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Preparing men for eldership in an upper middle class local church through small group mentoring

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GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY

PREPARING MEN FOR ELDERSHIP
IN AN UPPER MIDDLE CLASS LOCAL CHURCH
THROUGH SMALL GROUP MENTORING

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO
THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY COMMITTEE
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

D.Min. Dissertation

This is to certify that the D.Min. Dissertation of

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has been approved by
the Dissertation Committee on November 6, 2012
as fully adequate in scope and quality as a dissertation
for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in Semiotics and Future Studies.

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ABSTRACT

Qualified eldership in the local church congregation is difficult to maintain due to the nature of leadership promoted in the corporate world, the overall lack of spiritual progress through discipleship in the local church, and the general misunderstanding of the nature of eldership in the New Testament. Many have the same difficulty and have proposed solutions that are targeted at reorienting existing cultural leaders to a church context through specific reading and study. Others have assumed a personal burden for the development of leaders and have hand-selected men for individual discipleship and mentoring, leaving the local church marked by one strong pastor who has “reproduced” himself. Still others have let the church be reoriented around the leadership habits, convictions, and values of corporate America.

The thesis of this project proposes that if the biblical characteristics of eldership were clearly identified and a process of relationally teaching, modeling and encouraging those characteristics in the lives of potential elders was developed, there would be enough qualified men to formally lead as biblically qualified elders in the local church. The goal of this project is to create a relational context for the development of biblically based elder qualities through small group mentoring, achieved by a thorough understanding of the biblical qualities of eldership and the implementation of a curriculum through one-on-one mentoring to encourage growth of these qualities in the lives of potential elders.

The specifics of this ministry plan involve an initial, careful screening of men to involve them in the project, followed by a weekly three-hour meeting for fourteen weeks where the group will meet together, then the men will meet in pairs where a potential elder is paired with an existing elder.

SECTION ONE

THE PROBLEM

The beauty of the local church is the expression of the community of faith as a diverse group of persons gathered in unity under salvation in Jesus Christ. As such, the Church is both an organization requiring elements of institutional structure and an organism possessing the characteristics of a living being. The difference between the two realities creates a paradox of leadership where both the attributes of a successful organizational leader and those of a sensitive spiritual leader are required. Balancing the demands of this kind of leadership has made it difficult for local churches to identify men qualified to lead the local church. In order to help the local church choose the right leaders, the Apostle Paul places emphasis on the character qualities of these leaders in his pastoral epistles over against the actual responsibilities and “job descriptions.” Like many churches, Mountain Park Church in Lake Oswego, Oregon regularly finds it difficult to identify men who feel qualified and are recognized as qualified to be congregational leaders. The thesis of this project proposes that if the biblical characteristics of eldership were clearly identified and a process of relationally teaching and encouraging those characteristics in the lives of potential elders was developed, there would be enough qualified men to formally lead as elders in the local church.

As Senior Pastor of Mountain Park Church, this project leader has a vested interest in the ongoing health of the Elder Board. The proposal is to create a small group of ten to twelve men, half of whom are current elders and the other half potential elders. The two halves would be paired in mentor/mentee teams and all gathered together once a week for fourteen weeks for the development of biblically based elder qualities through

small group study and mentoring. The curriculum has been created to study elder qualities, as presented in the Pastoral Epistles, in depth through the study of God's Word and related materials. The combination of study, mentoring, and focus on character development for eldership make this project truly unique. Without an intentional approach to equipping men for eldership the local church will continue to struggle in finding truly qualified organizational and spiritual leaders. Taking the cue from Paul's focus on personal qualities for eldership as opposed to task orientations, the project focuses intently on character development as the grounds for elder qualification. The proposed outcome is to create an ongoing, reproducible, small group training program for the development of elders for the local church.

The chairman of the elder board, a successful businessman and long-time member of both the church and the golf club, approached me on a Sunday morning and asked to speak after the service, which is not usually the sign of a positive encounter. When we sat down together he began a brief explanation of the weekend's activities. Apparently he was at a business dinner on Friday night and had one or two too many drinks. He did not actually think he was drunk at all and was even able to drive himself most of the way home before he was pulled over for failure to use his turn signal. Once the officer asked him out of the car he knew he was in trouble and couldn't adequately perform the sobriety test. He ended up with a DUI and spent the night in jail. He was quite shaken by the time he got to the heart of the story and was truly recalcitrant as he went on. He was embarrassed, ashamed, and needed to know what he was supposed to do next. He was certain this meant the end of his career as an elder and certainly as the chairman as well as public humiliation as this would undoubtedly appear in the local newspaper. We

prayed and I affirmed my confidence in him, made sure he understood the grace and forgiveness of Jesus, and suggested he tell his story to the whole elder board and entrust his future to them.

