

## THE ELDER



***Qualifications for the man who is to serve as an Elder  
and what his duties are.***

**A study by Wayne E. McMorrان  
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## **INTRODUCTORY NOTE**

This is the third study I have done on this subject. The first was done for the purpose of solving a particular problem in a church. The second was also done for solving a (different) problem in another church. This third study is done, prayerfully, to preclude any such problems in the church.

Wayne E. McMorran

# THE “ELDER”

## THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR THE OFFICE

### THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICE

### THE MAN TO FILL THE OFFICE

#### PART ONE

#### THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR THE OFFICE

The clearest passage in which we find this term is below.

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The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: **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.

1 Peter 5:1-4 (NKJV)

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In this short passage we find “Elder” twice, “overseer” and “Shepherd.” The last term refers to Christ but it refers to Him as the “Chief Shepherd” which implies “Under-shepherds” as seen in the command “Shepherd the flock.” The “under shepherd” is to be an example to the flock. We shall leave this term for later.

The first verse contains the Greek word πρεσβυτέρους (presbuteros) from which we have derived the word “Presbyterian.” What does the word mean? In some contexts it refers to “older men” It has this meaning below.

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Do not rebuke an **older man**, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, **older women** as mothers, younger as sisters, with all purity.

1 Timothy 5:1-2 (NKJV)

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In passing, we may note that the feminine form of the word refers to “older women.” The Jewish people used the term as the name of an office in the synagogue.

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And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, **elders**, and scribes,

Acts 4:5 (NKJV)

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When the day of Pentecost was come, a completely new organization was born - The Church! While this was a new group of people, it took examples from other places to form the concept of the church and its officers. Hence, the concept of the Elder in the synagogue was taken over into The Church. It is thought that the “Elder” in the synagogue first originated with Moses.

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"I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden is too heavy for me. "If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now--if I have found favor in Your sight--and do not let me see my wretchedness!" So the LORD said to Moses: "Gather to Me seventy men **of the elders** of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle

of meeting, that they may stand there with you. "Then I will come down and talk with you there. I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone. . . . So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD, and he gathered the seventy men of **the elders of the people** and placed them around the tabernacle. Then the LORD came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed the same upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did so again.

Numbers 11:14-17 & 24-25 (NKJV)

You may not have noticed, but the four verses in I Peter (above) make up a single sentence! Let me shorten the sentence some.

*The elders who are among you I exhort, shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

When the peripheral phrases are removed, it becomes obvious that the "elder" was to be an "overseer" and a "shepherd"

In case you were not aware of it, the term Pastor is defined as: *pastor* >n. a minister in charge of a Christian church or congregation, especially in some non-episcopal churches. >v. be the pastor of. -DERIVATIVES *pastorate* >n. *pastorship* >n. -ORIGIN ME: from Anglo-Norman Fr. *pastour*, from L. *pastor* '**shepherd**', from *past-*, *pascere* 'feed, graze'.<sup>1</sup> So we find Peter addressing men using three different, but not contradictory, terms.

The first term, "Elder" we have already defined. It describes the person who is to be in this position. It excludes women even though that may not be "politically correct" today. It excludes boys and teenagers. In general it applies to older and more mature men. However, that can not always be the case, if younger men are not brought into the office to learn its responsibilities, when all the "old men" die off, who will fill the office?

The passage tells us that these Elders are to serve as "overseers." What is the Greek word? You take the Greek prefix, επι (epi) which means "over" or "outer" such as your "epidurmas" the skin that is on top of all the other skin, the outer surface of the skin. Add to this the word σκοπος (skopos) which we use in "microscope, telescope, periscope, etc.), and means to see or to look. Hence the whole word means "to overlook" (in the sense of supervising, not in the sense of forgetting). It is the word from which we derive "Overseer," "Episcopal" and, somehow "Bishop."

So we are talking about men who, for the most part are older and more mature and assigning them the task of being overseers. But where does "pastor" or "shepherd" come in?

Thus, he would miss the practical illustration of the shepherd in the East who always leads his flock, never drives it. The story goes that a traveler in the East once saw a man driving a flock of sheep. He said to the man, "I thought that eastern shepherds always led their flocks, never drove them." Replied the man, "Oh, I am not the shepherd. I am the butcher." All of which means that the pastor

<sup>1</sup>OXFORD Dictionary

who attempts to drive God's flock to the living of a holy life, only works havoc amongst his people, but the pastor who leads the people by a Christlike life, attains his purpose.

—Wuest's Word Studies

So this man is to fulfill his rule as overseer by being a leader. In this one passage we have seen all the Greek terms for church office except the Deacon which is not part of this study. Even more important, we have seen that these three terms all describe the SAME office. Some who fill this office we give the title Pastor (or “Teaching Elder”) and others, who do not regularly preach are simply called “Elders” (or “Ruling Elders”).

The Apostle Paul thought it important enough to give the qualifications for the man who is to serve as an Elder in two of his Epistles, 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. We shall look at each of these in order to determine what kind of man should fill that roll. I shall not even bother considering whether or not a woman can serve as an elder.

