

The Call to Lead the Church--Elders, Part 4

1 Timothy 3:2

54-21

Open your Bible, will you now with me, to 1 Timothy chapter 3...1 Timothy chapter 3. For many months we have been studying this great epistle from Paul to Timothy who is working in the church at Ephesus. And as we have come to chapter 3 verses 1 to 7 we are dealing with the call and qualification of church leaders...to put it simply, the qualifications for pastoring or being an elder or overseer in the church of Jesus Christ. Obviously in any dimension of human life, leadership is at a premium whether you're talking about politics or economics or education, business, anything. There is a tremendous demand for quality leadership. And the church as the most essential, most significant, most powerful institution on the face of the earth requires leadership. And God has designed certain men, equipped them in very specific ways and then called them to the leadership of His church.

When the church does not recognize the proper standards for leadership, when men rise to positions of leadership in the church who are unworthy to be there, the results are devastating. And if the Kingdom of Christ suffers anything more than others, it suffers so often from a lack of godly spiritual competent spiritual leadership.

Perhaps in the last couple of weeks you also took note of the fact that on a national television program a rather well known leader in the church who represents himself as a minister of Jesus Christ was debunked as a fraud. Last week when I was in Boise, Idaho, I received a phone call long distance from ABC New York. An investigative reporter in New York is doing a report on a wellknown preacher in our country and had uncovered some things about this particular man's life that were rather severe breeches of his trust, violent disregard for the Law of God. They had tracked him with a camera and caught him in compromising situations with women in his hotel rooms. They had found him in a bar. They had tracked down some of the way in which he handled himself in terms of finances and the whole thing is being prepared now for some kind of expose'.

This particular investigative reporter is a Christian and wanted to share with me the burden on his heart of ambivalence. Because on the one hand he is unmasking a charlatan, on the other hand he is knowingly going to strike a blow against the church of Jesus Christ that will make people say all over again, "I told you all those preachers were phonies." Not an enviable position to be in.

There is a tremendously need for spiritual leadership in the church, men who are authoritative, sacrificial, Spiritfilled and dependent on God. As we look at the qualifications for leadership in this chapter, we are brought face to face with what it takes to stand in the place of leadership in the church. But even before we look at the text, I want to be bold enough to back up a little and suggest to you that those who lead in the church are equipped by God with certain characteristics of personality that give them potential for spiritual leadership.

For example, Lord Montgomery annunciated seven ingredients necessary for a leader in war. It has nothing to do with the church or spiritual things, but these are the things he looked for for a leader in war. He should be able to sit back and avoid getting immersed in detail. He must not be petty. He must not be pompous. He must be a good selector of men. He should trust those under him and let them get on with their job without interference. He must have the power of clear decision. And he should inspire confidence.

Now all of those are human characteristics that demonstrate leadership potential. And I would daresay that we could take those seven and line them up alongside leaders we would like in the church and we would agree with him. Those are personality traits and characteristics which put a man in a position to be effective as a leader.

Dr. John Arnot(?) who was involved in student leadership had a list as well. This is what he suggested as the series of questions you ask to see if someone has leadership potential. Does he do little things well? Has he learned the meaning of priorities? How does he use his leisure? Does he have intensity? Has he learned to take advantage of momentum? Does he have the power of growth? What is his attitude toward discouragement and how does he face impossible situations?

Now leadership demands some innate capability. Just as you can't sing for the Lord even though you love the Lord, unless God gave you a decent voice, at least you can't sing and have anyone listen with a pleasing response, so in leadership we must assume that God gives some basic qualifications. Oswald Saunders who has written unquestionably the finest book on "Spiritual Leadership," that's its title, in Christian literature, has a list of questions to ask in determining whether someone has potential for leadership. Here are his questions and comments. Have you ever broken yourself of a bad habit? To lead others, one must be master of oneself. Here's another one. Do you retain control of yourself when things go wrong? The leader who loses selfcontrol in testing circumstances forfeits respect and loses influence. Do you think independently, he asks? While using to the full the thought of others, the leader cannot afford to let others do his thinking or make his decisions for him. Can you handle criticism objectively and remain unmoved under it? He says the humble man can derive benefit from petty and even malicious criticism. Can you use disappointments creatively? Do you readily secure the cooperation and win the respect and confidence of others? Do you possess the ability to secure discipline without having to resort to a show of authority?