The next Saturday morning, the elders met; the meeting opened with prayer then the chairman began his recollection of the DUI incident. The elders listened intently and compassionately, offering words of encouragement. Some said it could've been them and one man mentioned some embarrassment about a couple of circumstances in the past week. We were doing the hard work of dealing with sin in the body and they came up with several conclusions: (1) He needed to confess this to the whole congregation; (2) he needed to seriously investigate whether he had a drinking problem or not (meeting with a counselor and trying a couple of AA meetings); (3) they wanted him to remain on the elder board; and (4) they offered him a vote of confidence as the chairman of the board. He humbly agreed and the meeting continued.

The next morning, we gathered for worship and the service ended with the gentleman coming forward and sharing the same short story of the DUI weekend. It was an awesome sight to watch the congregation listen with compassion and deep sympathy. He did not varnish the plain truth and the vice chairman came up and publicly affirmed the elder board's confidence in their brother and their desire for him to remain on the board and finish his term as elder chair. To my joy and amazement they responded with a standing ovation. It was one of the most important moments of our church's life. But the questions hung in my mind: Could we do better than this? Did we prepare this man, who was a confirmed leader in the corporate world, to be a leader in the family of God? Is there a way a brother can deal with a weakness or sin and not have to do it in front of the

whole congregation? Should he have stepped down, was this a disqualifying event? In this endeavor, did we make it a higher aspiration to be an elder, or did we diminish the office?

A second tale of elder woes happened during the most recent rollover of elders at Mountain Park Church (MPC); it was racked with problems. First of all, it was hard to get a lay-lead nominating committee to commit to the process, and once they convened they had a tough time agreeing as to whom was “qualified” to serve on the elder board and who was not. They finally got a list of names of men to approach and as they began inviting men to eldership, they started getting the tried and true excuses, three to be exact: (1) “Not at this point in my life, I am too busy”; (2) “No, I don’t feel like I am qualified”; and, of course, (3) “NO, never (or never again), just not interested.” This eventuality does not even consider the fact that there were many men whom the committee had passed over as not qualified for this round of nominations.

The normal rotation of elders at MPC involves three or four moving off the board and three or four new men replacing them. But this last nominating process ended with just two nominees, and they had already served a couple of terms as elders. The whole process caused our leaders to ask many questions: (1) Why can’t we get men who feel qualified to serve as elders? (2) How can we get men to actually want to be elders? (3) What could we do to make the process less bureaucratic and more organic? (4) Could we actively qualify men to serve as elders?

These are the problems on which this project focuses. Mountain Park is not the only congregation with these kinds of besetting situations in lay leadership. The problem is that the western church has lost the sense of what it means to be an elder as proposed to

the congregations in the first century by Paul and Barnabas.¹ It is these kinds of circumstances and the questions that flow out of them that lead to the proposal in this project. If there were a way a local congregation could objectively identify the qualities of an elder and actively encourage the development of those qualities in the lives of potential elders, it would create both an atmosphere of aspiration and a pathway that leads to effective biblical eldership.

¹ Acts 14:23.

SECTION TWO

OTHER PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

There are several approaches to the issue of qualified elders in the local church. The first to be considered here will be published materials that are to be used in guiding confirmed elders in their specific tasks within the local church context. Two books stand out in particular, which are written by non-professionals (i.e., not clergy) who have served as elders. “The Elder’s Handbook”¹ and “Biblical Eldership”² are both a bit older but written well. The theme of the Handbook is an expansion of the Apostle Paul’s challenge to the elders from Ephesus in Acts 20:28-31, which the authors refer to as the “elder’s profile.” They do a thorough job of addressing the tasks involved in eldership within a local church context based on the primary edict from Paul to “shepherd the flock.” The Strauch book is a very careful and exacting exploration of the task of biblical eldership involving a helpful exposition of each New Testament passage that addresses the topic. He has a keen eye for the practical ramifications of applying the principles of eldership in the local church and sees the re-establishing of elders as the answer to the problems of church leadership.

Both of these books are very helpful once a man has decided to be an elder, or if one is exploring the biblical basis for eldership. They should be utilized in helping to define what exactly an elder can be expected to do in a church. They would also be

¹ Gerard Berghoef and Lester De Koster, *The Elder’s Handbook a Practical Guide for Church Leaders* (Grand Rapids: Christian’s Library Press, 1979).

² Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership, An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership* (Colorado Springs: Lewis and Roth, 1995).

helpful for a prospective elder to review in order to know what a church might expect of him in particular if the church has adopted the stance that these authors assume. While Strauch does an adequate job of reviewing the “Qualifications for Eldership” (his title) from 1 Timothy and Titus, he does not make any suggestions as to how these qualifications might be reached. He makes the assumption that these virtue lists serve as a “check list” for knowing who is qualified and who is not, as do all other books on eldership in the local church.

I was able to find thirty total dissertations, both doctoral and masters, addressing the area of eldership and specifically elder qualifications. They address the virtues listed in the Pastoral Epistles with very careful scholarship and do a thorough job in the exegesis. They generally do not view the virtues as anything more than a standard of character qualifications to which a man must measure if he aspires to eldership. A complete listing and evaluation of each dissertation is beyond the scope of this comparison: there are two broad categories into which they all fit: (1) exegetical analysis of the biblical texts; and (2) eldership as a facet of leadership in the local church. An example of the first is the finely crafted work of Craig Schumacher in his paper, “Elder Qualifications in the Pastoral Epistles”³, which is a very careful exegesis of the vital passages and a recommended use of the of the virtue lists as a “screening” for potential elders. A couple examples of the second are an investigatory work by Young Ju Kim wherein he surveys ninety-seven churches to make the correlation between church

³ Craig Schumacher, “Elder Qualifications in the Pastoral Epistles”, (D.Min. doctoral thesis, Multnomah Biblical Seminary, 2002).

growth and elder qualification in his paper “Empirically Testing the Relationship between Church Growth and Elder(s)’ Qualifications”⁴ and the church leadership general discipleship work in “Pre-Elder Orientation and Discipleship”⁵ which poises elders as the exemplars of discipleship in the most general sense. These works all differ from the proposal of this project, which focuses on the specific elder character qualities that Paul describes in 1 Timothy and Titus as a course of advancement for personal sanctification and preparation for eldership in the local faith community.

The single best resource in solving the problem of qualified elders for the local church is Gene Getz and The Center for Church-Based Training (CCBT). After the 1974 publication of his very famous book, *The Measure of a Man: Twenty Attributes of a Godly Man*,⁶ which is a complete study of the character qualities of an elder offered by Paul as the basis for being a godly man, a ministry was begun based on the qualities of an elder combined with contemporary leadership principles called The Center for Church-Based Training. The goal of the CCBT is to create a clear way for men to become leaders in the local church. The material addresses the qualities for eldership in the Pastoral Epistles, but not as a basis for the training. The training focuses more on the tasks and duties of eldership and sees the qualities as qualifications for participation in eldership. In fact, a clear case is made that without these qualities, a man is not ready to be considered for eldership, but no clear strategy is offered to help men acquire the qualities. This

⁴ Young Ju Kim “Empirically Testing the Relationship between Church Growth and Elder(s)’ Qualifications” (Covenant Theological Seminary, 2002).

⁵ Mark Goens, “Pre-Elder Orientation and Discipleship” (Western Seminary, Portland, 2001).

⁶ Gene Getz, *The Measure of a Man: Twenty Attributes of a Godly Man* (Ventura: Regal, 2004).

missing piece seems to be the consistent theme of all the materials: the qualities are considered, but only as a checklist for measuring a man for eldership. The entire plan is based out of a second book, *Elders and Leaders, God's Plan for Leading the Church*,⁷ which is a complete study of the nature of the church and her leaders over the whole first century and a review of the informative passages. The book is a “how-to” book on local church eldership: titles, functions, duties, and board activities, and while it includes the qualities of an elder, it is not focused specifically on how these qualities are learned.

Other dissertations and projects that do not necessarily focus on eldership specifically, yet are informative to this project, fall into three broad categories: the first is mentoring for a specific task or application that requires specialized training or mentoring in a specific context of ministry (missions or military). The second category focuses on relational issues where mentoring is valued for its life-on-life approach. Many leaders have seen a need for interpersonal growth in their churches and wanted to personally draw close to a group of influential leaders who in turn could help resuscitate the social connections of the congregation. The third category focuses on the development of leaders in the context of the local church. The motives behind these varied from church planting all the way to a new pastor building relationships with his congregational leaders for the purpose of unity and progress.

⁷ Gene Getz, *Elders and Leaders, God's Plan for Leading the Church, a Biblical, Historical and Cultural Perspective* (Chicago: Moody, 2003).

In the first category, Steven Holdaway⁸ directed his project at the deacons of his church for the sake of creating theological unity. There was a rising current of disagreement and therefore disunity over theological issues. Dr. Holdaway created a theological study with application that served to bring the deacons together.