## **PART TWO**

### **THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR AN ELDER**

The qualifications in Titus 1:6-9 and in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 apparently apply to elders. It becomes apparent that the elders were the spiritual leaders of the churches. Taken as a whole, the qualifications describe one who is a mature Christian of good repute, with gifts for teaching, management, and pastoral ministry. The only specific reference to the ministry of elders is the description (Jas. 5:14-15) of elders praying for and anointing a sick person. Although “bishop” usually occurs in the singular form, none of these passages indicate that there was only one elder in each congregation. The nature of the relationship between the various elders is nowhere described.

Holman Bible Dictionary

The qualifications are listed below. I have given the qualifications in the KJV, the NKJV, the NASB, and the NIV. There are places where there are more differences in translations than differences between the two references. In the table below the qualifications from Timothy are listed first and numbered in order. The number in the second column is the place where it appears in Titus. Those marked with an X are not found in the other reference.

It is important before going into the details here to note that, if you look for a man who is outstanding in all of these categories, you will never find an elder! Also, these items speak to the CHARACTER of the man, not the CONDUCT. The conduct is certainly an indication of the character, but, still we are looking at ideal qualities and must keep that in mind.

As already noted, the characteristic changes from version to version. The only way to make an accurate comparison is by looking at the Greek terms used. The same Greek term may be translated in one way in one translation and some other way in another translation. Similarly, two translations may have the same word but the Greek word is different. Note, finally, there is one qualification in the KJV and NKJV that is not in the NASB or NIV. Actually, “covertness” in the NKJV is “free from the love of money” in the NAS. So there are two similar characteristics.

## QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS I TIMOTHY 3:2-7 and TITUS 1:5-9

### I TIMOTHY 3:2-7

	KJV	NKJV	NASB	NIV
1 1	blameless	blameless	above reproach	above reproach
2 2	the husband of one wife	the husband of one wife	the husband of one wife	the husband of but one wife
3 x	vigilant	temperate	temperate	temperate
4 12	sober	sober-minded	prudent	self-controlled
5 X	of good behaviour	of good behavior	respectable	respectable
6 10	given to hospitality	hospitable,	hospitable	hospitable
7 16	apt to teach	able to teach	able to teach	able to teach
8 7	Not given to wine	not given to wine	not addicted to wine	not given to drunkenness
9 8	no striker	not violent	not pugnacious	not violent
10 x	not greedy of filthy lucre	not greedy for money		
11 x	patient	gentle	gentle	gentle
12 x	not a brawler	not quarrelsome	peaceable	not quarrelsome
13 9	not covetous	not covetous	free from the love of money.	not a lover of money
14 3	One that ruleth well his own house, etc.	one who rules his own house well, etc.	He must be one who manages his own household etc.	He must manage his own family etc
15 x	Not a novice, lest being lifted up etc.	not a novice, lest being puffed up etc.	not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited etc.	He must not be a recent convert etc.
16 4	Moreover he must have a good report ect.	Moreover he must have a good testimony etc..	And he must have a good reputation etc.	He must also have a good reputation with outsiders

### TITUS 1:6-9

	KJV	NKJV	NASB	NIV
1 1	blameless,	blameless	above reproach	be blameless,
2 2	the husband of one wife,	the husband of one wife,	the husband of one wife	the husband of but one wife
3 14	having faithful children etc.	having faithful children not accused etc.	having children who believe etc.	man whose children believe etc.
4 16	blameless, as the steward of God	blameless, as a steward of God	above reproach as God's steward,	entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless
5 x	not selfwilled	not self-willed	not self-willed	not overbearing
6 x	not soon angry	not quick-tempered	not quick-tempered	not quick-tempered
7 8	not given to wine	not given to wine	not addicted to wine	not given to drunkenness
8 9	no striker	not violent	not pugnacious	not violent
9 13	not given to filthy lucre	not greedy for money	not fond of sordid gain,	not pursuing dishonest gain
10 6	lover of hospitality	hospitable	hospitable	be hospitable
11 x	a lover of good men	a lover of what is good	loving what is good	one who loves what is good
12 4	sober	sober-minded	sensible	self-controlled
13 x	just	just	just,	upright
14 x	holy	holy	devout	holy
15 X	temperate;	self-controlled	self-controlled	disciplined
16 7	Holding fast the faithful word	holding fast the faithful word	holding fast the faithful word	He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message



We shall look at the qualities, one at a time, starting with those common to both references. There are 10 that are common to both, though not in the same order ("tim" =Timothy, "tit"=Titus) There are ten in one reference and not the other.

tim	tit	NASB
1	1	above reproach
2	2	the husband of one wife
3	7	not addicted to wine
4	12	prudent
5	10	hospitable
6	8	not pugnacious
7	3	He must be one who manages his own household etc.
8	4	And he must have a good reputation etc.
9	9	free from the love of money.
10	16	able to teach
11	tim	temperate
12	tim	respectable
13	tit	not self-willed
14	tit	not quick-tempered
15	tit	loving what is good
16	tim	gentle
17	tit	just,
18	tit	devout
19	tim	not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited etc.
20	tit	self-controlled

Let us begin with the eleven that are common to both lists!

