

Elder Training Series

Session 09 - Qualifications Listed in 1 Peter 5:2-3, with cross-references in Titus 2:7 and 1 Timothy 4:12b (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 and corresponding mandates.

READ: 1 Peter 5:2, with verse 5:1 for context

SECTION POINT: God authorizes, instructs, and requires that elders are to care for, serve, and oversee their church or ministry of true believers.

(v.1) **"To the elders among you..."**, (v.2) **"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers"**

- - The section of verses in 1 Peter 5:1-4 is addressed to the "elders" (v.1) or "shepherds" (pastors) or overseers (v.2) who are "among" "God's elect" (v.1:1), in other words, the spiritual leaders of, "among", and over a group or "flock" of true believers which God has ownership of. (For more details regarding the Greek definitions of the words 'elder', 'overseer', and 'pastor', see 'Session 01' of this 'Elder Training Series' on the "Home Page - Ministry" of the web-site www.BelieverAssist.com .)

- - An imperative command to the elders - "be shepherds" - do the functions to "care" for the sheep and the flock, along with let that functioning be or define what you are, and not merely what you do.

- - Stating in general terms, the functions of "being a shepherd" imply: providing individualized spiritual "care" for each sheep in the flock as needed; providing spiritual "care" for the sheep as subgroups in the flock as needed; providing spiritual "care" for the sheep as a whole group or flock; and "directing the affairs" of the flock. (1 Timothy 5:17)

- - Notice the distinct simultaneous "serving" quality of this functioning - "serving" in these same ways as this shepherding or providing care for the flock, serving to provide "oversight" for the flock, and fulfilling its various spiritual needs that relate to being a flock comprised of individual true believers. (Strong's #1983)

- - God is authorizing and instructing the elders to exert both this kind of shepherding authority over the flock and this kind of shepherding activity within the flock that God owns and has assigned them to, and upon each true believer in that flock that God owns by means of the redemption that came through the blood of Jesus. (1 Corinthians 6:19d-20a; Romans 3:24-25a)

- - This is an obligation of the job function of being an elder or "overseer" of a church or ministry, which the elder or overseer accepts and agrees to by and upon his assuming that position in a church or ministry.

- - Therefore, accepting a position of elder or overseer is a qualification commitment before God to be sufficiently available to do this kind of ministry work, to do it appropriately, to do it thoroughly, and to do it well.

- - Obviously then, each elder, overseer, and pastor must possess a natural-orientation towards and natural-drive to provide this kind of care, and not be inclined towards other kinds of functioning, such as: attaining a position of prestige, control, or power; building

his own little kingdom; fabricating an aura and reputation of being all-knowing and all-wise; or acquiring personal financial affluence and financial security.

- - For the elder, overseer, or pastor, this job functioning is an ongoing giving situation, and not a getting situation - ongoing serving and giving to the needs of the flock and its members, without ever expecting to be served or to get anything in return. (e.g. the example of Jesus - Matthew 20:28)

SECTION POINT: God requires that elders serve because they are "willing" and "eager" to serve, and **not** because of any kind of compulsion, or pressure, or financial desire that motivates them to serve.

(v.2) "**not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;**"

- - Elders or overseers or pastors are not to serve in this job position because they "must" - not "by compulsion", not out of necessity, not be or feel "obligated", not pressured or coerced. (Strong's #0317)

- - A need certainly may exist within the church or ministry for this job position to be filled and quickly, but the person selected to fill this job position instead must be "willing" and of a "voluntary" frame of mind - decided by means of his own freewill choice. (Strong's #1596)

- - In other words, to qualify as an elder, deep down inside he must be genuinely agreeable and wanting to serve in this capacity, even to the extent of being "eager to serve", despite perhaps any reservations or insecurities he may have about personally being able to do the job or do it well.

- - And he must genuinely be willing and eager to make all of the personal sacrifices that are necessary for him to do his ministry job functioning well.

- - Let there be clarity, therefore, that a person who is in any way pressured to be functioning as an elder, overseer, pastor, or ministry leader is herein declared by God to be utterly unqualified to hold that position, and thereupon that church or ministry or head pastor or ruling board who is pressuring him is therein acting directly in opposition to God's stated will.

- - Also, a further implication is that enticing an unwilling person to serve as an elder or pastor by means of offering him a significant pay or benefit increase may likewise be therein acting directly in opposition to God's stated will if this offer generates or fuels within the person a motive to serve out of a need, or desire, or "greed" "for money". (For more details regarding the topic of "not greedy for money", see 'Session 03' of this 'Elder Training Series'.)

READ: "**not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock**" (1 Peter 5:3), with cross-references "**In everything set them an example by doing what is good**" (Titus 2:7) and "**...set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity**" (1 Timothy 4:12b)

SECTION POINT: God instructs elders to establish as foundation the implementing of their authority and rule over the people of their flock by means of "being an example", and "**not**" by "lording it over" them.

