

**Thursday, August 31, 2023 ◻ Titus 1:8–9**

*Questions from the Scripture text: What six characteristics must an overseer have from v8? To what must he hold fast (v9)? What sort of word is it? How does he know what to believe about it? What two things must he do to whom? How is he enabled to do so?*

**What must an elder persist in being?** Titus 1:8–9 looks forward to the second serial reading of in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these two verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **an elder must have a Word-formed character for his work in the Word.**

**The elder's character,** v8. v7 listed several things that an elder must not be. This is because those things prevent a man from being what he ought to be. Now in v8, we read what he ought to be. (1) Hospitable: a "lover of strangers." Someone for whom the image of God in someone else is abundant reason to provide care for body and soul at his own expense. (2) A lover of what is good. It's just one compound word in the original. Whatever God is, he loves. Whatever God says is good, he loves. Not just approves of. Not just follows. Loves. The first two characteristics are love characteristics. This is a man of love. (3) sober-minded. The word means that he is controlled by wisdom. He learns and grows. He is a theologically principled man, not a pragmatist who changes with the situations, nor an impulsive man who changes with his feelings or inclinations. (4) just. He does what is right toward others; he is fair. (5) holy. He does what is right toward God; he is pious. (6) self-controlled. In possession of himself—particularly enabled to follow what the Word says because he is not manipulated by competing emotions or desires.

**The Word that forms the elder's character,** v9a. The participle "holding fast," at the beginning of v9, serves as an explanation of how he came to be the man described in v8. The elder is someone who is teachable. He did not come up with his doctrine; he was taught it. He grows, but not through instability; he holds fast to what he has been taught. He considers the Word to be faithful, because God is faithful. It is the Word of a faithful God. It is true, reliable, authoritative, effective and sufficient. And the elder continually gets his life from the Lord by means of His Word.

**The work that the elder does in the Word,** v9b. Just as the man in Mat 7:5 gains skill in speck-removal by his own plank-removal, the elder gains more than just a godly character by his use of the Word. He gains experience in applying the Word to life. His own holding fast to the Word becomes the foundation for being able to exhort and convict. Others will not have sound doctrine, and he needs to be able to expose them by sound doctrine and apply it to them in whatever way is helpful.

**Whom do you have most difficulty loving and serving? What part of Scripture-defined goodness do you have most difficulty loving? Whom has the Lord given to teach you the Scriptures, and how are you practicing teachability and application?**

*Sample prayer: Lord thank You for working in us by Your Word. And thank You for giving us those who minister Your Word to us. Forgive us for when we do not live by Your word like we ought. Forgive us for when we are not hospitable. Forgive us for when we do not love what is good. Forgive us for when we are not sober-minded. Forgive us for when we are not just. Forgive us for when we are unholy. Forgive us for when we lack self-control. Forgive us for when we are unteachable, or when we do not hold fast to Your faithful Word as it was taught us. Forgive us, and help us, we ask through Christ, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP1 "How Blessed the Man" or TPH172 "Speak, O Lord"**

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Titus 1 verses 7 through 9, these are God's words. For a bishop must be blameless. As a steward of god. Not self-willed, not quick. Tempered not given to wine. Not violent, not greedy for money.

But, Hospitable. A lover of what is good. Sober minded. Just, Holy. Self-controlled. Holding fast the faithful word. As he has been taught. That he may be able by sound doctrine. Both to exhort. And convict. Those who contradict. So far the reading of god's inspired and inherent word. So we're looking at verse 8, And these are the things that the bishop or the elder must be.

He's an elder. So he is mature in the faith. He has Grown, in these things. And he is an overseer. And so he is supposed to be leading the congregation in being these things. And what we see in these verses is he has a character Uh, towards others towards god and towards himself.

That is formed by right doctrine. And he, Uh, so he doesn't just seem to act a certain way. But it's from, Good theology about Jesus. That he has come to act that way from the heart. And he learned that by being taught by others. So, he knows the value.

Of someone investing in you, theologically to show you Jesus from the word. To give you the words of the spirit to give you the instruction. And the house rules of our heavenly father. And he knows the value of god, using another person to teach you that. So that So that he blesses his word to you and produces that character in you and not only does, he know that value for himself but then he pursues it for others.