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## 1 ABOVE REPROACH ἀνέγκλητος

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anepílēpton, adj. from the priv. a <G1>, without, and epilambánō <G1949>, to seize. One who has nothing which an adversary could seize upon with which to base a charge. Rendered in 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:7 "blameless" and in 1 Tim. 6:14 "unrebukable." "Irreprehensible" is a closer translation, giving the true meaning of the word.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

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Since different translations give different terms here and in the items to follow, we really need to consider the Greek word. The Greek word will be given in each heading and its definition will follow. At this point it might be well to indicate the source of the definitions.

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The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament is a wonderful tool for anyone interested in studying the words of the New Testament. This monumental work is the result of 46 years of research by the editor, Dr. Spiros Zodhiates. The dictionary offers definitions and explanations for every word

used in the Greek New Testament. Each entry is identified by a number from Strong's Greek Dictionary, so that readers can make great use of the information is given about each word, even if they have no working knowledge of the Greek language.

While no book can replace the insight that can be gained by a formal study of the Greek language, how many people will ever study Greek, or how many who have studied it in the past have forgotten some of what they learned? As you read the entries in this dictionary, the idiom and nuance of the original Greek text will open up before you, and you will arrive at a deeper understanding of God's Word. Publisher's notes

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Dr. Zodhiates is a well known Greek Scholar and his definitions can be taken as reliable. For this first characteristic, the definition of the term is below

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from the priv. a<sup>2</sup>, without, and egkaléō, to accuse in court. Not merely unaccusable but unaccused, free from any legal charge.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

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There are a number of other terms which Paul might have used but this has a specific meaning which suited the need. There are four Greek words that are synonyms here.

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. . .the New Testament uses of anenklētos are exclusively Pauline. The authorized Version translates anepilēptos as "unreprovable" (Col. 1:22) and "blameless" (1 Cor. 1:8; 1 Tim. 3:10; Titus 1:6-7). Chrysostom correctly noted that anepilēptos implies not only acquittal but also the absence of any charge or accusation against the person under consideration. Like amōmos, anepilēptos does not refer to the subjective thoughts and estimates of men but to the objective world of facts. . . .

Trench - Synonyms of the New Testament

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In other words, it is not that he should "appear" to be blameless because no one has caught him doing something wrong. He is to be blameless because he has done nothing to be accused of. This is the first qualification on both lists. Before proceeding, I will state again that no man, other than Jesus Christ, can meet all sixteen of these qualifications perfectly. These are the ideal to strive for.

Paul thought this qualification important enough to put first on both lists. It is important to note that the word goes further than just saying no one knows of something he has did wrong. He must not have done anything wrong that might come to light later.

Have you ever done anything wrong? Did you steal a cookie out of the cookie jar? That is not the kind of "wrong" we are speaking of. We are speaking of serious crimes that would lower the esteem for the office.

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<sup>2</sup>The letter alpha (a) prefixed to a word means "not-"

## 2 HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνθρωπος

This qualification is the one that churches have had the biggest “hangups” over. Does it mean he MUST HAVE a wife and can not be a bachelor? The NIV translation would imply that with its “*the husband of **but** one wife*” The NIV is not a literal translation and, in some cases such as this, can have the wrong connotation. Does it mean he can not have been divorced? Before answering this specifically, it is needful for you to realize that the sixteen “qualifications” are all related to a man’s CHARACTER, not (necessarily) his CONDITION. All are sinners when born! Wuest’s expanded translation has,

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a one-wife kind of a man

1 Timothy 3:2 (WuestNT)

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The Message translation has “**committed to his wife**” Weymouth’s translation has “**true to his one wife**”

What does this mean? εἶναι μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνθρωπος = “be a one wife/woman sort of man.” Someone has made reference to the Dalmatian as being a “one man’s dog.” This is the same sort of thing. A man can be legally married for years with no divorce in site and still not be a “one woman man.” He may have eyes for every pretty female he passes on the street. If he does take a second look, what does that mean?

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“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’” But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Matthew 5:27-28 (NKJV)

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This is not a one woman man! Show me a man who has never taken a second look at a pretty woman and I’ll show you a man that is either blind, homosexual, or a liar! Still, allowing for weaknesses of the flesh, the man that is to be sought is one who does not deliberately and habitually take the “second look.”

As to the idea that the qualification means he has to have a wife, that is a bit more difficult to settle. Especially when it also says he must rule his family well. So this would say he not only had to have a wife but a family as well. Where does this idea come from. Take a look at the reference below.

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Member of the Sanhedrin. “There are strong grounds for believing that if Paul was not a member of the Sanhedrin at Stephen’s death he was elected into that powerful senate soon after; possibly as a reward for the zeal he had shown against the heretic. He himself says that in Jerusalem he not only exercised the power of imprisonment by commission from the high priest, but also, when the Christians were put to death, gave his vote against them (Acts 26:10). From this expression it is natural to infer that he was a member of that supreme court of judicature. If this inference is well founded, and **the qualification for members of the Sanhedrin was that they should be the fathers of children, Saul must have been a married man, and the father of a family.** If so it is probable that his wife and children did not long survive; for otherwise some notice of them would have occurred in the subsequent narrative, or some allusion to them in the epistles” (Conybeare and

Howson).