And he suggests that true leadership is an internal quality of the Spirit and requires no external show of force. Then he asks, have you qualified for the Beatitude pronounced on the peacemaker, since it is much easier to keep the peace than to make the peace where it has been shattered? Furthermore, questions for a potential leader, are you entrusted with the handling of difficult and delicate situations? Can you induce people to do happily some legitimate thing that they would not normally wish to do? Can you accept opposition to your viewpoint or decision without considering it a personal affront and reacting accordingly? Do you find it easy to make and keep friends? Your circle of loyal friends is an index of the quality and extent of your leadership.

And then he asks, are you unduly dependent on the praise or approval of others? Can you hold a steady course in the face of disapproval? How about this? Are you at ease in the presence of your superiors or strangers? Do your subordinates appear at ease in your presence? A leader should give an impression of sympathetic understanding and friendliness. Then he asks, are you interested in people? Do you possess tact? Do you possess a strong and steady will? Do you nurse resentments?

Or do you readily forgive? Are you reasonably optimistic since pessimism is not asset to a leader? And are you in the grip of a master passion such as that of Paul who said, "This one thing I do," such a singleness of motive will focus all one's energies and powers on the desired objective. And do you welcome responsibility?

That's quite a provocative list, isn't it? A great check list to see if you have leadership potential. And that's where leadership starts. There is an innate working of the Spirit of God before you even get to the giftedness aspect, before you even get to the preparation aspect for that final leadership in the church.

I look back on my own life and it's almost funny to analyze the path that the Lord brought me through in bringing me to a place of leadership in His church by His grace. I remember when I was in high school, some people said to me, "You ought to run for Student Body President." And they had a little straw vote to determine who the candidates might be that would run before they were approved by the administration of our high school. And some one had put my name in the process and one day I got a call from the principal and I was called to his office. And he said, "It's come to our attention that you might run for Student Body President. Furthermore, the straw vote indicates that you might win. And so, we're withdrawing your name from the ballot out of fear that in the event of your running that might happen."

And that is exactly what they did. They took my name off the ballot. Now it wasn't that I didn't demonstrate some human capacity for leadership, it's just that I really didn't know how to control them very well and they were very sure of that.

When I was in college, some similar things to that happened. I came home from college one year and I decided to get a summer job and they were looking for people to work on the playground for the YMCA. Elementary school playgrounds were going to be open in the summer and they wanted young men to sort of open the gate, take out the carom board, set up the pingpong table and sit there with kids until five o'clock then lock the gate and that was it. And so I applied for that and had to fill out a rather lengthy application. They wanted to know everything possible about me and then after the application I received a phone call that I would have an interview with the panel who were determining who was qualified to open and close the gate and get out the carom board.

So I went to the Glendale City Hall and sat before five people on a panel, four, five people quizzed me for what amounted to nearly an hour. At the end of which time I was rejected as unsuitable for that position of leadership. And I've been waiting 30 years to tell somebody that, I think. That was a major trauma in my life.

I then went on to college and licked my wounds. And when I was coming to my senior year in college, it was suggested that I run for Student Body VicePresident. I was very active in sports and in church ministry by then, but somebody said you ought to be Student Body VicePresident. And I said really, I don't want to do that. But there was a friend in our class, he was particularly a classmate in philosophy class, a brilliant student and he said, "I'm just going to take it upon myself to put your name in." And I thought nothing would come of it, I really thought he was kidding. But he did. And on the day of the election when they were allowed to post banners and signs everywhere, I came to school to a shock because ten to one my signs dominated anybody else's signs. I hadn't known anything about it. What made it extremely curious was this friend who was so gracious and so concerned to see me run had a reading disorder, a form of delexia(?) which caused him to be unable

to spell. And as a result, my name was spelled wrong on every poster. Not only that, it was spelled differently on every poster. And it was so funny that I won the election. So I want you to know that the only place my natural talents ever got me in leadership was backing in by virtue of a joke to the vice presidency of my college student body. I should say, later on I fared a little better in seminary after the Lord began to pour in my life the spiritual qualifications to fit me for leadership and I did have the privilege of being president while a student at Talbot Seminary. But by then the Lord had begun to blend the things together.

