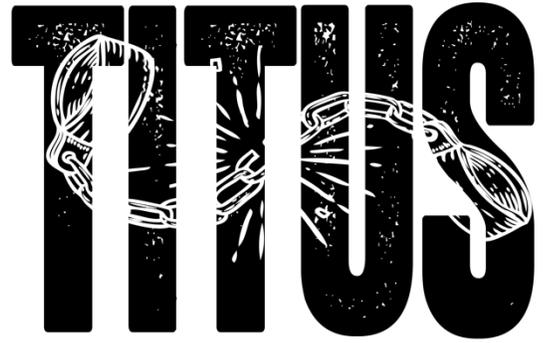


September 15, 2019 | DAVID ANDERSON

God's Design for Church Leadership pt 2 Titus 1:5-9



Do you remember that moment when you realized, often through the praise and adoration of others, that you were good at something? Remember standing in front of that crowd holding that trophy? Remember that feeling of getting that first commission paycheck? Remember that emotion of being recognized or honored or rewarded or validated? Wow! What a feeling!

Those moments sent us on a trajectory to reclaim that feeling over and over and over. There were huge payoffs emotionally to grow in those capacities and with it came titles, positions, individual fulfillment and recognition.

While we focus on all of these quests, talents, endeavors and achievements, God invites us on another journey. It's a journey that doesn't come with public recognition, trophies or commission checks. There's very little fanfare.

God's invitation is to go with Him on a journey into your inner world. As the world clamors for your giftedness, talents and expertise, God clamors for an opportunity to transform your character. He wants to heal, build trust and call out your new nature that He has placed in you through His death and resurrection.

As Titus landed on Crete, Paul said that his first task was to appoint men who had taken this inner journey of transformation with God. He told Titus that what the churches in Crete needed more than anything were leaders that had decided to trust and obey God in the things that matter the most. Paul goes on to describe the fruit of a life of trusting God with your inner world. It's those who have intentionally gone on this journey that God wants to shepherd the church of Jesus Christ.

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you (1:5). I believe the Bible teaches there are just a few roles in the church to which God calls men specifically (1 Cor. 11:3, 1 Tim. 2:12-15), and the role of elder is one of those roles. In Titus 1:6-9, Paul gives 15 qualities that should be apparent or growing as you examine the inner lives of these elders.

Paul begins with a general term about these elders—blameless (*anegkletos*). John Calvin paraphrased the idea as "not marred by disgrace." The idea is that no ongoing blame is attached to this leader. The idea really is not sinlessness, but rather that when he does wrong, he makes it right.

Husband of one wife. The Greek literally reads "a one-woman man." Probably more than anything in our life, marriage is going to be the great revealer of character and our willingness to go on that inner world journey with God. How a man loves his wife says a lot about how He is going to love the Bride of Christ. What does a "one-woman man" mean? I don't believe it excludes singles (1 Cor. 7:7, 32, 9:5). What about a non-Christian who lived with several women, but becomes a believer in Christ and marries a woman and remains faithful to that woman? My opinion is that he is a one-woman man. What about a faithful husband whose unfaithful wife refuses to continue in their marriage? It might even end in divorce, but that man has faithfully pursued that woman to the very end. I believe that individual is a one-woman man. The Ephesians 5 description of Jesus - the pursuing, always faithful groom - and His bride is something that must be mirrored in the leadership of our churches and every situation must be prayerfully and closely examined.

Having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. Paul says in 1 Timothy 3:5, “If a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?” The term that Paul uses is *teknon*, and it refers to children still living under the roof and authority of his/her parents. There are seasons where an elder’s primary emotional and spiritual energy should be spent caring for his own family and not the church family.

For the overseer must be blameless as one entrusted with God's work, not arrogant. The shepherd needs to be humble or this all falls apart. Humility is the key that unlocks the treasures of heaven. Humility is what gives an elder the opportunity to let go of all of his defense mechanisms and sincerely ask, “What does Jesus want in this situation?”

Not prone to anger, not quick-tempered. It’s impossible to be an effective shepherd if you express every feeling that comes into your mind, carry resentments and are hypersensitive and hypercritical.

Not a drunkard or addicted to wine. A shepherd can’t surrender control of his body to a substance.

Not violent. He can’t be contentious or quarrelsome. Intense emotions can’t fuel his interactions with others.

Not greedy for gain. Elders need to be generous stewards and not anxious about their financial future so that they make compromising financial decisions.

Instead he must be hospitable. This literally means “loving of strangers.” Hospitality is huge in the kingdom of God, specifically love for the foreigner and those who are different as we proclaim the Gospel.

Verse 8 finishes by saying, “devoted to what is good, sensible, upright, devout, and self-controlled.” The shepherd must have a deep seated love for Jesus and the things Jesus loves. He needs to be reasonable, fair and committed. As a shepherd you will be surrounded by a lot of immaturity that requires so much self-control.

Verse 9 says, “holding firmly to the faithful message as it has been taught, exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict.” Exhort is *parakaleo*, from which we get “paraclete” a term referring to the Holy Spirit in John 14. What’s the role of the Paraclete? Jesus says that the Paraclete was sent by the Father to teach you everything, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you (John 14:26). An elder needs to stand for the deity of Christ and the inerrancy of Scripture and the absolute truth that we are saved through faith plus nothing. An elder also needs to endure all of the hate and attack of this world when we proclaim that same-sex marriage and gender reassignment break the loving and protective heart of God. Our calling is to hold firm to the faithful message as it has been taught and proclaimed.

Isn’t it interesting that as Paul lays out 15 characteristics of an elder, not a single one is tied to giftedness or a talent or a capacity or a privileged place in society or financial success? Even the teaching part has nothing to do with giftedness, but faithfulness. There are those leaders who have accepted God’s invitation to go with Him on a journey into their inner world and character. They have decided to yield their lives - not perfectly, but consistently - to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and His fruits show up. These are the shepherds that God wants to be guiding His church.

God’s Invitation: A Journey of Transformation with Him!

As the world clamors for your giftedness, talents and expertise, God clamors for an opportunity to transform your inner life, your character. Each and every day He invites you to join Him in the parts of your life that you don’t want anyone to see. He wants to heal, build trust and call out the new nature that He has placed in you through the authority of His cross and resurrection.

What are you asking God to do in your inner life, your inner transformation and character? What is it that the Holy Spirit has pinpointed this morning? What do you want to trust Him with starting today?