—New Unger's Bible Dictionary

So to be a member of the Sanhedrin, a man not only had to have a wife but children also<sup>3</sup>. There is no need, however, to assume that this qualification came over into the church as qualifications for an Elder. On the other hand, a (happily) married man would be more desirable than one who had never be married. This is one of the problems in the churches that practice celibacy. If a man has never been married, how can he give real marital or family advice to a couple who have come to him for counsel? In this respect, I would say that not all elders should be married but the majority should.

I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

1 Corinthians 7:8-9 (KJV)

Here Paul is saying it is better to be single in carrying on the work of the Lord. I suppose this is where the Roman church began to "leave the R out of celibate."

There are those who claim that Paul is here saying a an Elder can not be a divorced man. What do the Scriptures say (or not say)?

Some Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing Him, and began to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to **divorce** a wife. And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a **certificate of divorce** and send her away ." But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. "But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. "for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become one flesh; so they are no longer two, but one flesh. "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." In the house the disciples began questioning Him about this again. And He said\* to them, "**Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.**"

Mark 10:2-12 (NASB)

That would seem to say the answer is "yes." But think a minute. Would it not have been easier for Paul to have written, "An Elder must not be a divorced man."? There is a Greek word for divorce (as shown above) but it is not used in these qualifications.

**ἀπολύω**, (III) Spoken of a wife, to let go free, put away, dismiss, with the presupposition that the dismissed wife is innocent and, according to Deut. 24:1–4, deserves a bill of divorcement which was equivalent to a certificate of innocence (Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:3). So also of a husband in Mark 10:12. In the case of Matt. 1:19 with Joseph wanting to dismiss Mary secretly, she was indeed not guilty of having had any relations with someone else, although in the mind of Joseph there was a suspicion. This the Lord made clear to him through an angelic message

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

<sup>3</sup>Either Paul's wife had a funeral for him when he became a Christian or she had died.

The answer lies somewhere in between. If you have two equally qualified men but one has been divorced, the other not, the one not divorced would be the better choice. But this is only one of the many characteristics.

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### 3 NOT ADDICTED TO WINE πάροινος

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pará, near or by, and oínos, wine. Pertaining to wine, drunken. The word does not include the responsible and temperate usage of alcohol, rather, it has in view the abuse or incessant use of it. The word-picture is that of an individual who always has a bottle (or wineskin) on the table and so signifies addiction.

— The Complete Word Study Dictionary

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This attribute speaks for itself. But, to clarify it, does it mean that an Elder must not even partake a glass of wine with his dinner? As a matter-of-fact, in the same epistle, Paul wrote,

No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.  
1 Timothy 5:23 (NKJV)

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Today, Paul might have written, "*No longer drink only water, but use some Pepto-Bismo for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.*" One needs to pay attention to all the words in this passage! "*use a little wine.*" Note the word "little." I don't need to refer you to the Greek. It means "a little bit" (i.e. a SMALL glass at dinner time." And, yes, this includes whisky, rum, et. al.

Be sure to note that this is not a command for an man who abstains to start drinking a little wine to be an Elder!

I feel that I must finish this section with the following comments. Some Christians insist that many of the references to "wine" in the New Testament refer to unfermented grape juice. Humbug!

Others mocking said, "They are full of **new wine**."

Acts 2:13 (NKJV)

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This is the one and only New Testament reference to unfermented grape juice. All other references are to real wine.

Note also, that while "a little wine" may be tolerated, one must remember Paul's testimony.

Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

1 Corinthians 8:13 (NASB)

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This passage has to do with meat offered to idols. The principal applies to all areas of life including wine.

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#### 4 PRUDENT

#### σώφρων

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sóphron, adj. from sóos (n.f.), sound, and phrén <G5424>, understanding. Discreet, sober, temperate, of a sound mind (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8; 2:2, 5); self-disciplined in one's freedom, self-restrained in all passions and desires.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

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I believe "Prudent" is a term that well describes this. I do not think further explanation is needed.

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#### 5 HOSPITABLE

#### φιλόξενος

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philóxenon, adj. from philós, a friend or loving, and xénos, a stranger. Hospitable, loving strangers, a friend of, or kind to strangers

—The Complete Word Study Dictionary

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These New Testament terms, each of which occurs only once or a few times, all refer to people as "lover(s) of..." In each case, the reference is to those people who are passionately devoted to the object of their affection.

philautos refers to "lovers of self," philēdonos to "lovers of pleasure," philotheos to "lovers of God," **philoxenos to "lover of hospitality," "given to hospitality,"** and philagathos to "lovers of good men."

—Expository Dictionary of Bible Words

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Being "hospitable" means more than just having your friends over once in a while. It means to be hospitable to others (both at church and at home). In our family, when our boys were growing up (and after, also), we always tried to have a missionary speaker stay with us or, at least, have a meal with us. This was not only a help for the missionary, it exposed both boys to what missions is all about. I must add that once it had a negative impact. One time when Dale Palmer was visiting us, he had a long talk with our younger boy who was interested in missions. By the time Dale finished explaining how much work it was to be a missionary, Richard changed his mind!