What I'm trying to say to you is there are some natural characteristics that God builds in to those He would have to lead but until they are refined by the work of the Spirit of God and until they are added to by the gifts of the Spirit of God, they are not suitable for proper leadership in His church. And so we cannot talk about church leadership from the viewpoint of human potential. We cannot close the case on church leadership by just analyzing the skills that a person has naturally in the areas of leadership. We must come to the spiritual qualifications, and that brings us to 1 Timothy chapter 3.

We could look in a very general way at the New Testament and we would find that leaders are to be motivated by love, not constraint. They are to be characterized by a gentle and soft authority, not a harsh and abusive one. They are to be models of virtue. They are to be humble. They are to be disciplined in their life in terms of how they use their time and their resources. They are to have a vision for the plan of God. They are to be wise in the Word of God, decisive in the will of God, uncompromising in obedience. All those general things sort of ooze through the New Testament.

There must be in a leader a willingness to accept loneliness, a willingness to accept and deal with failure, it will come, a willingness to sacrifice, to be weary, to be criticized, to be rejected, to be pressured, to be disappointed, all of that sort of comes with it. There must be a recognition that we have to set aside personal ambition. We have to set aside personal comparisons. Those things lead to pride and jealousy. But apart from all those general things, what are the specifics that qualify a man to be a leader in the church. They're right here in 1 Timothy 3, let's look together at them.

Now first of all, notice in verse 2 which is where we want to begin, an overseer or bishop or elder or pastor, it's talking about the pastor, the elder, the overseer in the church, must be blameless. That is, he manifests a state of life and conduct that is above accusation. There is no blot on his life that renders him an unworthy example or model of spiritual virtue. He is to set the example for the church. And as I said before, and I want you to understand this so I'm going to repeat it, the standard for the pastor or leader of the church is not higher than the people in the church. The standard of God is the same for everyone, it is just that the leaders have to be there so that everybody else knows what the standard is to which they are to rise. God is not content when the leaders are there and the people are here, God wants the leaders at the highest standard to pull the people to that same standard. So he is to be blameless. His life is unflawed...not perfection but whatever weakness he has he brings to God, whatever failures he has he confesses to God and he's a blameless man in the eyes of his people.

Now how is blamelessness defined? Well it begins to be defined right after that in verse 2. And there are four categories...his moral character, his home life, his maturity and his reputation. To see if he's blameless we look at these four things. We look at his moral character, we look at his home life, we look at his maturity, and then we look at his reputation.

Now remember, we began last time to look at his moral character. First of all, he's a onewoman man.

The Greek text says a onewoman man. That is not a phrase related to whether he's married or not, it is not a phrase related to whether he's ever been married before, whether he has previously been married before his conversion or after. It's not concerning status, it is concerning character. It is not a matter of circumstance, it is a matter of his virtue. And the issue here is a man who is solely and only and totally devoted to the woman who is his wife. It is a question of his character. He is a onewoman man. Anything less is a disqualification.

Secondly, he is temperate. Now temperate we said last time basically comes from a word that means wineless. He is not out of control of his faculties by being under the control of some excess, some other influence, such as wine. He is unmixed with wine, is the root idea. And metaphorically it carries the idea of being alert or watchful, someone who really is clear headed, nothing clouds his mind or vision. He has no excess. He has a moderation of life in which everything is seen clearly so that he can control the diverse elements of life and be a model of virtue.

Now with those two already in our minds, let's go to the third one where we left off last time. This man who leads the church is to be soberminded. Now remember, we're talking about church leaders but we're talking about characteristics that are the model for you and me and all of us to follow. He is to be sophron, sober minded. If temperate means selfcontrolled, if temperate means clearly seeing everything and controlling his life and no excess, then this is the result of that. This basically means to be well disciplined. This is the person, I love the idea, who knows how to order his priorities. He's got his ducks in a row. In fact, it carries also the connotation of a person who is serious about spiritual things.

One ancient writer says that a man who is sophron does not have the reputation of a clown. He does not have the reputation of a clown. He is a serious man. That doesn't mean there's no place for humor, any good leader is going to be able to use and enjoy humor. But there is a seriousness of life that commands a seriousness of his own mind. Fortunately and gratefully, one of the things that young men grow out of is a sort of unnecessary frivolity. The longer you serve the Lord, the longer you live in the world, the more you begin to see the world through the eyes of God, you begin to see it through the tears of Jesus. And the more you see the world for what it is and the more you see the lostness of men and the more you see the disobedience to God, and the inevitability of hell, and all of the struggles and problems of sin, the less frivolity there is in your heart. And that's part of being a soberminded person. It doesn't mean that you're a...you know, the guy who rains on everybody's parade, it doesn't mean you have no joy in your life, it doesn't mean you can't laugh, it does mean that there is a pervasive sense of the seriousness of life and ministry. And you don't approach ministry and you don't approach life with a certain frivolity.

