

Elder Training Series

Session 05 - Qualifications Listed in Titus 1:7, with a parallel in 1 Peter 5:3 (NIV based)

(Repeating) NOTE: As we examine each of the requirements in these next verses, again perhaps it would be prudent and wise for you to mark with a colored highlight marker or pen the items that you need to work on or improve in order to meet God's qualification requirements.

READ: "**Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must... not [be] overbearing,**" (Titus 1:7) and "**not lording it over those entrusted to you**" (1 Peter 5:3)

SECTION POINT: God instructs that pastors, elders, overseers, and ministry leaders are not to improperly, or abusively, or oppressively use the authority and leadership that He has given them in churches and ministries.

- - "Overbearing" carries the meaning of "arrogantly domineering; overwhelming in power or significance; dictatorial; controlling; oppressive; pleased with oneself while possessing no respect for other people". (Titus 1:7; *AHD* - "overbearing"; Strong's #0829)
- - "Lording it over" carries the meaning of "exercising lordship over; to control; to subjugate". (1 Peter 5:3; Strong's #2634)
- - Being a pastor, elder, or overseer in a church or ministry does not entitle the person to be a little dictator - an all-powerful tyrant who wields absolute authority like a sword.
- - Being overbearing, arrogantly domineering, or oppressive are not the kinds of leadership that God wants pastors, elders, overseers, and ministry leaders to be exercising in the church or ministries.
- - These leadership behaviors are counterproductive to the accomplishing of God's will by the church - perverting and corrupting the proper and effective use of leadership authority.
- - These leadership behaviors also erode the willingness of church people to get involved in helping in church programs or events - no one wants to be an abused slave.
- - Leadership in the church needs to be conducted in a manner that makes it fun and/or enjoyable and/or fulfilling and/or edifying for those persons who are under the leadership's authority, and for those persons who are doing the work.

- - Notice, though, that 'paying attention to details', which includes correctly identifying, placing importance on, and ensuring the implementation of priority details, is actually a very effective and valued quality for leadership.
- - But, there is a distinct and important difference and fine line between paying attention to details and being "overbearing" or "lording it over".
- - Therefore, care needs to be exercised in how leaders select, prioritize, present, and direct the implementing of details so that the line is not crossed into being "overbearing" or "lording it over".

- - God designates that "overseers are entrusted with God's work", functioning on God's behalf as a "trustee, or manager, or agent in that capacity" to appropriately implement what God has for their church or ministry to do. (Titus 1:7; Strong's #3623)

- - And correspondingly, God designates that overseers are entrusted with authority over the people in their church or ministry - those persons "allotted or assigned by God to be under the overseer's authority and care". (1 Peter 5:3; Strong's #2819)
- - Within these designations by God are embedded a clear and distinct responsibility for overseers to apply their management and authority appropriately, wherein overseer behaviors of being "overbearing" and/or "lording it over" are absolutely not acceptable to God.
- - Therefore, the implication here is that the overseers' applying of their management and authority should be conducted in a manner that is primarily and foundationally collaborative - working together that profoundly contains the quality of mutually-submissive cooperation.
- - The leadership approach of 'mutually-submissive cooperation and collaboration' is supported by the command in Ephesians 5:21, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."
- - Even though this may sound radical, indeed God is saying in these verses that overseers should apply their management and authority in a mutually-submissive manner - the overseer is at times submitting to his ministry workers and constituents, and conversely at other times his ministry workers and constituents are submitting to the overseer.
- - From the engaging in this kind of interaction, therein conditions for cooperation, and collaboration, and resulting effectiveness are maximized.
- - Of course, in order to achieve and maintain this approach of 'mutually-submissive cooperation and collaboration', the overseer must intrinsically possess and consistently implement flexibility in his use of authority.
- - This type of mutually-submissive, cooperative, collaborative, flexible leadership does not come natural or easy for us humans, because our sin nature compels us to use our authority in a rigid and demanding manner, wherein one person or group commands and everyone else blindly follows without objection, questioning, or hesitation.
- - Therefore, in order to genuinely possess and appropriately implement this God-approved mutually-submissive, cooperative, collaborative, flexible leadership, overseers must personally be Holy Spirit-empowered, rather than sinful nature-empowered or sinful nature-influenced.
- - Holy Spirit-empowering will furthermore remedy the overseers' natural tendency to feel threatened or insecure that his authority is being challenged or is vulnerable to being overtaken if he shows any signs of weakness in his use of his authority.
- - Being genuinely Holy Spirit-empowered and being secure in his Holy Spirit-empowering, that overseer is now freed to actively engage in open dialog with and input from lower-ranking or non-ranking persons in his church or ministry, especially regarding various aspects of ministry functioning that pertain to his domain of overseer authority and leadership.
- - This Holy Spirit-empowered mutually-submissive, cooperative, collaborative, flexible leadership implies that this overseer also maintains a willingness to take the time to adequately explain reasons for the decisions that he is making, and the directives he is issuing and implementing.
- - An important note here (that will be addressed in detail in a later session of this elder training) is that God does authorize and even orders that pastors, elders, and overseers

use commanding authority in some instances, for example in regard to the commanding of the ceasing of teaching false doctrine. (e.g. 1 Timothy 1:3-4)

READ: Titus 1:7 "...an overseer... must..." "not [be] quick-tempered,"

SECTION POINT: In conjunction with some relating verses in Scriptures, God instructs that pastors, elders, overseers, and ministry leaders are not to become angry, nor to have anger, nor to respond in anger, as evidenced by anger correspondingly hinders and even destroys ministry functioning in churches and ministries.