Getting serious again, having missionaries and other speakers in our home certainly had an influence on our two boys and, on us too! In being hospitable in such a way turns out to be a benefit, not a burden.

James also had a word to say about the definition of hospitality.

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My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives? Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court? Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?

James 2:1-7 (NASB)

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Being hospitable means giving the same treatment to a poor brother that you give to an affluent brother. You may say, "That does not occur in churches today." Maybe not in some churches, but it does happen whether you admit it or not.

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## 6 NOT PUGNACIOUS

### πλήκτης

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from pléssō <G4141>, to strike. A striker, a violent person, figuratively a reviler, one who by reproachful and upbraiding language wounds the conscience of his brethren, a contentious person, a quarreler

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

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We get the word "pugilist" from "pugnacious," - a fighter. Do you ever get angry? There are times when you should. But, the person described here is the person with the proverbial "chip on his shoulder." If there is nothing real to fight about, he will figure out something to fight about. Some people like boxing matches where they watch one guy try to knock the brains out of the other guy (I doubt if either have any brains!). If you like that sort of entertainment, this is alright - just don't let it happen in the church.

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## 7 ONE WHO RULES HIS OWN HOUSE WELL

### or ONE HAVING FAITHFUL CHILDREN

This is one qualification which Paul comments at length on. He gives a good argument.

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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?);

1 Timothy 3:4-5 (NKJV)

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If a man has a “model” family with all his children saved and doing things for the Lord, it seems he would be able to provide the same leadership in the church. While this is true in concept, it is not always true in actuality. I have seen very devoted men whose children have grown up and gone about as far from the Lord as possible. Perhaps it is not because their father did not raise them right, it may be that some of the “good church members” made the church distasteful to them. Perhaps they have witnessed what the church did to their father. There will always be “prodigal sons.”

Again, we are looking at the ideal man. A man might excel in every other way - are we going to pass him by because he is not good in one of sixteen areas?

Before going on, some note should be made regarding the following.

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if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not **accused of dissipation or insubordination**.

Titus 1:6 (NKJV)

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Dissipation and insubordination here do not refer to the man who would be an Elder, they refer to the character of his children.

#### Dissipation

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An *ásōtos*, a prodigal, is one who spends too much, who slides easily under the fatal influence of flatterers and the temptations with which he has surrounded himself into spending freely on his own lusts and appetites.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

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If you want an example of this, just look at the prodigal son! (Luke 15)

#### Insubordination

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from the priv. a, without, and *hupotássō*, to subject, sit under in an orderly manner. Not subject (Heb. 2:8); disobedient to authority, disorderly

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

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## 8 HAVING A GOOD REPUTATION OUTSIDE THE (CHURCH) μαρτυρίαν καλήν ἔχειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἕξωθεν

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ἀπό <G575> τόν *éxōthen*, from those that are without, or the strangers to the Christian community  
—Complete Word Study Dictionary, The

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The word here for “reputation” is the word that has come into English as martyr. This is because, during the age of the persecution of the church, being a good “witness” for the Lord often meant to be a martyr. If you look at it this way, Paul is saying that people outside of the church should be able to look at this man and tell by his reputation that he is a Christian (or a member of a church). Most



of the characteristics have to do with an Elder's walk within the church but this has to do with those outside the church.

It is becoming increasingly more important that Christians conduct themselves well before the world and this is especially true for the Elder. I am really concerned about the witness of those who are most "holy" at church and then, the next day at work, they swear and use foul language and put the church to shame.

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## 9 FREE FROM THE LOVE OF MONEY

### αἰσχροκερδής

αἰσχροκερδη (Schrivner)

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aischrokerdés, adj. from aischrós <G150>, indecent, dishonorable, and kérdos <G2771>, gain. A person who is eager to gain even if such gain degrades his moral character. Occurs only in 1 Tim. 3:3 (TR), 8; Titus 1:7. A bishop, elder, or deacon must not go after gain that would dishonor his character.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

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This is a hard subject for a Scotsman to deal with! 😊 Seriously, an Elder must be free of all kinds of financial problems.

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The rich rules over the poor, And the borrower becomes the lender's slave.

Proverbs 22:7 (NASB)

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It is not good stewardship for a Christian to borrow money unless, of course, it is a true necessity. In our family we made a point of not borrowing money for anything except our home mortgage (which we paid off early). We were able to pay the mortgage off early because we had not spent a lot of my income on interest payments. If it becomes necessary for a person who is to be an Elder to borrow money, he should be careful to make his payments on time and bear a good witness thereby. Note that it does not say "Free from money!" It does not mean that your Pastor or Elders have to live in poverty. I am sitting here at my desk in a beautiful home the Lord **gave** us. He gave it to us, I believe, because of faithful service.

The Elder who is to be a "teaching elder" had better be free from the love of money because, in many churches today (as in the past), he may have to get by on a less than sufficient salary. Some say the pastor should not receive a salary. Let him live in the parsonage and live off the scraps given him.