It carries also the idea, and this word is used in a broad way, it carries the idea of a man with a sure and steady mind who is not rash but who is very thoughtful and very earnest and very cautious in judgments. He makes judgments with great caution. The idea, right back to what I said before, well disciplined...a welldisciplined mind that results in a welldisciplined life. When I say a welldisciplined mind I mean a mind that chooses to think on things that are of importance and to waste its time on foolish things...a mind that learns to think about the right things.

I received a letter last week from a lady who said that she wanted to thank me, she started listening to our radio program and it delivered her from a very serious addiction. She said I was addicted for ten years five hours a day to soap operas. And she said, "I praise God for Grace to You, I began to listen and God has delivered me from that addiction." And now, she said, "My mind is set on the

things of the Word of God." That's a deliverance and we praise God, along with that lady, for what He by His grace did in her life. But a mind that knows where it ought to concentrate, a mind that knows the thing that is worthy of its thought, it's the mind of Philippians 4:8, you know that passage, "Whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." That's the ordered mind. That's the controlled mind, the well disciplined mind.

This is the kind of mind, chapter 3 verse 11 says, that is to belong to the women who serve in the church, the deaconess should also be soberminded. Titus 1:8 also says that the elders should have the sober mind and Titus 2:2 says older men should be sober minded, they should understand priorities. This is the one who can master his mind. His mind will react to the truth of God and not the whim of the flesh. He masters pleasure and he masters desire. And, of course, the key to all of this is that Christ reigns in his life.

Philo, ancient writer, interpreted this word as a certain limiting and ordering of the desires which eliminates those which are external and excessive, or which adorns those which are necessary with moderation...an ordered life.

The man then who leads in the church is devoted in his love life to one woman and is selfcontrolled in his personal habits and tastes so that his mind is clear enough to order the priorities of his world in a proper way.

Now let's go to a fourth characteristic that flows out of this. When a person is clear minded and they order the priorities in their thinking in a well disciplined way, it will result in what is translated here of good behavior. The idea here of the word kosmos which comes from the idea of kosmos which means system, we translate the word kosmos as world. The word world means the system, the word earth means the globe itself, its actual physical makeup. The word world means the system...the system of life, the network of values both human and divine and Satanic that interplay with one another in the dimension of time and space in man's existence. That's the system of the world, that's the kosmos. It is an ordered system.

And we live in that order and what it's saying here is that the person who has that kind of mind which has the ability to think soberly on what ought to be thought about is the person then whose system of living is going to be orderly. He will fulfill all the duties and all the responsibilities of life because he's controlled by that inner order, that well disciplined spirit. He thinks on right things. He's clear headed, as we saw, as a result he knows how to line up his priorities and it shows in the order of his life. His life is orderly. You see the discipline of his heart and mind in the discipline of his duties and his action. You give him responsibility and he does it. He can get his act together, to put it in the vernacular.

Frankly, the ministry is absolutely no place for the man whose life is a continual confusion of unaccomplished plans and unorganized activities. The opposite of the word kosmos, by the way, is the word chaos. And we saw that back in chapter 2 verse 9. Women there are said to, if they're going to worship God properly, need to reverence themselves in an orderly way before God. They're to conduct themselves in a way that is orderly, proper and so that same idea appears here in terms of spiritual leadership. We are not to have a chaotic life style but an ordered life style. And the work of the overseer in the church is a work of administration. It's a work of ordering others. It's a work of

overseeing. It's a work of putting things in their proper place. Everything has its place in time. Everything has its place in priority listing. And that must be part of the ability of this one who leads.

Oh it's a very special person. His life is not disconnected, disrupted and disorderly. And I confess to you that in my years in the ministry, I have seen many men who have great difficulty effectively ministering because they never do get their lives into any meaningful order. They can't concentrate on a task. They can't apply themselves to things within a larger framework to accomplish goals. And the disorder is a disqualification. So this is a special man.

