

Shepherding the Flock

*"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood."
(Acts 20:28)*



Qualifications of an Elder (Continued)

In this lesson, we will continue to look at the qualifications that are listed for elders from 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; and 1 Peter 5:1-3. We will follow the list given by the Apostle Paul to Timothy and then look at any additional qualifications found in Titus and 1 Peter.

To help better understand these qualifications, the chart below shows how the passage in 1 Timothy has been translated in the English Standard Version, New International Version, and the New American Standard Bible.

QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS in 1 Timothy 3:1-7		
English Standard Version	New International Version	New American Standard Bible
Sober Minded	Temperate	Temperate
Self-Controlled	Self-Controlled	Prudent
Respectable	Respectable	Respectable
Hospitable	Hospitable	Hospitable
Able to Teach	Able to Teach	Able to Teach
Not a Drunkard	Not Given to Drunkenness	Not Addicted to Wine
Not Violent	Not Violent	Not Pugnacious
Gentle	Gentle	Gentle
Not Quarrelsome	Not Quarrelsome	Peaceable
Not a Lover of Money	Not a Lover of Money	Free From the Love of Money
Manages His Own Household Well	Must Manage His Own Household Well	Must Be One Who Manages His Own Household Well
Not a Recent Convert	Must Not Be a Recent Convert	Not a New Convert
Well Thought of by Outsiders	Must Have a Good Reputation With Outsiders	Must Have a Good Reputation with Those Outside the Church

1. Describe what is meant by the following words or phrases:

a. Sober-minded --

b. Self-controlled --

c. Respectable --

- d. Not violent --
- e. Gentle --
- f. Not quarrelsome --
- g. Not a lover of money --
- h. Not arrogant (Titus) --
- i. Not quick tempered (Titus) --
- j. Not greedy (Titus) --
- k. Lover of good (Titus) --
- l. Upright (Titus) --
- m. Not domineering (1 Peter) --

2. What do the descriptive words and phrases above have in common?

The qualification to be hospitable means that the elder shares kindness with others. The Greek word translated as hospitality (*philoxenos*) literally means “love of the stranger.” The elder must love and care for those outside and inside the church. Hospitality is typically shown by opening one’s home to others. Alexander Strauch writes, *“I have found my home to be one of the most important tools I possess for reaching out to and caring for people. Although the shepherd’s ministry of hospitality may seem like a small thing, it has an enormous, lasting impact on people.”*¹

3. What do the following passages teach about hospitality: Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9; Hebrews 13:2?

4. What makes the home such an effective tool in shepherding?

The qualification to be able to teach tells us that an elder must have a good knowledge of God’s Word. He must have the ability to communicate the truth that he knows to others. He must have the willingness to communicate the truth of God’s Word to others. This does not necessarily mean that he must be a skilled public speaker. While he may be an effective preacher, he may instead be a capable mentor and one who can open God’s Word one-on-one or in small groups.



¹ Strauch, Alexander. *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Eldership*. Littleton, Colorado: Lewis & Roth Publishers, 1995. p. 194.



Ron Clark writes that apt teachers “are not men who deliver a good speech; they are men whose words, lives, and passion can persuade people to make wise choices. In Titus, the elder must hold to the teachings of the word and be able to encourage others, by healthy teaching and living, and confront the immoral (Titus 1:9). Elders do not only lecture; they persuade others, by their lives, to grow in a relationship with Jesus.”²

The meaning of the qualification: not a drunkard is sometimes debated. Does the word allow for the consumption of *any* alcoholic beverages? The literal translation of the Greek word *paroinon* is “beside wine” so the instruction is literally to “not be near wine.” Most English translations take the phrase to mean not a drunkard or one that is not addicted to wine. The word translated as “sober-minded” in 1 Timothy 3:2 in the ESV, is translated as “temperate” in the NIV and NASB. Some believe the idea is that the elder is a total abstainer from wine while others believe the word means that he is “sober in this thinking” or “level-headed” in his judgments.

While a study on the drinking of alcoholic beverages for all Christians is beyond the scope of this study on eldership, a good case can be made for an elder abstaining from alcohol. Drinking could harm his witness and drunkenness most certainly does. Many people whom an elder will counsel struggle with various addictions including alcohol. The elder must keep himself free from these same entanglements.

5. What are some reasons why it might be best for an elder to abstain from alcohol?

The elder must manage his own household well. 1 Timothy 3:4-5 instructs, “He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church?” Titus 1:6 adds that “his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.”



