

Titus 1:5-9 Leadership in the Church of God: Management that Produces Order (part 1)

In cp. 1 we see that Paul left Titus in Crete with a clear purpose. We are not sure when the gospel came to Crete or how long the church had been in existence. But we do know that order was lacking. Look at v. 5: **“This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order . . .”** So, the entire letter, really, is about ORDER in the local church. The same can be said of Paul’s letter to Timothy. Look at 1 Tim. 3:14-15: **“I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.”** There is no better place in the NT to find the specifics on local church order than with 1-2 Timothy and Titus. And with Titus, where does Paul begin? He begins with leadership, particularly the appointment of pastors/elders. For he knew as the leaders go, so goes the church. The word “elder” is often translated “overseer,” which implies management. In v. 7 we see the word “steward,” which is often in the context of “management.” This is why I’ve titled the sermon: Leadership in the Church of God: Management that Produces Order. God requires that elders manage the household of God, and when this happens according to God’s ways, order will follow. Therefore, we need these verses to help us manage the church of God here at Grace. These verses emphasize 3 areas of management: 1) Management in the home; 2) Management in Character; and 3) Management of the Word of God. Today, we will consider the home.

With this in mind, I take these words of instruction with the utmost seriousness! I have tried my best to preach these words to myself before I preach them to you. The same goes for all our elders. These are the words of truth and what truth looks in the local body of Christ. So let’s begin with . . .

1. Order in the management of the home. Look at v. 6. **“if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.”** Right from the beginning in both 1 Tim. and Titus, he begins by saying an elder must be above reproach (vv. 6 & 7). The KJV translates it as “blameless.” Let me say very quickly that Paul is not referring to perfection or sinlessness. If that were the case, no one except Jesus qualifies as an elder. In 1 Cor. 1:8 we see the same word as Paul says, in Christ, God **“will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** Here, he is clearly speaking of our standing as “blameless” in Christ. Because of the atonement of Christ, we are “justified” in the sight of God. On the cross, Jesus took our sin upon himself. And God punished Jesus in our place. And in exchange Jesus gives (imputes) to us his righteousness, so that when God sees us, he sees Christ in our place. So for sure, an elder is “blameless” in this way, as is any Christian. I am sinner. I don’t want to sin. I try not sin. But, in Christ my sins are forgiven. Not one of them is held against me. And the same goes for anyone who trusts in Christ!

Now, there is another meaning of the word “above reproach” or “blameless” in this context. It can mean “without accusation.” In other words, when someone looks at your life, they see a certain character that cannot be accused of living contrary to the gospel. To be above reproach is to live godly in this world that others may see your life and see consistency with your confession. One theologian says an elder should be *“blameless as regards ground zero of their real-world existence”* (Yarborough). Let me say that Paul’s description of the elder hits only the highlights. In both Timothy and Titus, he is giving a snapshot. All these characteristics come under the

UMBRELLA of above reproach. And the first area of importance is the household. For the rest of our time we will consider the elder as a husband, and then as a father.

i. Husband. An elder has integrity in respect to his marriage, his relationship with his wife. It is usually true that an elder is married. For with marriage comes knowledge and wisdom and the ability to oversee believers who are also married. But I do not believe that an elder **MUST** be married. We are not sure if Paul was ever married. But, generally speaking, this will be the case. Also, he is not speaking specifically about polygamy; though I believe the office of elder implies one wife. (The same is true for deacons.) And, I don't necessarily believe the meaning "husband of one wife" excludes a person who has been widowed or divorced. There are those who disagree. And I may be wrong; but I believe I have good Scriptural grounds. (See my position preached in a sermon on 1 Tim. 3:2 from Nov. of 2008). The meaning of "husband of one wife" has to do with character. The husband only has eyes for his wife. He is a one-woman man. And over a period of time this will be clear to the congregation as they call an elder.

This means, as a husband, an elder does not desire anyone but his wife. He loves her, and her alone. His affection is toward her, and her alone. His desire is for his **BEST** relationship outside of Christ, to be with his wife. He doesn't want to buy flowers for anyone else. He doesn't want to spend money on another woman. He doesn't think about anyone else. I think of Prov. 5:15-20: **"Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?"**

By way of application, pornography is not an option. These relationships are meant for marriage. And the husband who looks at other ladies in such a way, sins against God and against their wife, and against other women. If so, you are getting water from another well, another cistern. And the effects of that "water" will wreck you and your marriage; and it will destroy your family. Also, Young Men, the same applies to you. God probably has a wife for your future. And, when you look at another woman, she is not a part of your well system either. And for those of you involved in such, I don't need to say much more. For you know the effects it has on your relationships. Consider the way you look at your sisters, the way you view your mother. I can promise you this: You would never tolerate another man or boy looking at your sister or your mother in such a way. In fact, you would be angry, possibly **VERY** angry. We should be angry with our sin brothers and sisters, especially sexual sins. If you look back over the past months, and you have found yourself looking at pornography, as a Christian, you must repent! And you must do everything you can, by the grace of God, to put to death the deeds of the flesh in this area.