- - Previously in verse 2 is generally addressed the functions and the proper motives in serving as an elder, now in verse 3 is generally addressing the proper manner in serving as an elder, overseer, or pastor.
 - - A specific improper and disqualifying manner is highlighted and contrasted - "lording it over" - specifically cited presumably because it is important, it occurs commonly, it is counterproductive to having a healthy, edifying, growing, and fruit-bearing church or ministry, and therein it technically disqualifies the person from being an elder, overseer, pastor, or ministry leader. (For more details regarding the topic of "not lording it over those entrusted to you", see 'Session 05' of this 'Elder Training Series'.)
 - - In contrast, the phrase "but being examples to the flock" is an approach that distinguishes a use of authority and leadership that God instructs to be used, even though it is unnatural and contrary to our humanistic way of thinking and behaving.
 - - The elder "being an example" or "setting an example" is an ongoing real-life observable phenomenon to the flock of what life will be like for any of them who decide to completely live according to what God instructs in the Scriptures.
 - - And furthermore, "being an example" or "setting an example" is an impact-ful form of witness of the faith, in that it makes plainly observable, vulnerable exposure in detail, and down-to-earth practical what appropriately living before God is intended by God to be - what that looks like in everyday life.
 - - Because "being an example" consists of real-life demonstrations within real-life situations which ordinary true believers likewise encounter in their lives, they can readily identify with those situations and therein they can be readily impacted by how righteously the elder responds in those real-life situations.
 - - From observing the elder who successfully and consistently sets an excellent "example for the flock", they will see and hear how godliness, holiness, and dedicated spiritual service manifest and affect a person's life, behaviors, priorities, relationships, earning of income, and etcetera.
 - - An important note here is that the "example" of the elder is to demonstrate such things as how to "love", exercise "faith", maintain "purity", think, "speak", and conduct oneself in the religious environments of a church or ministry, and it is also to demonstrate for living in environments outside in the secular world. (1 Timothy 4:12b)
 - - Sooner or later, the people of the flock will see or hear about situations and detect a pattern in which the elder "does what is good" "in everything", therein "setting them an example". (Titus 2:7)
 - - And of course, the more that the people in the flock watch, listen, and investigate the elder, the deeper they delve into the personal life of the elder.
 - - So, the elder must be comprehensively and consistently "setting an example for the believers" in all areas of his life, such as "in speech, in life, in love, in faith, and in purity". (1 Timothy 4:12b)
 - - Anything less than comprehensiveness and consistency from the elder will generate within the believers doubt, suspicion, questioning, and criticalness of the elder's genuineness, likely resulting in their conclusion that he is a hypocrite and a fraud.
 - - Therefore, genuineness of "being an example" is crucial in both religious and secular environments, otherwise hypocrisy will sooner or later become evident and noticed by the flock, thus instantly destroying both the "example" and the credibility of the elder, overseer, pastor, or ministry leader.
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BIG IDEA: God authorizes, instructs, and requires that elders are to "willingly" "care" for, "serve", and "oversee" their church or ministry of true believers by means of "being an example".

APPLICATIONS:

- - Do you have a "shepherd's" heart, intrinsically being oriented to genuinely love and provide "care" for "God's flock"? Or instead, do you in fact generally hold little concern or perhaps even hold annoyance or disdain for other people who have problems?
 - - Do you understand and appreciate the various important beneficial aspects relating to true believers uniting together, functioning together, and being shepherded together as "God's flock"? If so, name some of those beneficial aspects.
 - - Do you intrinsically possess a nature of "serving" - genuinely wanting to serve others, which manifests as continuously looking for ways to serve others, and consistently carrying through with providing serving of others when feasible?
 - - In the past, have you repeatedly demonstrated making personal sacrifices in order to serve others - for their well-being and at your significant expense of some kind?
 - - Are you committed before God to be sufficiently available to do this eldership kind of ministry work, to do it appropriately, to do it thoroughly, and to do it well? Even if this position of elder proves to entail twice as much of your time, effort, involvement, patience, and endurance than you currently anticipate?
 - - Can you identify what primarily drives you to be an elder, overseer, or pastor? Does it properly align with the scripture verses studied in this document? If not, now what are you going to do, knowing that your primary drive motive thrusts you outside of God's will in this regard?
 - - Do you genuinely possess a sense of balanced "eagerness" to proceed fulfilling the ministry job function of being an elder, overseer, pastor, or ministry leader? Or instead, do you possess a sense of obligation, or dread, or opposition, or in fact a subsurface downright unwillingness?
 - - Being honest with yourself, what type of leadership style or approach do you naturally or usually utilize when you are outside of church or ministry environments? Does it properly align with the scripture verses studied in this document? If not, and because over time or in stressful situations you will likely revert to that type of leadership that comes natural to you, what are you going to do about this?
 - - The kind of life that you are living, both publicly and privately - If it were exposed and examined closely, would it rightly be considered as 'setting a good example for the flock'? If not, now what are you going to do about this?
 - - Please understand and appreciate that this kind of personalized questioning is intended not to necessarily disqualify you or remove you from holding a position of elder, overseer, pastor, or ministry leader, but instead is intended and designed to make you aware of areas that God wants corrected now, in order to align with His will and approval for this ministry job functioning.
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Works Cited:

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"Strong's Greek Dictionary." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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