



## **BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP FOR THE CHURCH AND BELIEVERS**

**Part 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

When the issue of leadership is addressed, what thoughts initially come to mind? Powerful CEO's in charge of large corporations such as Microsoft and WalMart, persons responsible for large financial institutions such as Bank of America and Goldman Sachs, military generals with the rank of multiple stars that are responsible for large segments of the United States military, potential presidential candidates in the current Republican and Democratic political contest that strive to convince the American public that a specific candidate is qualified to provide the proper leadership to this country for the next four years, or perhaps persons who are responsible for lesser areas of accountability and responsibility such as the head of a small company with three employees.

Although there are many other examples of leadership, a fundamental question is – *what is leadership* and/or *what makes a leader*? Is it the number of people a person is responsible for, position (such as an elected official), the winner of a political election, someone who is a recognizable Hollywood star, or someone with substantial financial success? From a secular perspective, Webster's Dictionary defines leadership as "*authority, control, administration,*

*effectiveness, superiority, supremacy, skill, initiative, foresight, energy, capacity,” and then directs the reader to also see “influence and power” which are summarily defined as “power to produce effects because of wealth, high position,” and “force and strength.” From a practical viewpoint, a more simplistic yet encompassing definition of leadership is the ability to influence others – either from a negative or positive perspective.*

However, from a biblical perspective the views of Jesus on leadership are strikingly contrary to the definition of secular leadership that incorporates the key fundamentals of authority and power from Webster’s Dictionary. In the New Testament, Jesus clearly delineates His views on leadership from the viewpoints of Christ’s church and every believer. Lets begin with the church:

***Note: All scriptures are taken from the New King James Bible unless otherwise noted.***

## **BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP FOR CHRIST’S CHURCH**

From a biblical perspective, the pinnacle of leadership is spiritual leadership that is exercised in the church as a shepherd – one who tends Christ’s church in the *temporary absence* of Christ as delineated in Acts and I Peter as follows:

*“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood”*

*Acts 20:28*

*“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away”*

*I Peter 5:2-4*

The two preceding verses indicate that Scripture places a top priority – with responsibility with accountability – on shepherding the people of God as every church, whether large or small, needs godly leadership. But what is godly leadership for Christ’s church, and are there biblical qualifications for that leadership? Let’s first look at the biblical definitions of church leadership and then consider the scriptural qualifications for church leadership.

## **BIBLICAL DEFINITIONS OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

Although the Bible mentions shepherds over 200 times with 18 specific references in the New Testament, the New Testament Greek word *poimen* for

shepherd can also be translated in Latin as pastor, so both of these words can be placed into the same context. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance defines shepherd and pastor as "*someone the Lord raises up to care for the total well-being of His flock (the people of the Lord).*" Quite often, many people initially think of the term "pastor" when considering church leadership yet the New Testament interchangeably uses the words *bishop*, *elder*, *overseer*, and *pastor* to describe the same men who are responsible to lead the church (Acts 20:17, Titus 1:5-9, and I Peter 5:1-2).

Before continuing, let's briefly look at the similarities and backgrounds of the previous four titles as all four refer to the **same** role of the leader of a local church. Again, it is important to remember that the four titles are simply different ways of identifying the same people who are a unique group of leaders that have the responsibility for overseeing the people of God. Although deacons are not a part of this initial specific group of leaders, deacons are also responsible for a portion of church leadership (although to a lesser degree than pastors, bishops, elders, and overseers) and will also be overviewed:

#### **Pastor**

The term pastor comes from the Greek word *poimen* – which literally means shepherd – and is the most frequently used term associated with the minister of a church and/or church leadership. The term pastor *specifically* appears in Ephesians as follows:

*"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers"*  
*Ephesians 4:11*

A pastor is a shepherd of the people of God and is charged with the responsibility to instruct, teach, and protect the people under his responsibility. Elders in I Timothy 5:17 are also called bishops in I Timothy 3:1 or overseer, who are also called pastor in Ephesians 4:11.

#### **Elder**

In the earliest churches, the term elder (*presbuterous*) was the most common name associated with a church leader and also denoted the highest level of church leadership as the apostolic era came to a close. Today, the term elder is typically associated with a plurality of biblically qualified men (including the pastor) who are responsible for the leadership of a church (in some cases, *presbuterous* is defined as a mature man having seasoned judgment/experience). The word elder is used about twenty times in Acts and the epistles to reference this unique group of church leaders who are qualified to have the responsibility for overseeing the

people of God. The qualifications for an overseer (*episkopos*) in I Timothy 3:7 and an elder (*presbuteros*) in Titus 1:5 are the same.