So more specifically and more detail then. He must be hospitable, literally. A lover of strangers. Uh, someone who does not love based on. Um, Uh, self-interest. But somebody who loves based on divine interest, Even a stranger is made in the image of god. And so, that's what it takes for him to care about the best interests of someone else to be willing to lay himself out for the sake of someone else.

Yes, there are connections to themselves in god's providence. Uh, that makes people less stranger to him and makes him more obligated to them. Um, Your mom is still

a stranger to me. And in some ways I'm still learning what she is like and she is not entirely myself but she of She is the least stranger person to me in the whole world.

Because we are one flesh and oneself until I love her. Not only is my own body but as my own self, but that comes from God. And so that's why she has priority over everyone else in the world even over your children. Your children are from my own flesh, you are adopted covenantally in me assigned to me by God.

I have a federal responsibility. And fatherly affectionate connection to you. Uh, but that's assigned by God, it's not out of self-interest that I prioritize you after your mother. Above everyone else on the earth. But because the love of the bishop or the elder, who is teaching, Christians out to love comes from that which is assigned by God.

There is nobody, who is such a stranger that he may not love him. Because even the the most foreign person to me in the world, is still made in the image of God. And so God says not just love your neighbor. But he classifies among neighbor. Even your enemy doesn't he?

And he gives us. The example, of course. Um, the Lord Jesus gave us. Of the Samaritan. Who loved his neighbor. And his neighbor was one who was among the enemies. From among. The enemies. And so a lover of strangers is the first thing, someone who loves God and the image of God, in other people.

The second thing then is a lover of what is good. So he doesn't just love. Uh, love all people love his neighbor. Love his enemy. Love this stranger. He loves God above all. Because God is, Uh, the definition of what is good. And so whatever God is he loves, but he loves God himself as a person.

But whatever God says is good. He also loves. Not just agrees with approves of follows what God says is good. But he loves what God says as good. Why? Because the only place goodness comes from is God. And so just like he loves people because of God's image in those people, he loves everything that is good.

He loves God's whole creation. This is one of those reasons why? Um, it can be so harmful to make up rules that seem like good ideas for avoiding sin. But end up putting you opposite. God. Now, we don't have to Uh, we mustn't, love sin. We must not love abuse of alcohol.

But alcohol is a good gift from God. For instance, and we should love the goodness in everything that God made just like we should love every person. For the image of God in that person. Are all creatures of God are good. If they are received They are sanctified. Um, by thanksgiving and the word.

Okay, so he is. Um, he is. Lover of strangers. Love of what is good? He is so reminded. This is. Towards himself. We're going to see this. Um, Uh we're going to see two triplets here. This is the end of the first triplet. Uh, but he is. Uh, dignified and noble in his mind, his controlled, by wisdom.

He's theologically principled. In other words, he carries and conducts himself. In a way that honors. Belonging to God and that his own life as a stewardship from God that's very important. Because we've just heard in the previous verse. That. The church is the house of God and the eldership is a stewardship of the house.

Well, learning to be a steward starts, with learning to steward yourself. The boys who are in the men's breakfast and we were talking about loving our wives as our own body, as our own self. And, How one of the ways that that gets corrupted is by on biblical ideas of what loving yourself means?

And that we must love ourselves. Biblically rightly take care of our body. Take care of our soul, understand both, as a stewardship from God. So that we will Be able to take care of our wife, the right way as well. Uh well, this sober mindedness is a big part of that.

Living. As someone who is controlled by wisdom in a way that is dignified and noble. Stewarding our own life. And so you have the three loves and then you have really the the three actions upon that love. His hospitable, a lover of what is good and so reminded. But he's also to be just Um, There are variations of the root for righteous.

And this is one that really means. Fair and equitable and does right in his conduct towards others. So he is, he Uh, treats others rightly properly, appropriately. Uh, he is. Holy This is a biblical piety he does. What is right towards God. He worships God. Though, he played. Excuse me.