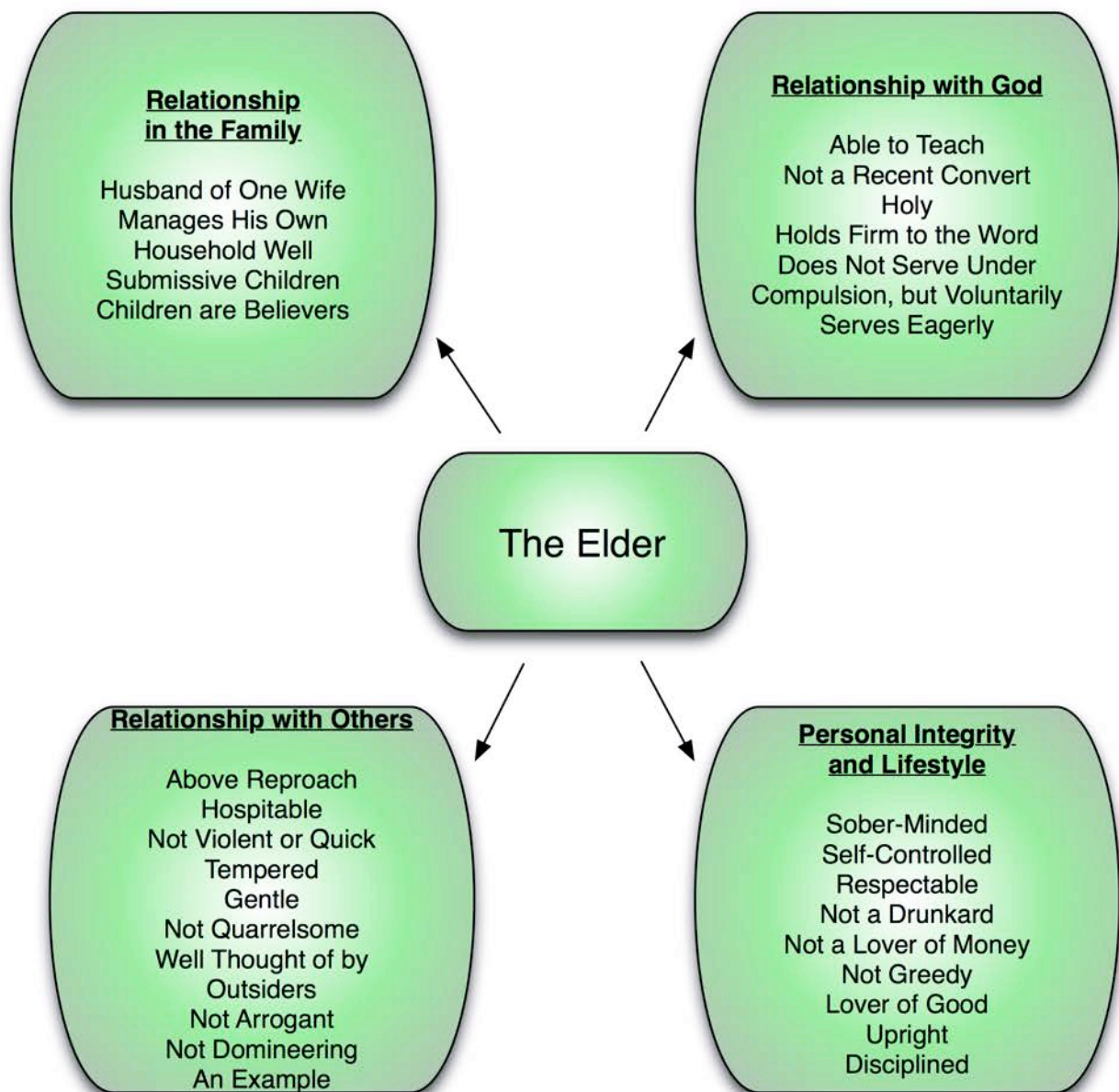
As in marriage, there are experiences gained in parenting that cannot be learned elsewhere. Elders are men who are involved in the lives of their children. Their children have learned to be godly from them and at least while they are living at home, the children are to be obedient. As all people have free-will, elders cannot be held responsible for the actions of their adult children after they leave home. This passage does not seem to teach that elders *must* be fathers since not all households are blessed with children. Whatever the household, whether a spouse or a spouse and children, the elder will be one who demonstrates how to lead a family.

6. What are some lessons that are learned in parenting that would aid one who shepherds the church?

These qualifications of the elders are not meant to be exhaustive, but reflective of the type of men who would shepherd the church. The elder is to be a man of high character, who loves God and understands the Scripture. He loves his family and the church, and shuns evil. He attempts to be obedient to everything that he finds within the Word of God.

² Clark, Ron. *Emerging Elders: Developing Shepherds in God’s Image*. Abilene, TX: Leafwood Publishers, 2008. p. 90.

The Elder must be a mature Christian, who is well-grounded in the Scripture and able to share that faith with others. He must love his family, treat them well, and pass on his faith to his children. His own life is one of integrity, moderation, self-control, and sober judgment. He is well thought of within the church and among outsiders. He has no glaring weaknesses that would harm the reputation of the church or prevent members of the church from trusting in him as a shepherd.



The areas listed above overlap and interlock. For instance, a man must not be violent, but gentle within the family as well as with others. If he loves money or is greedy, his relationships within the family and outside the family will be harmed. These areas interlock because they reflect the type of relationship the elder has with God and whether or not he will be able to serve effectively as a shepherd within the flock.