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The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of **double honor**, especially those who work hard at **preaching and teaching**. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "**The laborer is worthy of his wages.**"

1 Timothy 5:17-18 (NASB)

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There is no reason why a pastor should not be paid what he is worth. On the other hand, the elder

should not take on this position because he may think it will make him richer in one way or another.

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Covetousness

pleonexia (<G4124>) Covetousness Greediness **philargyria (<G5365>) Love of Money**

The same distinction exists between pleonexia and philargyria as between covetousness and avarice. Pleonexia is the more active sin, philargyria the more passive. Pleonexia refers to having more and (more usually) to the desire to have more, to seeking to possess what is not possessed. **Philargyria refers to seeking to retain what is possessed and, through accumulation, to multiplying what is possessed.** Pleonexia often implies bold and aggressive methods of acquisition; it frequently refers to behavior that is as free in scattering and squandering as it was eager and unscrupulous in acquiring. The pleonektēs (<G4123>) is often rapti largitor, "a squanderer of what he has seized." Theodoret defined this sin as "the desire for more and the seizure of what does not belong to a person." **Philargyria refers to miserly behavior that frequently is also cautious and timid, not necessarily having cast off an outward show of righteousness**

—Trench's Synonyms of the New Testament

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## 10 ABLE TO TEACH

διδασκτικός

διδασχί

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from didáskō <G1321>, to teach. Didactic, able to communicate Christian teaching, apt or skilled in teaching. A quality named as a requisite for a bishop (epískopon <G1985> 1 Tim. 3:2) or elder (presbúteron <G4245>), the terms being synonymous

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

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didáskō <G1321>, to teach. In an act. sense it means the act of teaching, instructing, tutoring (Mark 4:2; 12:38; 1 Cor. 14:6, 26; 2 Tim. 4:2); in a pass. sense, teaching which is given, that which anyone teaches, the manner or character of one's teaching

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

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The terms are not identical in the two references. But, the sense is the same. In Timothy it is simply stated "**able to teach**" In Titus it is elaborated more.

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holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

Titus 1:9 (NASB)

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Here some qualifications are listed.

- holding fast the faithful word
- in accordance with the teaching,
- able both to exhort in sound doctrine
- to refute those who contradict

First of all, he must **know** God's Word. Do you know the Bible from cover to cover? I do not, but after over 40 years of teaching, I know a lot of the Scriptures, especially the important ones. I do have a problem of remembering where some are found but a good concordance will solve that problem.

Secondly, this is the opposite of the first. He must know well what is NOT in the Scriptures as well as what is. People seem to love adding things to the Scriptures that are not there. Beware!

Thirdly, and this is important, he must be able to transfer what he knows to others. Paul wrote to Timothy.

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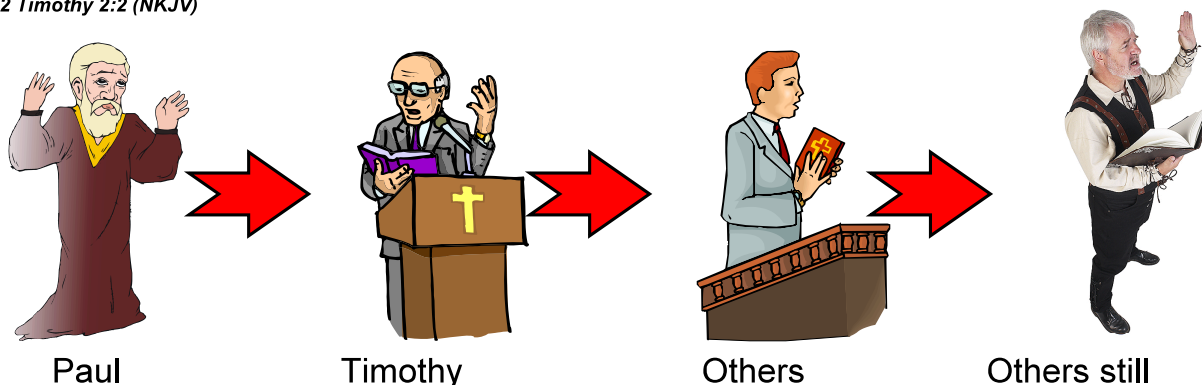
The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

2 Timothy 2:2 (NASB)

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*The things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.  
2 Timothy 2:2 (NKJV)*



Today, much of what is said is written down for others to read. The problem today is there is too much stuff to read or hear or see on TV or the Internet and we need to separate the good from the bad. In the beginning, however, the Gospel had to go forward by word of mouth and, especially, sound teaching as illustrated above.

The last thing on the list is "to disprove." or "rebuke" those who would discredit the Scriptures with false teaching about what they actually say. It seems as the "end times" draw closer, people will like to confuse the issue of what the Bible teaches. Daniel was told that!

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He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. "Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and **none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand.** "From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. "How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days! "But as for you, go your way to the end; then you will enter into rest and rise again for your allotted portion at the end of the age."