### **Overseer**

Overseer (*episkopos*) appears five times in the New Testament and can also mean guardian, or bishop. It can also refer to the same role as pastor and elder (Acts 20:17,28, Titus 1:5-9, and I Peter 5:1-2). The responsibilities of an overseer are to rule (I Timothy 5:17,) to preach and teach (I Timothy 5:17), to pray for the sick (James 5:14), to care for the church (I Peter 5:1-2), to be examples for others to follow (I Peter 5:1-2), to set church policy (Acts 15:22), and to ordain other leaders (I Timothy 4:14). Several specific responsibilities that are directed by God to overseers are:

- Watch over the flock (Acts 20:28)
- Shepherd the flock (I Peter 5:12)
- Are eager to serve (Acts 20:27-30)

### **Bishop**

In the New Testament, the term bishop is a translation of the Greek word *episkapos* (the same word is also translated elder, pastor, or overseer), means overseer, identifies the men who are responsible to lead the church, and is never once used to denote a different office from that of an elder. The word bishop has changed in church traditions since the time of the New Testament as multiple layers of leadership positions were added to Western Christianity. By the time of the Council of Nicea in AD 325, the term bishop was repeatedly applied to the Christian leader of each city or region. This resulted in one bishop responsible for several churches. Many denominations and church traditions continue to use this term today.

### **Deacons**

As previously discussed, the *primary* spiritual leaders of a church are the elders, bishops, pastors and overseers who are responsible for teaching and shepherding the flock. However, by the time the apostle Paul wrote Philippians in about 49 AD, he referred to both elders and deacons in Philippians 1:1, and I Timothy 3:8 specifically refers to deacons. The New Testament uses three primary words to reference deacons that typically refer to any kind of service that supplies the need of another person:

- *Diakonos* which means servant
- *Diakonia* which means service
- *Diakoneo* which means to serve

Although the New Testament does not provide much information concerning the role of deacons, their role has historically been service oriented – doing whatever is necessary to allow the elders/pastors/bishops/overseers to

accomplish their primary calling of shepherding and teaching. As a result, each church can define the tasks and responsibilities of deacons based on their particular needs as there is a plurality of Godly men (elders, etc.) who oversee the work of those who serve the Lord and then deacons who assist elders in their responsibilities.

## **SCRIPTURAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP**

With the preceding overview of church leadership definitions as a foundation for our discussion, let's turn our attention to the biblical qualifications for church leaders that are specifically found in I Timothy 3:1-13 and paralleled in Titus 1:6-9. God's standards for *all believers* are high, non-negotiable, and His requirements for church leaders is even higher due to the necessity of church leaders to model and display godly standards to His people. Why is it important for church leaders to set a godly example, particularly to church believers? The answer is found in Hosea 4:9 that says "*And it shall be: like people, like priest.*" This means that people will mirror their leaders – for good or bad. In other words, people will typically rise or lower themselves to the standards set and/or modeled by their leaders.

Unfortunately, shepherding a spiritual flock of people is not a simple task. Because God's standards are very high and his requirements are hard to satisfy, not everyone can meet Godly leadership qualifications – either for the short term or particularly the long tenure. Such leaders are not qualified on the basis of natural ability, intelligence, education, but on the basis of moral and spiritual character combined with the ability to skillfully teach as the Spirit has sovereignly equipped them. Regrettably, it is not uncommon in our modern culture for pastors and/or churches to fail – primarily because they did not initially meet the scriptural requirements and/or continue to meet those requirements. A church cannot be more successful than its leaders. If members of a church leadership team fail to meet godly standards, the leaders and/or church will likely fail.

First Timothy and Titus both explicitly list the qualifications for church leadership that applies to an elder, bishop, pastor, and overseer. As we have previously discussed, these four titles all refer to the same role of the leadership of a local church so it is important to remember that the four titles are simply different ways of identifying the same people who are a unique group of leaders that have the responsibility for overseeing the people of God (remember that deacons are an integral part of church leadership but to a lesser degree than the previous four titles).

As the biblical qualifications in I Timothy are repeated in Titus, let's focus on I Timothy 3:1-7 and start with the beginning of the chapter as the first verse

begins with the *calling* of godly leadership and teacher candidates, and verses 2-7 delineate the *characteristics* of leadership and teacher candidates.

### **The Calling**

*“It is a trustworthy statement: If any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do”  
I Timothy 3:1 (NASB)*

#### **It is a trustworthy statement:**

This is a phrase that was unique to the Pastoral Epistles (I Timothy 3:1, 4:9, 2 Timothy 2:11, and Titus 3:8) and announced a statement summarizing important key doctrines. Apparently this phrase was well known in the early churches and embodied succinct expressions of fundamental gospel truth that were self-evident and did not need to be proved. This brief introduction sets the stage for the following passages in I Timothy 3:2-7.

