

“HEALTH ~ By the Book ~ Titus 1: 4 – 9” [10.28.07]

[This morning]

Let’s allow the text to set the context for our message!

(R) Titus 1: 4 – 9 or p. 917 in pew Bible

The Apostle Paul spent his entire life attempting to establish healthy /life giving churches that would offer hope to this world!

He knew these healthy / life giving churches must be built on Jesus Christ & not upon individual personalities!

His 1st order of business was always to establish a godly leadership team that would center their lives & teaching upon the Word of God!

II Timothy 2: 2 [describes his strategy]

“You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.”

[I agree with Paul] - - the most vital aspect of a healthy /life giving church is godly leadership!

Today, Paul describes healthy / life giving leadership that honors God; pay attention to what the Bible says it is supposed to look like!

Let’s PRAY (Father, please give us fresh eyes & open hearts!)

Back to the TEXT

(R) Titus 1: 5

- Island of Crete
 - Crete was a small island in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast-Greece.
 - (30 yrs. earlier) after the great – revival of Pentecost in [Acts 2: 11] churches had been established on this island.
- Paul left Titus on Crete so that he could complete the ‘unfinished business’ of establishing healthy / life giving churches!
- Paul’s 1st order of business;
 - To train & equip spiritually mature men & their wives to protect & oversee God’s church family & the doctrinal teaching of the local church.
 - So, how do we know if a man is qualified to be an elder?

Paul explains that there are (3) realities in a man’s life that need to be investigated:

- I. 1st reality (to be investigated) ≈ an elder’s family life
 - A. (R) Titus 1: 6a

- “An elder must live a blameless life;”
 - in a nutshell there must not be any glaring weakness
- [parallel passage] in I Timothy 3: 7 explains the broad implication of blameless;
 - “People outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced & fall into the devil’s trap.”
 - Blameless = a good reputation with non-Christians!
- [Notice what’s not mentioned?]
 - Character is mentioned - - not life skills nor abilities
 - Who you are is more important in God’s economy than what you can do!

B. (R) Titus 1: 6b

- Paul knew from experience that an elder’s conduct in their homes revealed their fitness for service in the local church.
- Primary relationship investigate; “Has he been faithful to his wife?”
- [Problematic translation]
 - NIV translates = “...the husband of but one wife”
 - Original language / literally translated = ‘A one woman man’
- Some contend that a person desiring to be an elder or pastor in the church must not have been divorced.
 - It’s WRCC position that divorce in a person’s past does not automatically disqualify a man from future church leadership
- The passage in Titus goes on to say that an elder must not be given to drunkenness or violence.
 - Most believers agree that if a man got drunk or was in a fight many yrs. ago as a young man - - that this should not disqualify him from leadership.
- The nature & circumstances of the offense & the length of time of proven credibility are all taken into account in determining whether a person is qualified for a leadership position.
 - [In other words] did this offense occur before or after this person made their public profession of faith in Christ?
 - The same standard should apply to a person’s past divorce!
 - If MURDER didn’t disqualify Paul from becoming an apostle & missionary after a decade of proven credibility; a divorce in someone’s past shouldn’t automatically disqualify that person from serving as a church leader!

Any other position makes the past more important than the present!

The Bible says,
“...that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!” [II Cor. 5: 17]

- [Another clue] about an elder’s family life is his children!
 - Do they respect their parents?
 - Do they honor and love Jesus as their Lord & Savior?

Back to the text...

II. 2nd reality (to be investigated) ≈ an elder’s private life

A. (R) Titus 1: 7 – 8

- 11 attributes / areas = 5 negatives & 6 positives

B. (R) Titus 1: 7

- An elder must not be...
 - Arrogant - - @ the root of this sin is pride; this was Satan’s original sin that eventually led to his downfall ☹
 - Quick tempered - - not quarrelsome;
 - If I’m contentious for the right things; I’m still contentious!
 - Next (3) items indicate character – immaturity flaws!
 - Heavy drinker - - violent - - & greedy

Back to the text...

C. (R) Titus 1: 8

- An elder must be...
 - Hospitable – enjoy hosting people in their home [reaching out]
 - “...must love what is good” – positive frame of reference [not highly critical]
 - “must live wisely” – how do they handle their finances? Do they live within their means? How do they handle confidences?
 - “must be just” – non political; not easily swayed by people – friends; intent on pleasing God; willing to make unpopular decisions!
 - “must live a devout & disciplined life” – a healthy / life giving leader is always growing; there is never a sense of having arrived!

6th quality leads to the 3rd reality!

III. 3rd reality (needs to be investigated) ≈ an elder’s doctrinal purity

- A. (R) Titus 1: 9
- B. An elder must be able to use & defend God's word
 - o Is this man willing to stand all by himself & the integrity of God's word?
 - o We believe God's word to be without any mistakes or errors!
 High calling = godly lives [examples] for us to follow!

So, what is your part in creating a healthy / life giving church?

IV. Here are 5 principles on how to treat a spiritual leader:

- A. # 1 When you choose one (an elder) ~ take your time.
 - o (R) I Timothy 3: 6 & I Timothy 5: 22
 - o GOAL = next 3 yrs. is to have (12) elders who sit on our leadership team
 - o (1) yr. apprenticeships
 - o 2008 - we are blessed to be bringing on 3 new apprentices
- B. # 2 When they mess up ~ don't cover up.
 - o (R) I Timothy 5: 19 – 21
 - o (R) Galatians 2: 11 – 15 [problem w/Paul = timid] ☺
- C. # 3 When they are criticized ~ give them the benefit of the doubt.
 - o (R) I Timothy 5: 19
- D. # 4 When they are human ~ don't be shocked.
 - o (R) II Corinthians 4: 7
- E. # 5 When they are biblically above reproach ~ obey & pray!
 - o (R) Hebrews 13: 17 – 19

Can you imagine a healthy /life giving church authentically led by God's spirit?
I can...