Now, as we consider being a husband, our example is Christ and his love for the church. Christ is the **BEST** manager of his household. Husbands, He is your example! **"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the**

church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”

ii. Father. The Second point of emphasis for Paul in this passage is also within the home, particularly the elder’s relationship with his children. Look at v. 6a: **“and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.”** Let me say something about our translation of the word “believers.” At first reading, it may seem that a man cannot be an elder if his children are not “believers”; that is to say, “born-again,” Christians. Well, I don’t hold to this view for at least three reasons. First, what do you do with a man who has young children and you don’t know for sure if they are true “believers.” Second, the word “believer” can also be translated as “faithful.” The KJV reads: **“having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.”** Third, in Paul’s list of characteristics in 1 Timothy 3:4, he says, **“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.”** Here, he does not say the children must be Christians. Now, it may be unwise to call an elder who has an unbelieving son or daughter. But, I think the principle is on character, not legalism. Also, Paul is referring to “children” in the home. He is not referring to the adult child who may have left the home and is running away from Christ. One final note. The word for children is plural, which emphasizes the entire home.

I believe the emphasis is on order and respect for authority in the home. Look back at v. 6 again: **“not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.”** The picture here is wild and disobedient children. The man who is qualified is a good Father; and this is evident from his children. And let me say also, even as I look back on my years as a father. I have made many mistakes. I have failed to discipline when I should have. I have disciplined when I shouldn’t have. I have not always done the most loving thing in all the many situations in our family. Family worship is not always consistent. And I don’t think any of our elders honestly feel qualified in this area, or others for that matter. But, in the end, we are looking for elders who, through the years, are faithful and consistent, “above reproach” as a father. And when this happens in the right way in the church, there is order.

Now, let me ask, “what does a good father look like?” Well, the Bible is clear on this. Look with me to Eph. 6:1-4: **“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”** Also, Col. 3:20-21 says pretty much the same thing: **“Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.”**

Here we see a number of characteristics. First, we see obedient children. Let me say, “Fathers and Mothers, you should expect obedience from your children.” For this is right! And parents, you know your kids are bent toward disobedience. This is a result of the fall. We have to teach out kids NOT to hit their siblings. We don’t have to teach them to be bad. And let me also say that as parents, we must enforce our rules. And our rules we make in our households are up to us, not our kids. I think personally, it is not good to have so many rules. But when they are smaller,

they need more rules. The important thing is to discipline consistently. My dad often reminded me that he didn't have many rules, but the ones he did have, he enforced.

The next thing we see is honor. Paul is repeating the 5th commandment. "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you" (Exod.20:12). Children, honor your parents! Now, this is not mere obedience; it is a heart attitude. We don't really expect this from young children. But, as children grow older, this is our goal. Children, to honor your parents means to trust them and do good to them and even when it is hard to obey, you do it because you want to honor them. And obedience is the place to begin. Also, all of us can honor our parents even when they are not "good" parents, even when they do not act honorable. Let's move on.

Parents, Paul instructs us not to raise our kids in such a way to cause them anger; or to cause them to be discouraged. "**Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger . . .**" And, "**Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.**" We could say a lot here. But, I believe one of the biggest ways we do this in our homes is by hypocrisy. This happens in many ways. Parents, we sin in our homes. We sin in front of our children. And in spite of our sins, we still ask our children not to sin. The key is humility and honesty and repentance as we look unto Christ. Parents, do your best to apologize and ask for forgiveness when you sin against your children. Let them know that you are a sinner too. And then look unto Christ, who has forgiven your sins. Fathers, Parents, our kids know the real us!

Finally, we see faithful Christian instruction. "**Bring them up in the discipline and instruction in the Lord.**" Fathers, teach your children from the Bible. Teach them the gospel.

Let me end with a few comments.

Parents, it is important to work together. I don't always "manage" the best. And clearly, Kristen is better at "managing" certain things than I am. But, part of being a good manager is to allow Kristen to help where she is strong. And in this, I can add to my ability to manage. I don't know where I would be without Kristen.

Let me also say by way of application that ALL Christian men are commanded to act in such a way. No man gets an excuse saying: "*He's the pastor. Of course, he's going to be godly in that area.*" These things I am teaching this morning about the husband and the father is normal Christian life. These principles apply to us all. Godliness is the same for all Christians.

Finally, an orderly church will be full of families that are orderly. The man who manages his household well in his relationships with his wife and kids contributes greatly to the health of the local church.