Let's go to number five and see further what it is that qualifies a man to be the example of what God wants all of His people to be. This is given to hospitality. The word is a beautiful word, philoxenos, xenos means stranger and philo comes from phileo, to love or to show affection. This is a frequently commanded attribute of Christian character. Back in Romans chapter 12 verse 13, as Paul is laying down some of the behavior patterns of believers, he talks about being given to hospitality as a mark of one who embraces Christ. Hebrews 13:2 says don't be forgetful to entertain strangers, for some in so doing have entertained angels unawares. And he has in mind Abraham and Sarah who in being gracious to serve a meal to three strangers found out when looking back that the strangers were none other than God and two holy angels come in the form of a man. And so, be careful how you train...treat strangers. First Peter 4:9, use hospitality without grudging, Peter says. Don't give it but not like giving it, do it willingly and with a ready heart.

Now what does it mean to love strangers? I hear all the time, "Well, Soandso has a gift of hospitality because she's a great cook." I'm for great cooks and people say, "Well, you know, boy, my wife has the gift of hospitality, she's always having our friends over." Look, I think that's good too. In fact, I'll come over and eat good food anytime. But that is not what this word means. This is not a word about having your friends over. This is a word about loving somebody who isn't your friend. This is all about strangers. This is like Jesus when He said, "Look, when you have a feast, don't call everybody you know, go out and call the poor and those who don't have any resources." You see, the mark of spiritual leadership here is not somebody who entertains his friends....hey, everybody does that, that's not a mark of anything. Everybody does...everybody has their friends over. Everybody takes their friends out. Everybody shows kindness to their friends, this is talking about the people who aren't your friends, this is loving strangers.

Now I confess that this can be...this can be dangerous because a stranger is a stranger. And if you think you have to have an FBI dossier on everybody who enters your house, you're going to have a little trouble with this because you are going to expose yourself to some vulnerability. Recently one of the dear couples in our church took in a group of people who expressed great need and in their own home they took them in and cared for them and provided a place for them. And then when it became apparent that they were taking great advantage of that and had no true interest in the things of Christ and no true graciousness of spirit to receive as should be received the kindness given them, they tried to deal with that and then it became very very difficult and the people took things. From what I understand there was great damage, great loss of money involved, very very sad. And then when they asked the people to leave, their lives were threatened by these people who by the way had a rather lengthy police record and certain association with weapons and so forth...this in the last month in our church.

And a few Sundays ago the word came that this group of people was coming to Grace Church to commandeer the pulpit in a Sunday morning service. Now you didn't know that because we didn't tell

you that. I would like to keep your attention when I'm preaching to you, I don't want you looking around for who is going to take over the place.

But we had policemen here that morning. And they all were prepared properly with mace. In fact, just as I was coming in to preach, one of them said, "Now if anything comes down, just duck." And I said, "Wait a minute, you better explain a little more than that, what should I be looking for?" And they explained what might happen, somebody might take over the pulpit and just be ready, they said. So I was ready and I'm just thankful it didn't happen. I don't know how it was dealt with but we didn't know anything at all so perhaps they didn't even come or they came and found us to be a more formidable looking bunch than they had originally anticipated.

But anyway, the point I'm making is these dear people were threatened in terms of their life, they lost some of their belongings, they had to put out a great amount of money to deal with the situation. And there is always the downside risk to loving the stranger but I want you to know that there is in my heart the absolute confidence that any loss to the unkind stranger is a gain to our gracious God who shall abundantly repay them for whatever and far more they may have lost by doing that which is commanded of them in the Word of God. And they can be looking around any corner ahead of them to see what it is that God will pour out on them by way of His blessing...loving strangers.

I have this rule at our house, never go in the hall until you're fully dressed because I never know who is staying in our house and some of the people I meet in the hall I have never met before. But that's all right and that's as it ought to be.