Daniel 12:9-13 (NASB)

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## QUALITIES FOUND IN ONLY ONE REFERENCE

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### 11 TEMPORATE

**νηφάλιος**  
(Timothy)

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from néphō <G3525>, to be sober. Sober, temperate, self-controlled, especially in respect to wine. Used metaphorically, meaning sober-minded, watchful, circumspect

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

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We have already discussed the wine situation so this must be other than that. **sober-minded, watchful, circumspect** Here we need to concentrate on “Temperate.” I am not here thinking of the Women’s Temperance Union. In one sense this goes with “not long at wine” because it says the Elder must be sober (earnest). He is to be “watchful.” Do you know what is going on in the world today? Do you know about the millions and millions of dollars the Roman church have spent to undo the problem they created with celibacy. Do you know about the many Christians and Jews that are being slain by fundamental Muslims? The Elder must be judicious .

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### 12 RESPECTABLE

**κόσμιος**  
(Timothy)

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from κόσμος <G2889>, order, arrangement. Orderly, decent (1 Tim. 2:9; 3:2). Plato presents someone who is κόσμιος as the citizen who quietly fulfills the duties which are incumbent on him and is not disorderly.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

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I think we all know what it means to be “respectable” persons.

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### 13 NOT SELF WILLED

**αὐθάδης**  
(Titus)

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from autós <G846>, himself, and hédomai (n.f.), to please. One who is pleased with himself and despises others, insolent, surly, the contrast of courteous or affable. A person who obstinately

maintains his own opinion or asserts his own rights but is reckless of the rights, feelings, and interests of others. He regulates his life with no respect to others

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

The office of Elder is an important office in the church. Much is entrusted to the Elder. Because of this the Elder is not to seek what **he** wants, but what is best for the church. The biggest problem I have had (in the past) with being an Elder is discerning what the will of the congregation was. People are reluctant to go to an Elder with a perceived problem in the church. In most of the time I served on an Elder board, when we voted on an issue, it really made no difference whether Roberts Rules of Order required a simple majority or a two-thirds majority. We always discussed in refined the situation until ALL were in accord. A self-willed man will not function well in that setting.

## 14 NOT QUICK-TEMPERED

ὀργίλος  
(Titus)

orgé <G3709>, anger, wrath. Prone to anger

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

Some people are very quick to anger. I tend to have this characteristic but, even if it is anger over something that is wrong, being quick to become angry is not desirable. If a man wishes to serve as an Elder, he must first earn to count to ten! This applies to when he is in a board meeting, in church, or in public.

## 15 LOVING WHAT IS GOOD

φιλάγαθος  
(Titus)

from φίλος <G5384>, friend, and agathós <G18>, benevolent. Loving and practicing what is good (Titus 1:8). It combines not only the liking to be kind but also the actual doing of good. The word is similar in implication to eleémōn (<G1655>, merciful), and oiktírmōn (<G3629>, compassionate) but stands in contradistinction to philoiktírmōn (n.f.), one who enjoys sympathetic feelings without necessarily externalizing them in good actions.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

This characteristic refers to going out of one's way to do something good or nice for others. Of course, there was the boy scout who was very rough in helping an old lady across the street - she didn't want to cross the street! (Bad joke). Seriously, one person can go through life day by day and never see anything good he could do. There are others who are always going out of their way to do something good for others. Why is this? I really can not say. I know it to be true. I believe the answer is that one has an internal desire (or love) to be of help. I really think when I do something

good for people, I am enriched for it even more than the people I help. For the past year or two, I have been working with an elderly (mid 80's) couple living in Jerusalem (suburbs). She is a wonderful composer of music but her music never seemed to go anywhere. Through a woman who is a missionary there, we got together - via e-mail. I was able to put one of her pieces, based on Psalm 91, on a DVD and over a hundred of these have distributed in various ways and have resulted in considerable financial help for them. It really helped them but it made me feel real good knowing that I was able to accomplish this.

Sometimes doing what is good costs money. One of the problems with the music I noted about is that the woman was never happy with the way the music came out. I, finally, perceived that the problem is that they had a poor sound system on their computer. I really felt bad that she was missing the blessing of her own music. I took care of that by sending them a goodly sum of money to purchase a real good sound system. She was elated. So was I! Not only was I happy that I had been able to make her and her husband happy, the Lord must have been happy too because, within a week, we received an unexpected check in the mail for nearly the amount I had sent them. This has happened over and over with us. It is not hard to love what is good when the Lord is so good to you.

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## 16 GENTLE

ἐπιεικής  
(Timothy)

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from ἐπί <G1909>, upon, on, an intens., and eikós (n.f.), fair, equitable. Fitting, appropriate, suitable, proper, to be lenient, yielding, unassertive

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

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The Elder is to be a leader or shepherd of the flock. In the introduction I had a piece which noted the difference between the butcher who drove the sheep and the shepherd who lead the sheep. An Elder ought not to think more highly of himself because he is an Elder. You should be able to go into a church and not be able to spot the Elders because they were no more assertive in church than the rest of the members. If you are to be an Elder, you should be able to listen to people's problems in a kind way and gently make suggestions on what they need to do.

If an Elder is not gentle, some of the members will be reluctant to come to him with problems and needs. He must make them feel comfortable in expressing their needs.