#### **If any man:**

According to this section, the issue of church leadership (that we are discussing) is a calling that is *limited to men only*. However, in a social climate of total equality, this biblical directive is not only unpopular in modern society, it is also denounced by many feminist organizations as chauvinistic and antiquated. As a result, many churches have adopted the politically correct viewpoint of contemporary equality and have allowed women to assume the role of pastors and elders in positions of church leadership. As an example:

- 8% of all congregations are led by women
- 49% of churches allow women to become head pastors
- 67% of churches allow women to preach

Nevertheless, the question still remains – is this a biblical approach to the leadership qualifications that are outlined in I Timothy 2 and 3? The Bible’s clear answer to this question is *“women are not to be pastors and elders in positions of church leadership.”* Before we look at some examples from Timothy why this biblical directive is so assertive yet patently clear, let’s take a closer look at I Timothy 3:1 and consider the English translation from the original Greek wording of this verse:

*“Trustworthy [is] the saying: if anyone overseership aspires to, of good a work he is desirous”*

*English translation I Timothy 3:1 from the original Greek text*

In the Greek, the word for anyone is *“tis”* which is translated as *“anyone,”* yet many Bibles translate *tis* as *man*. An example of the popularity of these two

particular translations (anyone and man) is that out of 24 different Bibles (i.e., New Living Translation Bible, King James Bible, NET Bible, etc.), 12 Bibles translate *tis* as *anyone* and 12 Bibles translate *tis* as *man*. However, as the word *anyone* can refer to male or female gender, it should be applied (or translated) in the masculine form due to the masculine descriptive genders that are used in I Timothy 3, verses 2-7. In other words, the gender of I Timothy 3:1-7 is to the masculine gender and is a reason why *tis* should be translated as man. The focal point of I Timothy 3:1 is the masculine gender is to be taken literally. It should be noted that a popular argument for women as elders/pastors is using the translation of *tis* as *anyone* to allege that any gender (which can have numerous definitions in modern society) can be qualified for elders/pastors in church leadership.

Six additional reasons why the masculine gender is to be taken literally are as follows:

- A woman cannot be a one-woman man (v2)
- Women of that era were not the head of households (vv5-6)
- Created order of God – Adam first then Eve (Genesis 1-2)
- All of the pronouns used in reference to elders or bishops in the New Testament are masculine
- In over 700 mentions of priests in the Old Testament, all were male priests, none were female priests
- I Timothy 2:11-13 precedes I Timothy 3:1-6 where Paul specifically teaches that women are not to be leaders in the church as follows:

*“(11) Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. (12) And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. (13) For Adam was formed first, then Eve”*  
*I Timothy 2:11-13*

The focus on the masculine gender does not minimize the importance of women in the Bible and the church. Although women are equal to men in spiritual privilege and capacity, their ordained roles are different as follows:

- Women are to be submissive in leadership roles as Paul did not allow women to preach and/or teach
- Women have a unique impact on society by raising up godly children (child bearing and influence)

With the preceding thoughts of I Timothy 3:1 in mind, how does this portion of scripture apply to current popular women speakers such as Joyce Meyers, Kay Arthur, Anne Graham Lotz, Beth Moore, etc. These blessed women are listed as evangelical Christian authors, speakers, and radio hosts, not pastors,

elders, bishops or overseers involved in church leadership positions. They are primarily speakers who predominantly speak at conferences that are open to anyone who desires to attend.

**aspires-desires:**

Interestingly, the Greek uses two different words in I Timothy 3:1. The first is *orego*, which means “to stretch out, to reach after, to yearn for, to aspire to.” The focus of this word is not internal motives but emphasizes the personal desire of a person taking **external** actions to become a bishop/overseer/pastor/elder. The second word is *epithumeo*, which means “focused on, intensifying, to show focused passion, to desire very much” and refers to an **inward** feeling of desire and/or what a person truly yearns for. Together, *orego* and *epithumeo* fittingly describe a man who belongs in the ministry as he outwardly pursues it because he is driven by a *fervent* internal desire.

Dr. John MacArthur, President of The Masters Seminary, makes a persuasive case that attending a Bible college or seminary *alone* does not produce godly leaders, nor does teaching Sunday school-Bible classes or ordination councils. Although Bible related schools and associated responsibilities could assist in providing the biblical background and related tools for ministry, only the Holy Spirit can produce a true spiritual leader! From another perspective, men who are truly called to the ministry do not choose the ministry from a list of lifetime options that include money, prestige, stability, glamor of public speaking, working in the church, being around other Christians, and so on. Instead, they have a divine calling and are permeated with a compelling internal and external desire to serve in the ministry. There is a difference between a man who only has the educational qualifications and a man with educational qualifications with the passion to serve the Lord in ministry!