Persecution, poverty, orphans, widows, traveling Christians, it made it necessary in ancient days to open the home. There weren't any hotels like we have, motels. They didn't pamper people like they do today. And the inns for the most part were brothels. They marked the ancient world with a black mark. There people were robbed and beaten and solicited to evil. William Barclay writes of the picture of the ancient world with these words, "In the ancient world, inns were notoriously bad. In one of Aristophanes' plays, Heracles(?) asks his companion where they will lodge for the night. And the answer is, 'Wherever the fleas are the fewest.' Plato speaks of the innkeeper being like a pirate who holds his guests to ransom. Inns tended to be dirty and expensive and above all immoral. The ancient world, therefore, had developed a system of what were called 'guests friendships.' Over generations, families had arrangements with other families to give each other accommodation and hospitality if they were in the area. And often the members of the families came in the inn to be unknown by each other by sight, as the generations went on. They would then identify themselves by means of what were called 'tallies.' A stranger coming into a town would seek accommodation and produce one half of an object, that was called a tally, and if the houseowner had the other half he would know that this was someone from a family that had a guest friendship with his family in generations past. And the stranger was indeed the friend and could be admitted to the home. In the Christian church there were wandering teachers and preachers, they needed hospitality. There were many slaves who had no homes of their own, it was a great privilege to have them come into a Christian home maybe for the only time in their life."

You see, the whole church was like a little island of Christianity in a sea of paganism and Christian homes would be the safest most enriching and wonderful place of all. And I still think we live in a world like that. Many are far from home, many are strangers and many need a place to stay and the Christian home would be the best place of all. And the door of the Christian home as well as the heart of the Christian family ought to be open to all who come.

You see, what it's saying here is that the pastor is not somebody who is elevated to a place where he's unapproachable. He's not remote. He's available. This is not the place for seclusion. This is not the place for isolation. His life and his home are open so that the true character of his life is manifest to all who come there. I mean, if I want to know the most about you, I'd go to your house and watch you for a few days...or weeks. The pastorate is not a place where you ascend beyond the people and become untouchable. It's a place where you become touchable and you hold your home as a stewardship to be used as God sees fit. And I'm always reminded when I think about this that God received those of us who were strangers and alien from the covenant, those Gentiles, He received us as strangers into His family and how can we who have been so welcomed not welcome other strangers into our own? And after all, we own nothing. Now I'm not saying disregard what you have, I want to be a steward of what God gave me. And when the couple shows up with eight little children and four new boxes of Crayolas, I'm a little leery. We did have our house decorated one time. I want to be sensitive to that. And we're not going to be wasteful about resources God has given us but we are going to be aware of the fact that we don't own anything, we only manage everything we have for Christ, He owns it all. And so we want to love those strangers that call upon us.

And that isn't only a matter of just opening your home. I mean, loving strangers is just a matter of life. Opening your heart to people who really don't know you and whom you don't know, sometimes that can become maybe the best avenue for evangelism.

Well, let me give you one more this morning and this one, a fitting one in which to close, at the end of verse 2, and we'll take verse 3 next time. At the end of verse 2 he says, "apt to teach...apt to teach." Here is the only qualification given in the entire list related specifically to the function of a pastor or elder or overseer. Skilled in teaching, didaktikon, it means skilled in teaching. It is used only here and in 2 Timothy 2:24, only those two times. The word is a rich word. He is to be a skilled teacher, that's the bottom line. The difference really, beloved, the thing that sets deacons apart from elders or pastors, the thing that sets the congregation apart from the pastor is the skill of teaching. There is a marked skill in teaching that goes along with the unique moral spiritual qualifications of the man. The man is highly qualified and with the addition of skill in teaching.

You say, "Well then how is it that the skill of teaching is put here in the middle of the list of moral qualifications?" Because teaching effectively is predicated on the character of the teacher. You cannot divorce what a teacher is from what he says when the whole content of his teaching is moral. So this in itself is a moral qualification. That is, he is to be able to teach and he will only be able to teach effectively if he lives up to what it is he teaches, right? So it is a moral qualification as well as a note about his function. He is to be a skilled teacher.

In 1 Timothy 5:17 the note is that he is one who labors, kopiao, who works to exhaustion in the Word and doctrine. And I am always amazed at how many people are concerned about leisure and how many people want time off and yet in the Word of God there is the constraint that one labors to the point of exhaustion in the Word and in the teaching. This is the primary task. You see, in Ephesians it says He's given the church evangelists and teaching pastors, these would be the same as elders and bishops. And they are for the perfecting of the saints. And how do you perfect the saints? Through the Word of God, feeding the Word, feeding the Word, the primary role is teaching, teaching.

Notice 1 Timothy chapter 4 verse 6, Paul says to Timothy, "If you put the brethren in remembrance of

these things you'll be a good minister of Jesus Christ." If you're a good teacher, he says, and make the people remember divine truth, you're a good minister. A good minister is a good teacher. A good minister is able to communicate the Word of God. Verse 11, "These things command and teach." Verse 16, "Take heed to yourself and unto the teaching." Chapter 5 verse 17, as I mentioned earlier, "Work hard in the Word and teaching."

