

A scenic autumn landscape featuring a pond in the foreground, surrounded by trees with vibrant orange, red, and yellow foliage. A white arrow with a black outline points to the right, positioned in the center of the image.

*Welcome To
Sunday Night Bible Fellowship*

“We proclaim Him, warning every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man mature in Christ.” Col 1:28

“Above Reproach”

Titus 1:6

September 27, 2015

Titus 1:6-8

- 6 namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.
- 7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,
- 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,

Heb 10:24-25

24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Acts 2:46

46 Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart,

Elders

- 1. Elders were the leadership in the churches of the first century. Leadership wasn't complicated.***
- 2. Pastors, elders, overseers – all the same office.***
- 3. No set number. If you have that desire to be an elder and you meet the qualifications, you can be an elder.***
- 4. One elder may have the predominate teaching/preaching role in the church.***
- 5. A ruling Board of Elders promotes the biblical concept of the Priesthood of all believers.***
- 6. Elders are not leaders who dictate or “lord it over” but their role is to serve the believers in the congregation.***
- 7. Elders have no authority in themselves but their authority is derived to the degree that they use God's Word, which is the only authority in the Church.***
- 8. The role of the Elders is 2-fold:***
 - 1. They are to teach, defend, guard, and protect the authority in the Church – God's Word.***
 - 2. They are to pray for the flock and be examples to the flock.***

Qualifications for an Elder/Pastor-Teacher

Character

Above reproach
Man – husband of one wife
Temperate/Self controlled
Prudent
Respectable
Hospitable
Not addicted to wine
Gentle
Peaceable
Free from the love of money/Not fond of sordid gain
Manages household well
Children under control - not accused of dissipation and rebellion
Not a new convert
Good reputation outside the church
Not self-willed
Not quick tempered
Not pugnacious
Sensible
Just
Devout

Abilities

Able to Teach

Notice what are NOT qualifications:

1. Intelligence.

1 Cor 1:27

God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise,

2. Seminary/Bible School education.

2 Tim 2:2

2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

3. *Ability to influence.*

1 Cor 1:17

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void.

Rom 16:18

18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

1 Thess 2:5

5 For we never came with flattering speech, as you know,

4. *Human talent.*

1 Cor 2:1

1 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom,

2 Cor 11:6

6 But even if I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not so in knowledge;

5. Charisma.

2 Cor 10:10

10 For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible."

6. Physical attractiveness.

2 Cor 5:12

12 We are not again commending ourselves to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have an answer for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart.

7. Wealth.

1 Tim 3:3

3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

Phil 4:11-12

11 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.

12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity;

8. Business acumen.

2 Cor 2:17

17 For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

9. Age.

1 Tim 4:12

12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness,

1 Tim 3:6

6 and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

1 Tim 5:22

22 Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.

10. Position in the secular world.

1 Cor 1:26

26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;

Titus 1:6-9

- 6 namely, if **any man** is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.
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1 Tim 3:1-2

- 1 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.
- 2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach,

“ανεγκλητος”

“ανεγκαλεω”

α	εγ	καλεω
not	in	to call

Legal term: “not having been called up before a judge.”

1 Cor 1:7-8

7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,
8 who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Col 1:22

22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach —

“beyond reproach” is a position that does not change. You are either in that position or you are not.

What does “above reproach” mean?

“blameless, without fault, faultless, irreproachable, exemplary, impeccable, unblemished, spotless, untarnished, stainless, squeaky clean, beyond criticism.”

******Being above reproach means that no one can honestly bring a legitimate charge or accusation against an Elder.

“If any be blameless”—that does not mean he must be perfect, without sin. It does mean that any accusation that is brought against him must not be found to be true. His life must be above reproach....When someone can point a finger at an officer of the church and accurately accuse him of dishonesty, then the cause of Christ is hurt. It does not matter how naturally gifted a man may be, if someone can say that his speech does not reflect a dedication to Christ, then the cause of Christ is hurt, and that man should not be an officer of the church. There must be nothing in their lives to disqualify them as models of moral and spiritual character for believers under their care to emulate.”

- *J. Vernon McGee*

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What does it NOT mean?

1. That he lived “above reproach” all his life.

Titus 3:3

3 For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

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What does it NOT mean?

1. That he lived “above reproach” all his life.
2. That an Elder is perfect and sinless.

** Above reproach means that the Elder’s/Pastor’s/Overseer’s life is free from scandal and inappropriate behavior.

How do you get to that point?

1. Elders are sinners saved by grace.
2. The position of “Elder” is designed by God to be a significantly higher level than those who are a part of the congregation.
3. Elders have reached a level of spiritual maturity where they are consistent (not perfect) in the application of the Word in their lives. An Elder is a model of Christian maturity.
4. They have demonstrated that they understand the authority of the Word, obedience to the Word, and the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Why must elders be “above reproach”?

1. So that there is trust by the congregation.
2. So that there is an example for all in the congregation to attain.
3. So that they are effective leaders. You cannot have frequent accusations causing turmoil in the church.
4. So that they can train the future Elders/Pastors/Overseers of the church.
5. So that they are testimonies to the outside world.

What if an Elder has a moral failure?

1. He has disqualified himself from the office of Elder. In the OT God replaced shepherds of the flock of Israel with other shepherds. Once they violated the office they were done.
2. He no longer meets the qualification of an Elder which is “above reproach”.
3. Eldership is an office that you either meet the requirements or you don't.
4. Repentance, grace, forgiveness, personal restoration are all to be granted to the fallen Elder, however he can not be restored to the office of Elder. He may serve in other areas.

“The calling of ministry is the highest honor bestowed on man, and it demands the highest level of integrity, blamelessness and holiness that is above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2, 10; Titus 1:7). The demands of ministry are not set by men, but God, and as difficult as they may be to attain, they are nonetheless vital. The pattern for ministry was set in Jesus Christ, and those who follow Him must be Christlike in their walk. We do not look at the world to define our ministry, we look to God and His Word. To determine whether a man is qualified to serve, look at the basic qualifications laid out in scripture (1 Timothy 3). Scripture does not lead us to a conclusion that those who have wasted away their reputation and destroyed the trust of those who follow and lead them can or should be restored to the position they once held. In fact, their negligence has created a chasm between those they would lead and their own integrity, trust, and godly example. Once this purity has been sacrificed, it is impossible to then lead by example.”

- Jay Jones

Pastor, Kentwood Michigan

“Restoration after Moral Failure?”

“By all means we should be forgiving. But we cannot erase the consequences of sin. I am not advocating that we "shoot our wounded." I'm simply saying that we shouldn't rush them back to the front lines, and we should not put them in charge of other soldiers. The church should do everything possible to minister to those who have sinned and repented. But that does not include restoring the mantle of leadership to a man who has disqualified himself and forfeited the right to lead. Doing so is unbiblical and lowers the standard God has set.”

- John MacArthur

1 Tim 6:13-14

13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate,

14 that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,