Proverbs promises how to discern the wisdom, understanding and *calling of God* which can be referred to as the **IF** and **THEN** passages:

*“(1) My son, **if** you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, (2) So that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding, (3) Yes, **if** you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, (4) **If** you seek her as silver, and search for her as hidden treasures, (5) **Then** you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God, (6) For the Lord gives wisdom, from His mouth comes knowledge and understanding, (7) He stores up sound wisdom for the upright, He is a shield to those who walk uprightly, (8) He guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of His saints, (9) **Then** you will understand righteousness and justice, equity and every good path, (10) When wisdom enters your heart, and knowledge is pleasant to your soul, (11) Discretion will preserve you, understanding will keep you”*

*Proverbs 2:1-11*

This section of scripture promises that if a person sincerely follows an outline comprised of three **IF'S, THEN** the Lord will give wisdom, knowledge, understanding and every good path!

**the office of overseer:**

As previously discussed, overseer can also refer to bishop, elder, or pastor who can be responsible for setting church policy, to be examples to the flock, teaching, praying for the sick, discipline, administration duties within the church, ordain other leaders, etc. These positions are not to be taken lightly as Hebrews 13:17 cautions leaders that they must give an account to God for their faithfulness while James 3:1 warns that leaders who teach will encounter a stricter judgment.

**a fine work:**

Church ministry is a demanding work/task that does not fit within the typical 8-5 normal work hours. It takes a maximum effort to consistently study the Word of God, accurately deliver scriptural principles to a church congregation, tend to the appropriate needs of the congregation, and keep a steady focus on the end prize of completion along with numerous other responsibilities. In 2 Timothy, Paul cautions Timothy to:

*“(2) Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. (3) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; (4) and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. (5) But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry”*

*2 Timothy 4:2-5*

Unfortunately, the failure of churches and pastors is common in our modern culture as it is easy to find burnout statistics on the Internet along with books and organizations that are dedicated to solving this dilemma. To illustrate this point, the following statistics are a brief overview from a survey conducted by the New York Times in August 2010:

- Members of the clergy now suffer from obesity, hypertension and depression at rates higher than most Americans
- In the last decade, their use of antidepressants has risen, while their life expectancy has fallen
- Many would change jobs if they could
- 1,500 pastors leave their ministries each month due to burnout, conflict, or moral failure
- 57% would leave the pastorate if they had somewhere else to go or some other vocation they could do

- 50% feel unable to meet the needs of the job
- 33% felt burned out within their first five years of ministry

From the previous statistics, it is easy to see the importance of being called by God to the ministry, the relevance of the previous section on the words *aspires* and *desires* from I Timothy 3:1, and the difficulty of the position of church leadership from the perspective of a pastor.

### **The Characteristics**

As previously mentioned, I Timothy 3:1-7 can be viewed from the perspective of two separate viewpoints. First, in verses 1-7 only spiritual character traits are listed – not duties. Second, the first verse begins with the *calling* of godly teacher and leader candidates, and verses 2-7 delineate the *characteristics* of those candidates. Lets start by looking at the characteristics in verses 2 and 3:

*“A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous”*

*I Timothy 3:2-3*

### **bishop**

Remember that the four titles of bishop, elder, pastor and overseer are simply different ways of identifying the *same* people who are a unique group of leaders that have the responsibility for overseeing the people of God.

*Note: For the balance of this discussion, let’s use the more common title of pastor that will also include candidate, elder, bishop, overseer, etc.*

### **must**

The beginning portion of this section of scripture uses the key word of must (*de*) that stresses the indispensable importance and absolute necessity of the specific characteristics for godly church leadership and is explicitly applied to the first characteristic of blameless which sets the framework for the following verses.

### **blameless-above reproach**

The word blameless (*amenptos*) is also used in some translations as “above reproach” (*anepilemtos*) but both words denote the connotation of free from fault or defect and/or cannot be accused of wrongdoing before the people of God. An example of scriptural reference to blameless is highlighted in Psalm 19:13 where David prays, *“Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless.”*

Above reproach and blameless are defined by the Greek connotation of “not able to be held” which indicates that the pastor is in a current state of being above approach which is indicated by the word “be” (*einai*) that is translated as “to exist.” This does not mean that a pastor has never sinned because if that were

true, then nobody would be a qualified candidate as all have sinned as delineated in Romans 3:23. However, the focus then, is that a pastor's life is not blemished by a current sinful characteristic that would disqualify him from setting a high godly standard/example to be followed by either the public at large and/or a congregation. Scripture unmistakably indicates that true spiritual leadership is by example (I Timothy 4:12, I Peter 5:3, Hebrews 13:7, II Thessalonians 3:9, and Philippians 3:17). If true spiritual leadership is scripturally set by example, then what about pastors that commit a sin that is capable of disqualifying them from the ministry? Should they be forgiven and restored to the ministry, and if they are restored, should it be in a short or an extended period of time?

