

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of **DISCIPLE**, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —*Psalm 145:11*
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —*Joshua 22:5*

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- Jesus established two radical principles of leadership—servanthood and suffering (Mark 10:42-44 and Matthew 20:20-23). Which of those have you observed in one of your leaders? Tell us about it.

Which of them do you think our world finds more difficult or distasteful to put into practice—and why?

- Too often, churches (mirroring the world) select leaders based on popularity, posterity, politics, or prosperity. Have you ever been in such a church? Tell us about it. How did their lack of godliness reveal itself?

Three Greek words (translated as "pastor", "elder", and "overseer") describe different attributes and functions of the biblical church leader (ie., different descriptions of the same person). Compared to "popularity, posterity, politics, or prosperity", how do we see God's protection and provision in this leadership system?

- Review the fifteen character qualities required of a church leader (found in the Sermon Summary).

In your opinion, which ones are obviously necessary—and why?

Do any surprise you that they are included in the list? What would happen if they weren't required?

Are there any others you'd add—and why?

How do you compare to that list?

Need to grow in Christian character?
For free biblical hope and help, write to
Counseling@tcc.org

Application-Challenge

- This week take the "Christian Maturity Inventory" in this week's *Talking Points, Walking Points*. Ask God to help you make—and follow through on—a plan to address your areas of weaknesses.
- If you would like to know God personally, contact us at <connect.tcc.org>. Scroll down to the Ministry Information Request section and mark the first or second checkbox. We look forward to helping!

Sermon Summary

First Timothy 3:1-7 reveals the qualifications required to serve as a leader in the church. Paul's focus here is on the character qualities befitting those who aspire to church leadership. The New Testament identifies two primary leadership roles: elders and deacons. Elders are servant leaders; Deacons are leading servants. Today we will talk about elders. Paul sets forth fifteen character qualities required of those who seek to serve the church as elders. An elder must be...

1. Above reproach. Literally, the word means “blameless” or “without accusation.” This doesn't mean that elders are expected to be sinless. If that were the case, we would all be disqualified. What Paul is calling for is a person of exceptional maturity and reputation.

2. The husband of one wife. The Greek text literally reads “a one-woman man,” and it describes someone who is married to one woman and continues to live in faithful fidelity with this same woman. In other words, this person has a reputation for devotion to his wife.

3. Temperate. “Temperate” describes a sober or non-intoxicated state of mind. A temperate man remains in full control of his faculties. He allows nothing to cloud his thinking, keeping everything within balance and limits.

4. Prudent. Prudence suggests someone who is reasonable, sensible, and has sound judgment. Paul uses this term in his letter to Titus. It was a quality he wanted to see in “older men” (Titus 2:2), in “young women” as taught by older women (Titus 2:5), in “young men” (Titus 2:6), and in the “church at large” (Titus 2:12).

5. Respectable. The word translated here as “respectable” describes someone who lives an orderly life, guided by respectable ideals and virtues. They are well-mannered and have good behavior.

6. Hospitable. The word “hospitable” literally means “loving strangers.” A hospitable person opens his home to others and makes them feel loved and welcomed. This trait was highly valued in the first century, where there were very few public accommodations. When visiting a foreign city, you depended on the hospitality of others.

7. Able to Teach. Paul tells us that an elder must be “able to teach.” He doesn't have to be a teacher by calling or gifting; but he must be able to explain the Scriptures and help others understand and apply them.

8. Not addicted to wine. The phrase “not addicted to wine” literally means “not staying near wine.” It describes someone who habitually has alcohol nearby. Elders must avoid addictions of any kind.

9. Not pugnacious. “Pugnacious” describes someone who does not allow his emotions to fuel his interactions with others, even during a disagreement. He is not contentious or quarrelsome.

10. Gentle. “Gentle” is the very opposite of a “violent” man, who is apt to punch someone. “Gentle” means “moderate,” “reasonable.” Such a man's response is always appropriate for the occasion, even when he feels harshly criticized or verbally attacked (Proverbs 15:1).

11. Peaceable. An elder is to be “peaceable”—“not-fighters” (a literal rendering of the Greek word). He walks away from physical altercations. While he may have the strength and skill to fight, he is known as a peacemaker, a man willing to keep a loose grip on his personal rights.

12. Not a lover of money. “Free from the love of money” describes a disposition that is not overly motivated to pursue material wealth. It is possible to be wealthy, and yet not be a “lover of money.” It is fine to possess wealth; the problem comes when wealth possesses you!

13. Manage his own family well. Elders should possess the ability to manage their family well. This makes sense, because, after all, the church is a family. If you can't manage your biological family well, what makes you think you can effectively lead your spiritual family—the church? In other words, a man who ineffectively leads his children is unlikely to lead adults with any greater success. Plus, if a leader's home is in chaos, he won't have the emotional margin needed to lead at church.

14. Not a recent convert. Paul tells us that an overseer or elder must not be a recent convert. This is because Satan loves seeing a youthful pastor have success and get proud, so he can tear down what he has built.

15. A good reputation outside the church. The last quality Paul mentions here is the importance of having a good reputation with those outside the church. Why do you think that is important? Because it reveals who you are. You take your character with you wherever you go.

Are **you** attracting people to Christ by how you live and interact with others, or are you creating barriers to faith? This qualification of having a good reputation with those outside the church is something we should each aspire to... not just leaders. In fact, every Christian should seek to embody the leadership qualities we have outlined today.

Christian Maturity Inventory

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

“Although I’m still very much ‘a work in progress’, nonetheless . . . ”

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. “. . . I have a character and reputation which are not marred by disgrace.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. “. . . I consistently live in faithfulness and integrity toward my spouse.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. “. . . I avoid excesses in all things, remaining in full control of my faculties.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. “. . . I am reasonable, sensible, and exhibit sound judgment.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. “. . . I live an orderly life which is governed by Christian ideals and virtues.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. “. . . I open my home to others, making them feel loved and welcomed.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. “. . . I am good at helping others understand and apply the Scriptures.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. “. . . I do not drink alcohol often—and <i>never</i> to excess or drunkenness.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. “. . . I control my emotions and am neither contentious nor quarrelsome.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. “. . . I am not violent—even when harshly criticized or verbally attacked.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. “. . . I do not insist on my own rights, but instead am a peace-maker.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. “. . . I give generously and view my possessions as a tool to bless others.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. “. . . I have created a calm, godly, structured, loving environment at home.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. “. . . I have grown and matured in my faith over an extended period of time.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. “. . . I have a reputation of integrity among the <i>non</i> -believers who know me.” | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

How did you do? Add up the scores you gave yourself for *all* 15 items, and then divide by 15, in order to find your average score. Write that number here:

A score above 2.0 means that you generally exhibit these godly qualities of maturity. A score nearing 4.0 means that you are above reproach (*unless, of course, you lied!* 😊). Really want to grow? Ask someone who knows you well to rate you. How did it differ?

OK, time to make a game plan! List the qualities (by their item number, 1-15) for which you scored “1” or “2”:

Review the sermon summary (& 1 Timothy 3:1-7) to understand steps you can take to grow.