He places the worship of God, above all other things. And when he comes to worship God he worships God as if God really is, which means he worships God in the actions by which God says to worship. Because if you have a true God then you worship how he says, not how you feel And he worships God in the manner.

As he does his actions with reference and all. As to one who is a consuming fire, but in covenant with God. As we heard in Psalm 100. Coming with, not just the The joy. And Um, gladness and thankfulness and intensity but also nearness and intimacy. And we saw that also in solved 95.

Uh, for instance, so he's a, he's a pious man. He doesn't just do it as right towards others that begins. But doing what is right towards God. And then, of course, That self-controlled. Does what is right with respect to himself? He possesses himself. Well, is particularly enabled to follow what the word says.

Because he is not manipulated by others. He is Um, he is in control. He is serving the Lord. With what he does. Uh, with himself. And so those are the, those are the characteristics that The three loves and the three actions others God self in the order of listing here, priority, of course, God, others out.

About how is the character of verse 8 produced? And you see that, it's how because of the participle. Holding fast the faithful word. And so the relationship of the first phrase in verse 9, to what we see in verse 8 is that it is holding fast the faithful word.

That makes him a lover of strangers. It is the holding fast of the faithful word. That makes him a lover of what is good? Just the holding fast of the faithful word that produces the rest of it. So so forth. But not just the faithful word but it's the faithful word as he has been taught.

He is a teachable instructable person. Uh, knowing that God. Is the one. Who produces character in us and he has chosen. To do that producing by means of his word. And so, he holds fast the faithful word because the faithful word is, the means by which God is appointed to hold fast to him.

And so, not only does he submit himself to God's word, but he said, submits himself to God's way of giving him the word. Which means he doesn't lock himself and in his room and study his Bible and come up with his ideas and then he goes to church and hears the sermon and spends the whole sermon.

Thinking that the The things that he's hearing must not be as true and right, as As what he came up with by himself. No. You understands. That elders and bishops pastors. You know, all different Bible words for the same group of people are Jesus's plan and Jesus's method. And there may be times where, Something does not seem to be born out by the word itself and there's an obligation on those who teach Uh, to make it as plain as possible.

What they are saying is what the word says. That this man. The one who is going to be a teacher of others. He has to be teachable himself first. He has to understand the dynamics. Of how the Lord is using his word to grow, his people. And so he needs to have been on the receiving end of that.

It doesn't just hold fast. The faithful word. He holds fast the faithful word as has been taught. So, he prays for his teachers and he respects. At his teachers and he

submits. To his teachers and he has done that. So that he may be able. If, you know, once he becomes the teacher, He may be able to buy sound doctrine.

So it is, it is proper theology that he uses both to exhort. That is to. Um, To give the. The. Positive use of the word for everything. The, the The hero needs to hear the believer needs to hear. Um, Whether that's Uh, warning or comfort and instruction application. Um encouragement.

All of those things fall under the word, that's behind the word, exhort And then convict. Because people don't always receive. That comfort or that encouragement or that command, or that application? And so, not only does he have to be able to show people by sound doctrine on the front end?

Put they should think, feel say and do. Uh, but he needs to be able to show people by sound doctrine on the back end, if they're not. Thinking. Feeling speaking or acting. The way that they should. Because when in either way whether they could, Um, Contradict. The sound doctrine and their ideas or whether it is their life and their follow-through.

That is contradicting, the sound doctrine, they need Um, what the lord assigns for the elder to do is to be and able to teacher. To show them by sound doctrine. Both of those things. So that The lord blessing. His use of the ministry that he has appointed. He would produce a whole congregation of people.

To have the verse 8 character. By his use of the ministry of the bishop or the elderly overseer. This is the lord give us. To cling sound doctrine to hold fast. To the faithful word. Um, that we have been taught. That by his use of that word in our hearts.

He would produce enough character that we see. In verse 8, let's pray For their prayer for Myself, my wife, my children. That you would indeed, do your word work in us by your spirit. That we would properly love you and others. And ourselves. And that we would act lightly towards others.

And worshipfully obviously. Towards you. And be improper. Theological wisdom control of ourselves. So help us by your spirit. We ask when Jesus name Amen.