First, it should be recognized that all sins – except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit as delineated in Matthew 12:31 and Mark 3:28-29 can be forgiven by God if confessed – *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness – I John 1:9.*

Second, although there are a multitude of sins that could be debated for their egregious nature and ability to disqualify a leader, it must be remembered that the office of pastor must have an unimpeachable reputation within his sphere of influence and also in the unbelieving community as stated in I Timothy:

*“Moreover, he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil”  
I Timothy 3:7*

However, it appears the sin of adultery brings a reproach that can never be erased and can permanently disqualify a pastor as stated in Proverbs:

*“Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul. Wounds and dishonor he will get, and his reproach will not be wiped away”  
Proverbs 6:32-33*

This verse indicates that once the purity of a pastor is forfeited, the ability to lead by example has been compromised forever. Unfortunately, sexual sins are becoming more common in the church, partly due to the influences of our modern culture and the availability of Internet porn. Consider the following surprising statistics:

- 13% of active pastors are divorced
- Of divorce rates in the United States, pastors had the third highest divorce rate – exceeded only by that of medical doctors and policeman
- One in eight pastors who are still active have committed adultery

- About 37% of pastors have been involved in inappropriate behavior with someone in the church
- 33% of pastors admit that being in the ministry is an outright hazard to their family
- 80% of pastors say they have insufficient time with their spouse

Although Proverbs 6 defines adultery as an exclusive sin, adultery by pastors is even a greater sin in general. We know that our bodies are a spiritual temple in which the spirit of Christ lives (I Cor 12:3, John 7:38-39). So, when a pastor who knows scripture and is also supposed to be a godly example commits a sexual sin, it involves Christ with a harlot as all sexual sin is harlotry. Although all sin is deceitful, men who fall sexually have typically followed a pattern of lying, misinformation and deception for a noteworthy period of time. The early church held to complete disqualification from pastoral ministry when a sexual sin was involved.

Third, it is not uncommon for pastors to sin, repent, and be *rapidly restored* to the ministry as if nothing ever happened. Although there are numerous examples of restoration in the Bible – such as Peter who denied Christ three times (Luke 22) yet was restored by Christ to become the cornerstone of His church – is the principle of restoration applicable to today within the context of our discussion of church leadership in I Timothy 3:1-7 – remembering that the foremost requirement of a church leader is “above reproach?” While there is no sure biblical text that provides indisputable evidence of restoration for a pastor who has forfeited a blameless reputation, there are currently three resolution categories for a fallen pastor that has repented:

- Immediate restoration within one year
- Future restoration within an undetermined amount of time
- Personal restoration but with no possibility of being restored to a previous position of leadership

With the exception of a sexual sin that has the capability of permanent disqualification, a basic rule that should be initially exercised is that a fallen pastor should not be hurried back into ministry (if that is a possibility). Lastly, it should be stated that if a fallen pastor is returned to ministry, the godly standard for that leadership position has been lowered!

#### **the husband of one wife**

This important phrase has been subjected to multiple interpretations but the focus should center on what standard Paul was stressing for pastors. The English translation of “the husband of one wife” comes from the Greek phrase *mias*

*gunaikos andra* which when translated, literally means “a one woman man” or “a one wife man.”

Lets briefly consider the four most common interpretations of this Greek phrase:

- Pastors must be married

If this was the view of Paul, then he would be contradicting himself in his letter to the Corinthians (I Corinthians 7:7-9) where he states that (7) “*For I wish that all men were even as I myself,* and (8) “*But I say to the unmarried and to the widows, it is good for them if they remain even as I am.*” From another perspective, if one of a pastor’s qualifications is being married, then every single man would be routinely disqualified – including Jesus Himself. This view is not a serious consideration

- One marriage

This viewpoint stresses that a man can only be married one time in his lifetime. This allegedly comes from the phrase “one-woman man” and reflects the premise that a man can only marry once in his lifetime and/or once a man is divorced he can never remarry. First, Scripture does not teach that remarriage after the death of a spouse automatically disqualifies a pastor and/or no longer renders a pastor “above reproach” (I Timothy 5:14 and I Corinthians 7:37-39). Secondly, scripture plainly teaches that a pastor can remarry after a divorce under certain conditions as follows:

- Sexual immorality by the wife (Matthew 5:31-32)
- An unbelieving wife departs as a result of not being able of tolerating the partners faith (I Corinthians 7:15)

- Polygamy

Quite simply, polygamy is forbidden in scripture (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5-6, Mark 10:6-9, Ephesians 5:31). Additionally, during Paul’s era, a polygamist could not have been a church member and/or a church leader

- Faithfulness

From this perspective, the focus is not the issue of a “*one-woman man*” as it is possible for a one-woman man to have “*outside interests!*” Rather, the primary issue is marital fidelity! In other words, is the pastor faithful, true, completely committed and has an exclusive relationship with only his present wife. In summary, moral purity in thought and deed

### **temperate**

*Nephalios* is the Greek word for temperate and can be translated as “clear-headed, alert, watchful, and prepared. These words denote a man who can think clearly and stay away from *anything* (alcohol and the Internet could be good examples) that could negate his alertness.

