses
  - First, the text says “sins” not personality clashes, differing viewpoints and priorities, bad manners, or unkempt appearance. It says sin.
  - Second, every elder is accountable for his sins; no excuse will suffice
  - This passage gives no indication that repentance suspends rebuke.
  - Holding elders accountable increases the credibility of the local church in the community
  - If it is a sin that destroys his influence, he ceases to be qualified. He can be forgiven of the sin, but often earthly consequences of sin remain

# Understanding Safeguards On Elders

- A rebuke that reveals and remonstrates
- A public rendering
  - “Those that sin before all rebuke before all, that the bandage may be as wide as the wound, and that those who are in danger of sinning by the example of their fallen leader may take warning by the rebuke given them for it” (Matthew Henry Commentary)

# Understanding Safeguards On Elders

- The courage to cause fear
  - Psalm 97:10-12; Isa. 55:7; Jude 23; Luke 12:13; Eph. 4:22; Heb. 12:1; 2Thes. 2:12; 1John 1:9; James 4:17
  - “The judgment of the Church is the instrument of God's love, and the moment it is accepted in the sinful soul, it begins to work as a redemptive force.” (James Denney)

# Understanding Safeguards On Elders

- Trembling at the seriousness of the matter
  - How serious is this matter? “I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels...”
  - “As the saving doctrine of Christ is the soul of the church, so discipline forms ligaments which connect the members together, and keep each in its proper place. Whoever, therefore, either desires the abolition of all discipline, or obstructs its restoration, whether they act from design or inadvertency, they certainly promote the entire dissolution of the Church.” (J Calvin Commentary)
  - “When discipline leaves a church, Christ goes with it” (John Dagg).

# Understanding Safeguards On Elders

- The blessings of obedience
  - Blessings always flow when scripture is obeyed.
  - It causes the power of gospel repentance to be known and seen.
  - It causes sin to be purged in both elder and congregation.
  - It diminishes love for the world and increases love for Jesus Christ.
  - It heals. It warns. It restores.
  - David called it, “excellent oil” - Psalm 141:5
  - Job said it causes happiness - Job 5:17-18