The same thing is true in 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 13, "Hold on to sound words." Chapter 2 verse 15, "Study to show yourself approved unto God, rightly dividing the Word of truth." Know how to interpret it properly. Chapter 3 verse 14, "Continue in the things you've learned." Pass them on to others.

The essence of everything is teaching. That's why 2 Timothy 2:2 says, "The things you've heard from me commit to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also." It's all about teaching. And, of course, at this time the apostolic era is dying out, the Apostles are going to glory. And there's a great need as the church explodes all over the then known world. And as it is exploding there is this great demand for teachers. And so Paul's word to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2 is to make teachers, to teach teachers who can teach others, this is the skill that is at the core of the role of the pastor, evangelist, the leader of the church. The Lord's servant must be didaktikos, skilled in teaching, able to teach because his life is of such moral constitution, such impeccable virtue that he is believable. Not only does he have skill in the communicating end of it, but he has the ability to make it believable because he lives it.

The New Testament also encourages him to be paidionta(??) which means to be trained. That's the word paidia(?) comes from a word that means little child, to be disciplined or trained or educated like a child. You put together then the skill in teaching and the training and you have what it takes to be an effective teacher. The object is to be used by God to articulate divine truth.

Now not everybody is a teacher. And not everybody is called to be a teacher. And it isn't wrong not to be a teacher of the church as a pastor or evangelist or leader. It isn't wrong. It's a question of the calling of God. First Corinthians 12:29, do you remember that verse? Look at it for just a moment. In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul is talking about the gifts of the Spirit. In verse 28 he begins by saying, "God has set some in the church," and it's important to note that this is the work of God. God sets His leaders in their place. "First He set Apostles, then prophets and then teachers," and that no doubt refers to pastor teachers, those who lead the church, skilled in teaching. And then He set some who have the gift of miracles or healing or helps or government. He mentions tongues. And then he says this, all of those things, by the way, were in existence at that time, "Are all apostles?" The answer obviously is no. "Are all prophets?" No. "Are all teachers?" No. No, we're not all teachers and God did not intend for all of us to be teachers in the formal life of the church. All of us are to be teachers in the informal life of the church, sharing truth within the network of our influence, but not all of us have been called to teach.

Those who have will have, I believe, some innate human qualifications that potentiate leadership. We talked about those at the very beginning. They'll have some characteristics that are potential for leadership. And then they will be refined by the Spirit of God, gifted by the Spirit of God, and brought by the Spirit of God to the place where they can match these qualifications.

What is it then we that we look for in the moral character of a teacher in the church? A onewoman man, a man who is not given to excesses but in a clear minded way orders his priorities and

consequently his life has an orderly pattern of behavior. And when he teaches out of that platform of an ordered mind and an ordered life, he will be skilled in his teaching because God will have given him the gift to do that and the life credibility to make it believable. Now that's the kind of person that God has called to lead His church.

And how sad, how tragic it is when other kinds of people find their place in church leadership. Or, when even these kind are there but fall into sin and are disqualified. The saddest thing we deal with in the church because it's the most important thing is the problem of ungodly leadership. And we need to be praying that God will maintain the purity of our leadership here and help us raise many more godly leaders for the church around the world.

Well, so much more to say but I don't want to get into any more until next time. Let's pray together.

Lord, we cannot understand why You have chosen to put so much dependence on those of us who are human teachers with all of our frailties and weaknesses, with all of our inabilities, with all of the potential for failure and bringing disrepute on Your name. Lord, we thank You though because with that great responsibility comes a holy privilege and a confidence that You have not called us to do what You have not enabled us to do. We thank You for the power of the Holy Spirit who causes us to be able to do those things we are called to do. O God, I pray for the leaders here. I pray for those who shall be raised up. I pray for the leadership of Your church that it might be in the hands of those who are the virtuous men so described in Your Word. And help us, Lord, to know that none of us is really qualified but by grace. Lord, help us to know that it's only because You are a condescending loving God that You even allow us to be used who come so short of Your glory. But keep us, Lord, as true and as pure and as right as we can be that we may be faithful and skilled teachers of Your Word for the sake of Your church that it might be to the praise and glory of the name of Christ. Amen.

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