**sober-minded**

A man who can correctly set his priorities, is serious about spiritual matters and is not quick to judge.

**good behavior**

The ability to lead a disciplined and orderly life.

**hospitable**

The Greek word *philoxenos* can be translated as “to love strangers” and/or “to show hospitality to strangers.” The door of a Christian heart and home should be open to those in need.

**able to teach**

This is a primary characteristic that sets a pastor (also elder, bishop, overseer) apart from the position of deacons. Preaching and teaching the Word of God is the primary responsibility of pastors (Titus 2:1, 2 Timothy 2:15,24, and I Timothy 4:6,11,13, and 5:17).

**not given to wine**

In short, a pastor’s lifestyle must be radically different from the world and should lead by example that should focus on leading others to righteous conduct and not worldly pleasures.

**not violent**

The emphasis is on reacting to pressure and stress with calm assurance and grace, not overbearing physical actions and/or temperamental outbursts (2 Timothy 2:24-25).

**not greedy for money**

See the following explanation for “not covetous.” Undeserved money should never be a motivation for ministry (I Peter 5:2).

**gentle**

Gentle (*Epieikes*) does not mean weak. Rather, the emphasis is on a person who is gracious and forbearing, not willing to hold a grudge and able to accept criticism. Obviously, these traits are characteristic of a strong person, not weakness.

**not quarrelsome**

The focus of this phrase is on a person who can be irritable and/or argumentative. Rather, the emphasis should be on the ability of a man to be peaceful and not the desire to have it “*my way*.”

**not covetous**

The primary emphasis should be on a love for God, His church and serving his people, not money and/or worldly possessions (Matthew 6:24 and I Peter 5:2). One should question a pastor who finds it necessary to live in a mansion, drive expensive cars, and/or own/fly in their personal jet aircraft. Remember that jealousy is a prime indicator of covetousness.

*“One who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?), not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover, he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil”*

*I Timothy 3:4-7*

**who rules (manages) his own house well, having his children in submission**

From a biblical perspective, not only should an pastor’s personal life be irreproachable but his home life must also be faultless. Home life can be defined with attributes such as family members, financial, discipline, and reputation in and outside the home. There is a solid link between the home and the church as it is God’s plan for men to assume the leadership role in both areas and exercise good stewardship that is also visible in both home and church.

A pastor’s children are not only to be well-disciplined but respectful, not insubordinate, and bring honor to their parents. Additionally, they are also to be believers as stated in Titus as follows:

*“If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination”*

*Titus 1:6*

In Titus 1:6, the phrase “faithful” is always used in the New Testament to refer to believers, not unbelievers. Therefore, “faithful children” refers to children who are believers. Remember that an essential prerequisite for a pastor leading a church is initially being able to lead his family.

**take care of the church of God**

This characteristic is self explanatory, particularly after following the previous trait of *“ruling his own house well.”* The necessity of being able to manage one’s household directly carries over to the church of God. If a man does not know how to manage his own household, then how will he take care of the church of God?

**not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride**

It is not wise to put a new Christian with minimal “vetting” and biblical experience into a church leadership role as Paul advises that the temptation to fall into the area of pride is enhanced. Candidates should be selected from the spiritually mature (I Timothy 5:22).

**good testimony outside**

Biblical qualities of church leadership should not only be exercised within the church and home but also outside the church environment. Church leaders must

be able to maintain a godly reputation in the unbelieving world. Otherwise, how will a community respect a church leader and be impacted by his message? A positive testimony is essential to unbelievers. This also holds true to Christian believers as well!

*“Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus”*

*I Timothy 3:8-13*

After discussing the numerous spiritual qualifications for elders in verses 1-7, Paul delineates the qualifications for deacons in verses 8-13. Although there is a primary difference in qualifications for deacons (they are not required to teach), they are not inferior to the qualifications for elders. As previously mentioned, the position of elders and deacons serve to perform different functions but collectively combine to provide unified church leadership from the perspective of leading and teaching (elders) and serving (deacons). While there are similarities in both elder and deacon qualifications, let's look at two noteworthy qualifications for deacon that are not specifically mentioned within the qualifications for pastors:

**not double-tongued**

The Greek word for double-tongued is *Dilogos* and is only used in this New Testament verse. Obviously, a deacon's speech must be honest, consistent and reliable, not hypocritical by saying one thing to a person and another thing to another person. Gossip is another trait that may also be associated with double-tongued as it typically promotes rumors and idle chatter that does not edify the church.

