

TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



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

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



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Questions for Reflection

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?
- Read 1 Timothy 5:17. How have you observed a church leader being **insufficiently** honored? How have you seen a church leader receiving **perhaps too much** honor? What did it look like?
What were the repercussions? Did the church flourish—or even survive—after that?
Was the situation ever rectified? If so, how?
- Jot down the fifteen traits found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 (or visit: tcc.org/sermons/1st-timothy-part-4-june-11-2017). Verse 10 adds, "These men must also first be tested, then let them serve if they are beyond reproach." **What sort of test** do you think would be capable of revealing whether a man is "above reproach"?
Which service opportunities at TCC do you think could be useful in revealing a person's character?
Are you taking advantage of any such "testing opportunities" at TCC so that you can be evaluated for possible future leadership? If so, which ones? If not, you willing to "put yourself out there"?
- In Romans 16:3-16 Paul uses a variety of descriptions for men and women who are "above reproach". What are they?
Which of those descriptions fit you?

What changes do you need to make in order to qualify?

Application-Challenge

- Take time to extend appreciation to church leaders who are serving with distinction.
- More than a dozen men are in training as elder. Pray for their growth and our wisdom in selection.
- If you have a problem with a church leader—don't gossip! Speak to him privately.

In the space below, write one, small, concrete step of obedience you will put into practice this week:

[Empty space for writing a concrete step of obedience]

Sermon Summary

In 1 Timothy 5:17-21 we learn about leadership in the church. Apparently, Timothy was having trouble with some of the leaders he had appointed in the church. Part of the problem may have been that he had made some hasty decisions and appointed some of them too quickly (v. 22). They hadn't been properly vetted. Consequently, Timothy had misjudged some of them (vv. 24-25). Character deficiencies began to surface of which he was unaware. There is a lesson here. Pastors make mistakes, even if their hearts are right! And so do other church leaders. But when leaders make mistakes the stakes are higher—because leaders are influencers. Our influence can be either positive or negative, good or bad.

Paul knew this, and so he writes this portion of the letter to share some important leadership principles with Timothy that will help him make wiser decisions in the appointment, discipline, and compensation of future church leaders. He begins with the compensation piece. He tells us that faithful church leaders should be honored and fairly compensated (5:17-18). Here, Paul is drawing a distinction between elders or church leaders who are faithful and competent and those who are not. Faithful leaders should be recognized and appreciated—especially those, Paul says, who work hard at preaching and teaching.

Church leaders do more than preach and teach. They have administrative, financial, and counseling responsibilities. They help set the vision and goals for the church. But Paul says that those who work hard at preaching and teaching are worthy of double honor. The term “double honor” has produced a good deal of discussion. Most Bible scholars believe that Paul is arguing that faithful elders who teach and preach well are worthy double honor in the sense of appreciation and remuneration. Faithful, hardworking church leaders should be fairly compensated. After all, they play a valuable role in the church and in society. Their salary should acknowledge that fact.

In verses 19-21, Paul moves from discussing faithful church leaders who deserve financial compensation to unfaithful leaders who deserve a rebuke. He tells us in no uncertain terms that unfaithful leaders should be held accountable for their actions. But he does more than that. He sets forth ‘grievance procedures’ for handling situations when a complaint is made about a church leader. Paul gives us two complementary directions: first, when a church leader is accused of something (19) and secondly, when he is found guilty (20). First, he says, “Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.” That is, the charge must be substantiated by several people. In the Old Testament, two or three witnesses were required to sustain a charge and secure a conviction. This very practical regulation helps protect church leaders from unjust slander.

In verse 20, Paul gives directions on how to proceed when a church leader is found guilty. In other words, a charge has been made by multiple witnesses and a guilty verdict has been reached. What do you do then? We know from other passages, such as Matthew 18:15-20, that first you go to the person in private and confront him. If he does not repent, you bring one or two more with you to help confirm every fact. If he still refuses to repent, then the pain and embarrassment of a more public showdown cannot be avoided. Thus, Paul says, “Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.”

Paul then turns his attention away from the discipline of church leaders to their selection. When it comes to selecting church leaders, we must not be hasty. A failure to properly vet potential leaders may lead to some very undesirable consequences. Potential church leaders should be thoroughly vetted before being placed into service (vv. 5:22, 23-25). The New Living Bible translates verse 22 this way: “Never be in a hurry about appointing a church leader. Do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.” Paul's main point is this: The best way to avoid a scandal is to carefully screen candidates before selecting them. Don't be hasty in the vetting process.

Everyone will one day be judged by a God who sees everything clearly, both our sins and our good works. For some people, their sins or good works are obvious to everyone. For others, their sins or good works are largely hidden from view. For this reason, Paul argues, we must exercise great discretion in selecting church leaders. While God sees things clearly, we do not. We can mistake a well-presented outer facade for the real thing. Therefore, when selecting church leaders, we should be thorough in our evaluation process. It is better to take the time to appoint the right person than to have to deal with the consequences of an unwise selection.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

Read 1 Samuel 16:1, 10-12. In v. 1, God tells Samuel to select a new king to replace disobedient Saul. The new king is to be one of Jesse's sons (v. 1c). Seven of Jesse's sons are rejected (v. 10). **Where** was Jesse's eighth and youngest son (v. 11)? What was he doing?

Read Psalm 78:70-72. Psalm 78 recounts Israel's history, ending with Israel's greatest king: David. **What kind of sheep** was David taking care of (v. 70-71a)? **What kind of sheep** did God **then** make him responsible for (v. 71b-72)? David's leadership is described both in terms of its **character** (v. 72a) and in terms of its **quality** (v. 72b). Put those descriptions into your own words.

“Sheep” became a key biblical metaphor for God’s people and “shepherd” for their leaders.

Read 1 Peter 2:25. What do sheep—both literal and metaphorical sheep—continually do? To whom have we now returned?

God is called our “shepherd” and “guardian”—literally “pastor” and “overseer”. Does that sound familiar? Acts 20:28 has the **same** two words. **To whom** are those words applied (see Acts 20:17)?

Read 1 Peter 5:1-4. **Who** does Peter exhort in v. 1? **To what two tasks** does he exhort them (v. 2): “_____ **the flock of God...exercising** _____” (**Same** two words again!) But shepherds come in all sorts. List how elders **are**, and **are not**, to shepherd us (“the flock of God”):

Do it this way...	...not this way...
v. 2	
v. 3	

What is Jesus called in v. 4?

OK, let's take a closer look at that “Chief Shepherd”...

Read John 10:1-18

- What does Jesus call himself (v. 11)?
- In contrast, others are called:
 - (v. 1, 10) _____
 - (v. 1, 8) _____
 - (v. 5) _____
 - (v. 12-13) _____
- Finally, let's contrast what each **does**...

The “Good Shepherd” does this...	But “strangers, thieves, robbers, hirelings”...
v. 2-4	v. 1
v. 7	v. 5
v.9	v. 8
v. 11	v. 10
v. 14-18	v. 12-13