

What should be true of every believer **must be true for the elder**

This week, pray through this list. Ask God to reveal through his Holy Spirit areas of your life that need growth. Ask a friend who is both spiritually discerning and knows you well for candid observations in your life regarding these qualities. *Whatever you do, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ* [2 Tim 2.1]. He has set His smile on you. There is nothing you can do to earn or lose His favor. We want to grow in character because it is *His* character.

- 1. Above reproach:** A pastor cannot be caught up in vice or scandal. Not only is he clean on Google, but in his "secret life," there is nothing to condemn him.
- 2. Husband of one wife:** The text does not disqualify the unmarried pastor nor the one who remarries after becoming a widow, but disqualifies the "polygamist" (who has two wives). The pastor should be a one-woman man. He must have his affections and dedication exclusively reserved for one woman only.
- 3. Sober-minded or temperate:** Every shepherd must flee all that is sin and trivial. He doesn't have to be a stick in the mud, but he does have to be someone who is taken seriously. He knows how to wade in the deep waters of the soul.
- 4. Self-controlled:** Pastors must be in control of their passions and impulses whether that is eating, drinking, entertainment or time management.
- 5. Respectable:** This means "in order" or decent. Both his outer, observable life and his intimate, inner thought life are in check.
- 6. Hospitable:** The word "hospitable" is made up of two Greek words: *philo* (love) and *xenon* (foreign). The pastor needs to love outsiders and work to bring them in.
- 7. Able to teach:** The pastor should take pleasure in teaching what he knows. This includes *disposition* and *ability*. That doesn't mean all pastors need to teach on a Sunday morning in monologue fashion as is done in our culture. But he should be able to explain God's word and help people grow through it.
- 8. Not a drunkard (or not given to wine):** He doesn't *need* alcohol to relax or to have a good time. He has self-control and moderation.
- 9. Not violent:** In Greek, this means "not a striker." This word depicts the guy who resolves his problems with his fists. You can also extend the definition to include someone who resolves his differences with his force over others (such as shouting, argumentation, abuse).

10. Gentle: This is the same as kind. A person who is gentle is willing to yield when possible. Not that he is passive or a push-over, but he is calculated with his words and actions. He thinks through how what he does and says affects others.

11. Not quarrelsome (or argumentative): The pastor does not have a spirit of dispute, contention, nor does he have the last word. It is possible to defend the truth without attacking people.

12. Not a lover of money: Some translations use the word “greed.” In this modern world, there is a temptation to treat the church like a corporation and the office of pastor like a profession, a career or a position. Although a pastor should be cared for financially by his congregation when possible (1 Tim 5:17-18; 1 Cor 9: 11-12), that should not be his motivation nor end goal.

13. He must manage his house well: The church is made up of families. Leading a church will be similar to leading a family but perhaps more complex. Therefore, an elder must have a well-controlled family. It does not say his children will be perfect, but they are to be controlled. The father spends the time necessary to mold, to teach, and to shepherd his children.

14. Not a recent convert: New believers are precious to the church. They are often full of zeal and willingness. However, they also have faced few temptations and few struggles, hence have little experience to deal with the variety of situations he will face.

15. Have a good testimony of outsiders: This doesn't necessarily mean that unbelievers love this man. But that there is no valid accusation against him. He is consistently representing God's character in his community.

16. Not arrogant [Titus 1.7]: This can also be translated “Self-satisfied.” An arrogant person thinks he is better or more important than others.

17. Not quick-tempered: Or quite literally: “sudden explosions.” These are people who do not control their emotions. They are rash. They speak first and think later. Or they act first and think later.

18. Disciplined: Which is another way of saying he is self-controlled. There are no vices in his life that dominate him.

19. Holy: Refers to moral purity. Being separate from moral impurity.

20. Holding firm [Titus 1.9]: The text describes the elder as one who is rooted in the teachings of Scripture and isn't easily swayed by popular and appealing notions. So that he is able to both give instruction and correct what is wrong. Not only does he know truth and can spot error, he has the personal strength to engage, teach and correct without his emotions tripping him up.