**their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things**

This portion of scripture has been translated in various ways, depending on what particular Bible that is used. However, the translation from the Greek reads, *“Women likewise [must be] dignified, not slanderers, clear-minded, faithful in all things.”* This translation from the Greek indicates that Paul could be referring to deacon's wives as well as women who serve as deacons. In summary, the use of “likewise” points to an additional group in addition to pastors and deacons. Similar to their male counterparts, women who serve must be reverent, not slanderers (gossip), temperate (calm), and faithful in all things.

## BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP FOR BELIEVERS

As previously delineated, I Timothy 3 and Titus I specifically defines God's criteria for church leadership that is intended for pastors, overseers, bishops and elders. Although the leadership directives for every believer are not as comprehensive as top church leadership positions, the Bible also specifically delineates biblical directives for all believers. The views of servant leadership and godly influence can readily summarize these directives as every Christian (regardless of any leadership responsibility) is *initially* called by Christ to fill a fundamental spiritual leadership responsibility that is based on servant leadership (service) and influence to others. Let's briefly look at these two directives.

### SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Regardless of any degree of spiritual leadership responsibility, a solid foundation for true leadership begins with a believer whose character and life are primarily accountable to God and for motivating people to follow a godly example as commanded in Matthew as follows:

*But Jesus called them to Himself and said "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him become your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many"*

*Matthew 20:25-28*

Although attending a three-day Tony Robbins or Dale Carnegie leadership seminar may be beneficial from a secular perspective, this verse indicates that Jesus believes true leadership is based on the primary elements of being a slave and a servant – which can be summarized by the phrase "Servant Leadership." This means that in the Christian realm, all leadership should be servant leadership. In Philippians 2:3-4 – "*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself*" – Paul underscores the fact that we should have a Christ-like attitude that centers on considering others better than ourselves and doing nothing out of selfishness or pride. The biblical importance of this insight is stated in numerous New Testament Bible verses. Some of these verses are as follows:

*"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to be serve, and to give his life as a ransom"*

*Mark 10:45*

*But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves"*

*Luke 22:26*

*"Not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock"*

*I Peter 5:3*

*"But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant"*

*Mark 10:43*

In other words, the primary elements of power, prestige, influence, money, fame, the scope of responsibility and the size of an organization are secondary to a leader whose foundation is established on a servant's heart that is willing to prioritize serving others while incorporating the principle of sacrifice. A simplistic definition of sacrifice for this discussion is *"the ability of a spiritual leader to put others before themselves"* which is significantly different from the *"me first and I want it now"* approach of our modern society. A clear example of a servant's heart and sacrifice is found in John and is the action of Jesus washing his disciples feet that was in direct contrast to their heart attitudes at that time as follows:

*"So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, do you know what I have done for you"*

*John 13:12*

In this verse, Jesus (the Creator of the universe) demonstrated a basic scriptural pattern of leadership when He bent over to wash His disciples feet, as this was a task that was attributed to the lowest of slaves and is why the practical example modeled by Jesus can be known as *"The King Who Led with A Towel."* The passages in John 13:1-17 gives the full account of Jesus washing the feet of His followers and emphasizes that from the perspective of an example, Jesus modeled the following highlights:

- Love for His disciples (v.1 – *He loved them to the end"*)
- Completely aware of his position as a leader (v.14 – *"If I then, your Lord and Teacher"*)
- Willingly became a servant to His disciples (v.5-12) – *"He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciple's feet and to wipe them with a towel"*
- Desired to set an example to be followed by His disciples (v.15 – *"For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you"*)

The example that is demonstrated by Jesus in John 13:1-17 clearly exemplifies the following characteristics of servant leadership:

- Christ-centered
- A voluntary servant
- A leader who uses their power/influence to serve others
- A servant who, out of love, serves other needs before their own
- A teacher who shows their followers how to become servant leaders

In summary, remember that Paul challenges believers in Matthew 20:25 to adopt and display an attitude that is like Christ's and is centered on the viewpoint that others are considered better than ourselves and to do nothing out of vanity and/or power. The central theme is to prioritize the interests of others as stated in Philippians 2:3-4 – *"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."* So, if the Creator of the universe could wash His disciples feet, Christian leaders should be able to follow the same example!

## **INFLUENCE**

From the perspective of Christians (followers of Christ) to model and influence others towards Godly characteristics, let's look at two biblical commands that specifically address the subject of influence with the church and secular world.

### **The Church**

The spiritual service required of every Christian, not just of church leaders, is to prepare God's people for service so that the body of Christ can be built up which can also be referred to as the work of the ministry as delineated in I Corinthians 15:58 – *always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord*). This means that the entire church body is enhanced by godly leadership characteristics that are provided by servant leadership characteristics. A servant leader constantly desires to invest themselves in the lives of other believers so that the church community is directed towards being more like Christ. The perspective that spiritual leadership imitates Christ – not the examples of this world – emphasizes this viewpoint.