- - "Quick-tempered" carries the meaning of being "prone to outbursts of temper; easily angered". (Strong's #3711; *AHD* - 'irascible')

- - Being "quick-tempered" would therefore also include engaging in: prolonged rantings, railings, reamings, and diatribes (chewing outs); sudden hair-trigger volcano-like gusher explosions of anger; episodes of poorly-disguised subsurface rage; spewing poorly-disguised accusations at an innocent ministry person of behaving as an agent of Satan; and etcetera.

- - God says in James 1:20 that "man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires", and correspondingly here in Titus 1:7 that likewise the pastor's, elder's, or overseer's anger does not bring about the righteous conduct and the righteous results that God desires.

- - Therefore, from these verses, pastors, elders, overseers, and ministry leaders are being ordered by God to not possess nor harbor the emotions of anger, nor produce the behaviors that generate from anger.

- - Thereby, technically it is always entirely unjustified for pastors, elders, overseers, and ministry leaders to have anger and to respond in anger, because they are suppose to be 'entrusting their situation to God', like Jesus did while He was being severely tortured and crucified. (1 Peter 2:21-24; from v.23)

-- From logic and observations, anger within any of the leaders of the church or ministries:

- - - - destroys cohesiveness amongst the pastors, elders, overseers, and leaders, and it instills dread and avoidance in them because they relish peace and peaceful resolution of conflicts and problems;

- - - - severely diminishes and even destroys positive opinions and favorable regard for the angry pastor, elder, overseer, or leader, and it instills dislike, negative opinions, and oppositional regard toward that angry pastor, elder, overseer, or leader;

- - - - destroys and even outright murders the ministerial careers of innocent excellent servants of God, who had been called by God into ministry;

- - - - destroys unity, harmony, healthiness, and open communication within the functioning of the leadership, the workers, and the constituents of the church and ministries;

- - - - destroys the desire of ministry workers to get involved or be involved - no one wants to work under an anger-prone leader;

- - - - sets and reinforces a bad example for everyone who becomes aware of the anger, therein defying the command in 1 Peter 5:3 to "be examples to the flock";
- - - - sets and reinforces a bad or negative atmosphere and environment in the functioning in the church and in all of the ministries that are under the oversight of that angry leader;
- - - - hinders the building of relationships and the bonding with unbelievers, that are so vitally necessary for them to want to come back to the church or ministry;
- - - - hinders the effective promotion of and perhaps even mocks Jesus' actions on the cross of immeasurable love and the acceptance that is freely available for each of us sinners, no matter how bad or wicked we have been;
- - - - and casts a taint of hypocrisy on all of the various commands in the Scriptures for true believers, for example in Colossians 3:12-15, "12. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful."

BIG IDEA: God declares that a person is **not** qualified to be a pastor, elder, overseer, or ministry leader if the person has the nature of being dictatorial, or domineering, or oppressive, or controlling, or prone to anger.

APPLICATIONS:

- - Do you ever conduct yourself in a manner that other people think is "overbearing", or domineering, or dictatorial, or controlling, or oppressive? Is it permissible for you to possess and exhibit these traits?
- - Do you think God approves and will bless and prosper the church or ministries that you lead or oversee if you possess and exhibit these traits of being "overbearing"?
- - Do you think that you can effectively quench or hide these traits of being "overbearing" when you are in a leadership role in church or a ministry?
- - Now that you have heard expository teaching on this subject, what are you going to do about your possessing and exhibiting of these traits of being "overbearing" or "lording it over"?

- - When you are in various kinds of situations or environments, do you ever engage in any aspects of anger, such as: internally forming anger; or possessing anger; or harboring anger; or venting anger; or outbursts of temper; or flying into a rage?
- - When you have authority over other people within various kinds of situations or environments, do you ever engage in any of these aspects of anger?
- - When you are a leader and are under a deadline or under pressure to succeed or solve a tough problem, do you ever engage in any aspects of anger?

- - When you are a leader and you perceive that one or more of your workers are not functioning in a manner that is suitable to your liking, do you ever engage in any aspects of anger?
 - - When a person under your authority is performing with excellence and effectiveness far above what you perform at, and thereby you think the person is making you look bad, do you ever engage in any aspects of anger or fly into a rage?
 - - If your answer is 'Yes' to any of these above questions, then do you think God considers you to be qualified to be a pastor, or elder, or overseer, or ministry leader?
 - - What are you going to do about your anger?
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[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - Analyze, discuss, and describe how ministry leaders being "quick-tempered", or 'prone to anger' directly compare to and impact the principles in each of the phrases in Colossians 3:12-15 (quoted above in this document).
 - - Contemplate the answer or solution to an obvious question in the first section of this document as to 'How does a person or overseer become Holy Spirit-empowered?', (which will be addressed in detail in 'session 10' of this elder training series).]
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