

# **The Imperative of Qualified Overseers**

Titus 1:5-9

# Main Idea

It is essential for the health of the church to appoint qualified men who serve as examples that are shaped by the Word and shepherds who shape others by the Word.

The qualifications for the leadership of the Church are not relevant for  
leaders only.

The leadership is not expected to measure up to these standards so  
that everyone else won't have to.

In terms of character, the elders are to be examples, not replacements.

## Titus 1:1-4

<sup>5</sup> For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, <sup>6</sup> namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. <sup>7</sup> 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, <sup>8</sup> but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, <sup>9</sup> holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

# The Imperative of Qualified Overseers

## 1. The office of elder

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1. The office of elder
  - a. Established with standing authority

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*Appoint elders in every city:*

“Put mature men with seasoned judgment **in charge** in every city.

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## Hebrews 13:17

<sup>17</sup> **Obey your leaders and submit to them**—for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account—so that they may do this with joy, not groaning; for this would be unhelpful for you.

## 1 Timothy 5:17

<sup>17</sup> Let **the elders who rule well** be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

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  - a. Established with standing authority
  - b. Established as overseers

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**“Elder” (*Presbyterous*):**

A mature man with seasoned judgment.

**“Overseer” (*episkopos*)**

A ruler appointed to keep watch over the flock and bear the responsibility of caring for others. One who does the work of a

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## 1 Peter 5:2-3

**<sup>2</sup> shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight** not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; **<sup>3</sup> nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge**, but proving to be examples to the flock.

As a steward of God's household (the church), the overseer has been given an allotment of precious people for whom he is responsible. His office is to be used for their shepherding care and well-being.

The New Testament teaches that the office of “elder” is in reference to an official office held only by qualified men who are charged with the responsibility to oversee and shepherd the church through the faithful ministry of the word and through their godly example.

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2. The qualifications of elder
  - a. Above reproach with respect to his own family

if any man is above reproach, **the husband of one wife**, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.

## Implications for everyone

**Qualification:** “Husband of one wife”

**Implications:** The standard sexual ethic for all Christians is chastity in singleness and fidelity in marriage, which is a monogamous, life-long covenant between one man and one woman.

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## Implications for everyone

**Qualification:** “Believing/faithful children”

**Implications:** Every Christian parent should use their authority and influence to persuade their children to follow Christ. They should labor diligently to impress the Christian faith upon their children and teach them to fear the Lord.

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<sup>7</sup> 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, <sup>8</sup> but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled

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## Implications for everyone

**Qualification:** “Not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain”

**Implications:** Christians who are characterized by these negative traits will damage the reputation of Christ and undermine their effectiveness.

In contrast, Christians are called to a life of humility, self-control, sobriety, peace, and honesty.

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## Implications for everyone

**Qualification:** “Hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled”

**Implications:** These positive characteristics exemplify “a knowledge of the truth that accords with godliness”, which every Christian should aspire to.

Because the office of elder is intended to function as an example to be followed and an authority to be obeyed, every elder must be living in accordance with sound doctrine and without any legitimate charge against his shepherding of his own household or against his own character.

# The Imperative of Qualified Overseers

## 2. The central focus of the elder

° **holding fast the faithful word** which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict

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3. The central focus of the elder

a. To minister the word by giving instruction in sound doctrine

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## The Imperative of Qualified Overseers

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The elder is appointed to be a care-taker and minister of the word of God. He must be mastered by the word, so that his life is shaped by it and his ministry is anchored in it.

His pastoral oversight and shepherding care for the church cannot be disconnected from the faithful ministry of the word and his godly example.

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