

Sunday, July 18, 2010-- Titus: The Practice of Grace—Titus 1:6-8: Qualifications for Church Leadership, Part Two

Introduction/Review

- Last week we reviewed how Paul uses the terms elder and bishop as interchangeable terms to refer to the same office. We saw how the ordaining of elders was to bring order to the churches on Crete.
- In Titus 1:6 we dealt with common misconceptions regarding the following issues:
 - Bishops are free to be married to one wife at a time if they so choose and are not required to take a vow of celibacy.
 - Women are not to be ordained to fulfill these capacities within the local church.
 - An elder needs to rule well his own house and children.
- In Titus 1:7 we saw that bishops are the stewards of God and need to be blameless in their stewardship. In addition we saw the negative side of what an elder should not be:
 - Not self-willed
 - Not soon angry
 - Not given to wine
 - No striker
 - Not given to filthy lucre
- This morning in verse 8 we are going to look at the positive side and what an elder/bishop should be. In addition, we will consider some other qualifications not listed in Titus 1. Finally, we will consider why Paul is silent about spiritual gifts.

Titus 1:8

- While verse 7 was more negative in outlining what the Bishops should **not be**, verse 8 positively states what the elders **should be**.
- *“But a lover of hospitality”*
- According to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* hospitality means: “The act or practice of receiving and entertaining strangers or guests without reward, or with kind and generous liberality.”
 - I Timothy 3:2
 - I Peter 4:9
- *“a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;”*

- A lover of good men— the Greek expression simply means “loving goodness” according to *Strong’s Concordance*.
- Sober—in this sense sober deals with one’s mental state not alcohol. Sober means 1) of a sound mind, sane, in one's senses, 2) curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate
 - I Timothy 3:2
 - Titus 2:2—temperate—moderate, not marked by excesses
 - Titus 2:5—discrete
- Just—the Greek word translated just carries many meanings according to *Strong’s Concordance* some of the more pertinent meanings given the context include:
 - in a wide sense, upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God
 - innocent, faultless, guiltless
 - used of him whose way of thinking, feeling, and acting is wholly conformed to the will of God, and who therefore needs no rectification in the heart or life
 - in a narrower sense, rendering to each his due and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in words or shown by the manner of dealing with them
- Holy— undefiled by sin, free from wickedness
- Temperate—deals with the ability to master and control ones appetites.

Other Qualification Not Listed in Titus

- I Timothy 3:3—elders are not supposed to be covetous but content with what they have (Hebrews 13:5).
- I Timothy 3:6—a bishop is not supposed to be a new believer lest pride get a hold of him.
- I Timothy 3:7—a bishop should be known by these characteristics outside of the local church.
- I Timothy 3:2—an elder needs to be apt to teach (or skillful in teaching) the Scriptures.
- I Timothy 5:17-18

The Question of Spiritual Gifts

- In both passages where Paul outlines the qualifications for elders does he say anything about them needing to have a spiritual gift. This reality should not be overlooked because much is made in Churchianity about the issue of spiritual gifts.
- In preparation for this message I went online and took a spiritual gifts inventory. It was a 108 question survey designed to ascertain what my dominant spiritual gifts are. According to the survey my dominant gifts are pastor, teaching, and administration as well as the gift of prophecy.

- There are essentially three passages where Paul deals with the issue of spiritual gifts: Romans 12, I Corinthians 12-14, and Ephesians 4
- I Corinthians 12:27-31—notice the first phrase of verse 28, “God hath set some in the church.” In the early church gifts were distributed by God himself.
 - Apostle
 - Prophet
 - Teachers
 - Miracles
 - Healings
 - Helps
 - Governments
 - Tongues
 - Interpretation of Tongues
- A casual reading of this passage illuminates the following critical points: 1) these gifts were supernatural divine empowerments given by God himself, 2) not everyone had the same gift, 3) the gifts were given for the benefit of the entire body of Christ, 4) there is a better way than spiritual gifts.
- I Corinthians 12:8-10—the gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge are doing to fail, cease, and vanish away. These gifts were the mouth piece of God. They were the vehicle through which God communicated to man before the completion of the Word of God. When God’s word was complete these gifts ceased in their function.
- Mark 16:15-18—Pentacostals ridicule Baptist and other non-tongues speaking groups for arbitrarily claiming only a portion of the passage. They say what gives someone the right to pick and chose what they like and leave what they do not.
- Ephesians 4:8, 11—traditionally grace teachers have said that the gifts of apostle and prophet are no longer being given but evangelist, pastor, and teacher are. What in the context gives us the right to make this distinction?
- Ephesians 4:11—“gave” is a past tense word. By Acts 28 when Paul writes the book of Ephesians from prison in Rome he is already speaking of the gifts as having been given.
- Ephesians 4:12—“for” tells us what the gifts were given for: 1) perfecting the saints, 2) the work of the ministry, 3) edifying the body of Christ.
- Ephesians 4:13—“till” tells us that the gifts were only temporary. The unity of the faith is not talking about when all the various denominations put aside their differences, join hands, and forget all there differences. The unity of the faith, knowledge of the Son of God, measure of the

stature of the fullness of Christ are all speaking about the body of truth committed to Paul for the current dispensation of Grace.

- Ephesians 4:14—“that” tells us the purpose and the intent of why the gifts were given, that we be no more children. Before Paul’s revelation was complete it was the supernatural functioning of these gifts that guarded and protected the saints from making doctrinal shipwreck of the faith.
- In the context, if these gifts are still being given than we are all children being tossed to and fro and carried about with over wind of doctrine.
- The reason that Paul does not include the possession of spiritual gifts as a requirement for leadership in the local church is because Paul knew that the age of gifts was already passing away as he was winding down his ministry.
- Let me be clear. Do we still need to people to do the work of an evangelist, pastor, and teacher? Yes, the difference is how these things are accomplished.
- I Timothy 3:1—these offices are filled by the word of God creating within people the desire to want to serve not by divine supernatural appointment.
- We confuse divine supernatural impartations for natural talents.
- Galatians 5:18—just as the Holy Spirit leads no man today to follow the Law he also does not teach doctrine contrary to the revelation of the mystery.
- When the gifts were functioning did they need to go to Bible College and Seminary?
- There is nothing special about me. The only difference between you and me is how much time we have spent studying the word of God.