

Destin Church of Christ

Fall, 2018

Lessons from I & II Timothy and Titus

Lesson 7 – “Roles in the Church: Elders & Deacons” – Part 3

Texts: I Tim 3:1-13; 5:17-20; Titus 1:5-9

- “Temperate” (“Vigilant”)
Originally, “nephaios” meant “wineless or unmixed with wine” (not a drinker of alcoholic beverages). Over time, it has come to mean “sober, someone who is able to think clearly.” It describes one who remains free from the intoxicating effects of the world, the flesh, and the devil. He’s a man who is sober and free from self-indulgence, whether you’re talking about alcohol or being restrained in their actions and speech.
- “Self-Controlled” (“Sober” – “Sober-minded”)
Being sober-minded is the result of being temperate. This is the person who is well disciplined, and knows how to order his priorities. His ducks are in a row. It carries the idea of a man with a sure, steady, thoughtful, earnest, well-disciplined, a well-ordered mind, and has control of his pleasures.
- “Respectable” (“Of good behavior”)
The word means “orderly, decent, modest.” It is the same word used in 1 Timothy 2:9, with reference to a woman’s apparel. It points to a person who lives in a well-ordered, decent life in every area.

An elder that doesn’t live in such a way as to garner respect in their life is an elder that will never lead the sheep to respectable living. An elder cannot expect others to live respectable, orderly, good behavior lives if they themselves don’t.
- “Hospitable” (“Given to hospitality”)
This is a word about loving and entertaining somebody who isn’t your friend. It’s opening your heart to people who really don’t know you and whom you don’t know.

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- "Able to teach." ("Apt to Teach")

This is the only qualification given in the entire list related specifically to the function of an elder or overseer. This is the difference that sets deacons and the congregation apart from elders.

"Didaktikon" means "skilled in teaching" (2 Timothy 2:24).

To have the ability to communicate the Word of God more effectively than the average person.

A skilled teacher will have a reservoir of doctrinal understanding. The more reservoir that a spiritual teacher has the more skilled will be his teaching. No matter how much we may know, there should be a commitment to the discipline of study.

A skilled teacher, is avoidance of error:

- 1 Timothy 1:3-4 – Do not let "false doctrines" and myths and endless genealogies" be taught.
- 1 Timothy 4:7 – "Old wives fables" attack you with questions that suck the strength out of your conviction.
- 1 Timothy 6:20 – "Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge." It does not help, and it does not produce godly edification.
- 2 Timothy 2:16 – "Profane babblings" is compared to gangrene.

An elder must be a diligent student, so the work they do is not something to be ashamed of. They should be able, with no guilt and no impact on their confidence, to teach and preach what they have learned.

1 Timothy 4:11, 13. Stick with the Scripture ... read it, teach it, apply it, take heed to it, and as verse 15 says, meditate on it.

Being a teacher of God's word in informal settings does not require that we have the gift of teaching. It simply means we recognize the responsibility we have to impart truth to others so they too can understand it.

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- “Not given to drunkenness” (“Not given to Wine”)
 “Me Paroinos”. It joins abstinence and the act of being in the presence of people and places where the consumption of alcoholic beverages is occurring. He is not a drinker, and doesn’t frequent bars and taverns. (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

You wouldn’t have to include drunkenness here, because anyone would know that a drunk was not fit to lead the church.

“Oinos” is a generic term used by the Greeks to refer to both fermented and unfermented grape juice. The interpreter must examine the biblical context in order to determine whether fermented or unfermented liquid is intended.

Common Statements:

- A. They didn’t have clean water, so wine was the drink of choice. There were purification techniques.
- B. Without refrigeration, there was no way to keep grape juice unfermented in biblical times, therefore it must have all been alcoholic. Boil the water out to create a syrup, that would not ferment.
- C. 1 Timothy 5:23:
 1. Paul may be telling Timothy to add water to this syrup.
 2. The alcohol content was a lot lower than it is today.

It is not a foregone conclusion that the “wine” Paul commended to Timothy was intoxicating, since evidence from antiquity exists to suggest that he was referring to the addition of grape juice to Timothy’s drinking water for medicinal purposes. Even if Paul meant for Timothy to add fermented (i.e., intoxicating) juice to his diet, he nevertheless implied: (1) that Timothy had been abstinent up to that point; (2) that the quantity he was now to add to his diet was to be “a little”; (3) that the juice was to be diluted with water; (4) that its use was strictly medicinal in nature, not social, casual, or recreational; and (5) that it took the directive of an apostle for Timothy to introduce its use into his life and body.

Modern science has discovered that grape juice has many health benefits that wine does, and in some ways is actually better.

“While there may be a slight benefit to heart and circulatory health from modest drinking, many studies have shown that the overall health risks of drinking alcohol outweigh any benefits.” – Jeremy Pearson (August 24, 2018)

- D. Jesus turned water into wine. (John 2:1-11) Jewish law did not permit fermented wine at special occasions. If Jesus made water into fermented wine, he would be promoting excess and debauchery. (Ephesians 5:18)

The Greek word “*methuo*” literally means "filled to the full." It can mean someone who has had their fill of any drink and no longer desires more. John 2:10 does not say everyone is in a drunken stupor, but that they had enough to drink before the good drink was brought out.

Many times fermented wine is said to be a "mockery," and is even used to symbolize God's divine wrath.

Leaven was strictly forbidden during the Passover Meal. Many Jews, in order to obey God's command, would press fresh grapes out into cups or pitchers themselves just prior to consumption to make certain that the juice was not fermented.

Calling for elders to be abstinent is consistent with other terms used in the same listing. Words we've already talked about that originally meant: “wineless” and “sober”, and words we'll later discuss that deal with being “not violent” and “not a brawler.” Actions which are many times associated with drunkenness or being intoxicated. Elders should refrain from the use of intoxicants, and be wary of places and people who do use them. When you think of someone who's an elder, whiskey, rum, wine and other alcoholic beverages, should not come to mind.

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- “Not Violent, but Gentle” (“No Striker”)
2 Timothy 2:24. He does not resort to physical or verbal violence.
- “Not Quarrelsome” (“Not a brawler”) (“Patient”)
Not a brawler, “amachos”.
- “Not a Lover of Money” (“Not covetous”) (“Not greedy of Filthy Lucre”)
“aphilarguros” means “not be a lover of silver”. (1 Timothy 6:6, 10)

Next Week: “Roles in the Church: Elders & Deacons” – Part 4
(Maturity, Reputation, and Home Life)