### **The Secular World**

Not only are believers called to be a godly influence within the body of the church but also they are also specifically called to be godly examples to a dark secular world as delineated in the following well-known verses:

*"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp*

*and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven"*

*Matthew 5:13-16*

If we take the liberty to reduce these four verses to one word, that word would be *influence*. In these four verses, Jesus summarizes the function of believers in the world and gives a mandate to influence the world as whoever lives a godly life will function in the world as salt and light.

Although salt is both a preservative and a flavor enhancer, it is commonly believed its use as a preservative is what Jesus had in mind. Until the day that the church and believers are taken from this earth at the rapture, Christians can have a formidable preserving influence in the world as they can retard moral and spiritual decay and prevent the entire earth from degenerating even faster than it already is. The second portion of these four verses emphasizes the importance of light in this world. Whereas salt is unseen in daily activities, light is obvious as it works openly, particularly in the dark. Light reveals what is wrong but helps to produce what is true and righteous. As a result, light must be visible in order to illuminate and Christians must be a direct and noticeable instrument of light to a dark world.

It must be remembered that salt both salt and light cannot lose their essential nature but salt can become tasteless when contaminated by other minerals and light can be hidden and become useless. Therefore, believers cannot be an influence in the dark secular world if godly values are compromised and/or godly principles are not on display. The primary purpose of being a godly influence is not to bring attention or praise to a believer but to lead others to God. This principle is strongly emphasized in Matthew 28 as follows:

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you"*

*Matthew 28:19-20*

This verse indicates the leadership responsibility of every Christian is a multi-faceted directive as follows:

- A spiritual responsibility
- One that is accountable to God (see Matthew 25:14-30)
- A command to influence others and teach them about Christ

#### **BEING CALLED TO A LEADERSHIP POSITION (APPLICATION)**

It is likely that every Christian has – at one time or another – been called by God to assume some type of leadership responsibility – whether large or small – and

felt *inadequate* for a calling that will involve some type of responsibility, large or small. Interestingly, the Apostle Paul asked the same question in II Corinthians 2:16 – “*who is sufficient in these things?*” – but provided the answer in II Corinthians 3:5 when he says – “*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.*” A simple translation of Paul’s question and subsequent answer is “ **our competence comes from God and not ourselves.**”

To illustrate the point of the trials and success of godly leadership, let’s briefly look at one of the greatest leaders in the Bible – Moses – the shepherd who God called into service to lead his people out of Egypt. The story is found in Exodus 3:1-22 and 4:1-17 and highlights the calling of God (at the burning bush) and a following series of excuses by Moses that were supposed to convince God why he was insufficient and not equipped to respond to the call of God (see if any of these excuses sound familiar). Starting with Exodus 3:10 (*excerpted from Joel Rosenburg blog, April 25, 2016, Lessons on Leadership: Moses*):

#### **God’s Calling**

*“Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”*

#### **Moses Response**

But Moses said to God, “*Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?*” – Exodus 3:11

Translation:

- I am not the right guy to do this
- I am no one special
- I have a history of failure

#### **God’s Response**

So He said, “*I will certainly be with you*”

#### **Moses Response**

Then Moses said to God, “*Indeed when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they say to me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?*” – Exodus 3:11

Translation:

- I am not the right one to do this
- I don’t know what to say
- I am not a strong public speaker

#### **God’s Response**

And God said to Moses, “*I AM WHO I AM*”

#### **Moses Response**

Then Moses answered and said, “*But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, ‘The Lord has not appeared to you’*” – Exodus 4:1

Translation

- No one is going to believe and/or listen to me
- I am the wrong person for this job

### **God's Response**

*"If they do not believe or listen to your voice, you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land"*

### **Moses Response**

- Then Moses said to the Lord, *"O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue"* – Exodus 4:10

Translation

- I am known to stutter
- My tongue gets in the way of my speech
- I do not speak well in front of people

### **God's Response**

So the Lord said to him, *"Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say"*

### **Moses Response**

*"O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send"* – Exodus 4:13

Translation

- I can't do this
- I won't do this
- So get someone else

### **God's Response**

So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses and He said, *"So Aaron your brother shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs"*

## **SUMMARY**

Even though the *"anger of the Lord burned against Moses,"* the Lord displayed grace and mercy towards Moses and used him in spite of himself and his complete lack of trust in the Lord. Not surprisingly, the legacy of Moses is detailed as follows:

- *"But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face"* – Deuteronomy 34:10
- Moses was included in the biblical *"Faith Hall of Fame"* – Hebrews 11:23-29

What is the primary lesson we can learn from the account of Moses and apply to essentials of leadership and believers in modern times? Consider the following challenges:

- What is God calling you to say?
- Where is God calling you to go?
- What excuses are you using to defend your lack of faith?
- If the Lord created the universe, empowered Moses (as well as other biblical characters), can He empower you and supply the necessary ingredients for His calling to you?

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