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## 17 JUST

δίκαιος  
(Titus)

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from díkē <G1349>, right, just. Righteous, just. Used in the neut. τό díkaion, that which is right, conformable to right, pertaining to right, that which is just. This is expected by the one who sets the rules and regulations whereby man must live, whether that be society or God. Therefore, it means that which is expected as duty and which is claimed as a right because of one's conformity to the

rules of God or society.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

What more can I say? We all know what it means to be "just."

## 18 DEVOUT

ὅσιος  
(Titus)

hósios; fem. hosía, neut. hósion, adj. Holy, righteous, unpolluted with wickedness, right as conformed to God and His laws, thus distinguished from díkaios <G1342>, righteous, which refers to human laws and duties. Corresponds to the Hebr. hasid (<H2623>, OT), denoting the person who readily accepts the obligations which arise from the covenant people's relationship to God. Such a person was known as "the loyal, the pious one" (a.t.). Used in the NT:

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

My Thesaurus gives: *Devout - God-fearing, pious, churchgoing*. I seriously doubt that Paul meant "churchgoing," although that would be a qualification. Pious has a bad implication in the minds of most people. God-fearing should be a characteristic of all Christians. So we shall have to stay with devout. My dictionary defines it as *1 having or showing deep religious feeling or commitment*. I guess it would be best to let it mean what most Christians take it to mean - a man committed to the Lord's work.

## 19 NOT A NEW CONVERT

νεόφυτος  
(Timothy)

adj. from néos <G3501>, new, and phúō <G5453>, to germinate. Newly sprung up or, figuratively, one who is but lately converted to Christianity and newly implanted in the Church, newly instructed or a novice

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

I believe this characteristic should be obvious. How can a man who is still learning what it means to be a Christian lead others?

## 20 SELF-CONTROLLED

ἐγκρατής  
(Titus)

from en <G1722>, in, and krátos <G2904>, power, dominion, strength, government. Having power over, being master of. Used metaphorically, meaning self-control, continence

The Complete Word Study Dictionary

The reference above defines this as “continence.” I think of this term in reference to one’s need to eliminate as do most others. While this is certainly not what Paul had in mind, it does serve as an example of what the word means. It means to be able to hold back in doing a thing when we have an inner (Christian) need to do it. Sometimes a problem will arrive in a church. An Elder can rush in like the proverbial bull in a china shop and make the matter worse. In these cases, if the Elder uses self-control and waits to see how the problem is going to “play out,” the problem may go away without causing any disturbance in the church. This brings to mind that thought that many Christians have: “When all else fails, pray!” An Elder ought to display self control by first praying about whatever the issue is and then relying on God to show the way to the solution.

## DUTIES OF AN ELDER

This section of the study is, perhaps, the most difficult to be give precise instructions.

After the New Testament period, the structure of the ministry became more formalized. By the early second century, many churches were governed by one ruling bishop, assisted by presbyters (elders). These presbyters performed pastoral tasks, **preached sermons, and conducted worship services**. Often, perhaps usually, bishops were chosen from the ranks of the presbyters, thus making the bishops the “chief presbyters.” By the third century, as the Lord’s Supper was increasingly conceived as a reenactment of the sacrifice of Christ, the priestly function became more central to the presbyter’s role. Thus, the English word “priest” was derived from “presbyter.”

—Holman Bible Dictionary

If you go beyond the above description in time, you get into the descriptions as they relate to the Roman Catholic Church and, as such, are of no value to us. Below, I have listed all of the New Testament references to the work of the Elder (Overseer, Bishop, Shepherd).

Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

1 Peter 5:1-4 (NASB)



The above passage from 1 Peter we looked at in beginning this study. It does not add any new responsibilities that we have not covered. It mainly reviews some of the qualifications and then reveals the reward for being a good Elder - ***you will receive the unfading crown of glory.***

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"And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. "Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. "Be on guard for yourselves and for 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. "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. "Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes. "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me. "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

Acts 20:25-35 (NASB)

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These are the instructions Paul left with the Elders of the Ephesian church. He warns them that, in shepherding the church, they must be on the watch for "savage wolves." These **will** come. I have seen them in action and they are something an Elder has to be especially on the alert from.

He finally gave himself as an example whom they should follow. ***Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears and "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*** "

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The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning. I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality. Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.

1 Timothy 5:17-22 (NASB)

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We have looked at this passage before as well. In addition to their right to be paid, he reminds them that they must keep themselves pure and free from sin.

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Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one

who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.  
James 5:14-15 (NASB)

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This is the only passage in the New Testament that specified a specific duty - to pray for and, in some cases, anointing the sick with oil (which happens too infrequently).

I would close this section with an example of many conversations I have had over the years. The congregation calls a man to be the Youth Pastor. People will say to me, "We need to set down a list of things that this man must do in fulfilling his duties as Youth Pastor." To that I say, I do not want to call anyone to a job that must have that job spelled out to him! If he is to do that job, he must also know, himself, what needs to be done and how to do it. When I started as a professor on the faculty at Cal Poly, never having taught anywhere before, no one sat me down and said, "These are your duties here." I knew without being told what needed to be done and I did it. This is the way it ought to be with an Elder. If the man does not know what needs to be done, he should not be called!