Richard Hartsell, in *Developing a Mentoring Training Program for Unit Ministry Teams at Fort Benning, Georgia Preparation for Servant Leadership in the Twenty-First Century Army*⁹, focused his attention on the men of his unit who had committed themselves to a partnership of reaching the unit for Christ. He developed a study and application that helped his team understand servant leadership in a way that spoke to the men with the subordination-oriented culture of the military. Finally, Bruce Pickell¹⁰ used the context of his position at Southeastern Bible College to implement a mentoring ministry for the students in the pastoral ministry core. His desire was to give the next-generation leaders a model to follow as they established their ministries. These three dissertations were aimed at creating a united purpose in the groups being mentored, while the project being proposed herein is aimed at the development of individuals for the specific task of eldership.

⁸ Steven D Holdaway, "Deacons Mentoring Deacon Trainees in Key Doctrinal Positions Relevant to Ministry in a Military Church" (D.Min. thesis, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002).

⁹ Richard Michael Hartsell, "Developing a Mentoring Training Program for Unit Ministry Teams at Fort Benning, Georgia: Preparation for Servant Leadership in the Twenty-First Century Army" (D.Min. thesis, Erskine Theological Seminary, 2002).

¹⁰ Bruce Allen Pickell, "Toward the Development of a Mentoring Program for the Pastoral Students of Southeastern Bible College, Birmingham, Alabama" (D.Min. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 2001).

In the second category, David Swanson¹¹ addressed the need of the postmodern culture for deep relational connection. He created his project, *Building a Model for Mentoring Ministry in the Local Church*, to address this issue and to tie the moderns in his congregation to the postmoderns. Drs. Stevenson¹² and Caughman¹³ were both trying to build the men's ministries in their congregations, as well as creating a style of ministry through mentoring that could be transferred to other local congregations. Conley Hughes¹⁴ developed an approach to the "back door" issues of his church by connecting more personally with those who had been in the church and working to raise their level of interest in others. Though these papers are more closely related to this proposal, they focus more on the nature of the relationship between the mentor and mentee rather than the objective of raising the character quality of the mentee.

The last category, focusing on leadership development in the local context, has the greatest impact on the formation of this current project because of the close tie to both leadership development and the desire to see the local church strengthened in her ability to make disciples. Two Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary D.Min. graduates

¹¹ David D. Swanson, "Building a Model for Mentoring Ministry in the Local Church" (D.Min. thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 1998).

¹² Jerome P. Stevenson, "Developing a manual for men mentoring men Bethany Baptist Church and Westside Community" (D.Min. thesis, Ashland Theological Seminary, 2002).

¹³ Wofford Boswell Caughman, "Male Mentoring" (D.Min. thesis, Erskine Theological Seminary, 1995).

¹⁴ Conley H Hughes, "A Discipleship Mentoring Ministry as a Model for Member Retention" (D.Min. thesis, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2002).

focused on leadership development. Jong Po Kim¹⁵ and David Hixon¹⁶ used the local church context and the general unavailability of qualified leaders to form their studies. Two other students from a completely different church context did similar projects, looking to strengthen the upcoming leaders: Michael G. French, *The Lasallian Volunteer Program Mentoring, Mutuality, Discipleship*¹⁷ and David Jeffery Weidner¹⁸, *Mentoring a Vestry for Leadership*. Both men were attempting something of a revival of the existing leadership development programs, while this proposal is aimed at individual growth of potential elders rather than reaffirming a program of leadership. The two most noteworthy projects for informing this study are *Mentoring for Leadership Development in a Middle-Size Church* by Terrell Lee,¹⁹ and *Mentoring, Jesus' Model for Developing Church Leaders* developed by Keith Rolle.²⁰ This project is aimed directly at the biblically defined role of Elder within the local congregation, not small group leaders or Sunday school leaders. The specific qualities of an elder have been clearly prescribed by

¹⁵ Jong Po Kim, "Developing a Strategy for Lay Leader Training and Ministry Employing Mentoring Principles" (D.Min. thesis, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2002).

¹⁶ David G. Hixon, "Developing and Training Future Church Leaders Through the Process of Mentoring" (D.Min. thesis, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1996).

¹⁷ Michael G. French, "The Lasallian Volunteer Program Mentoring, Mutuality, Discipleship" (D.Min. thesis, Catholic Theological Union at Chicago, 2000).

¹⁸ David Jeffery Weidner, "Mentoring a Vestry for Leadership" (D.Min. Thesis, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, 1998).

¹⁹ Terrell Lee, "Mentoring for Leadership Development in a Middle-Size Church" (D.Min. thesis, Harding University Graduate School of Religion, 1995).

²⁰ Keith E. Rolle, "Mentoring, Jesus' Model for Developing Church Leaders" (D.Min. thesis, Bethel Theological Seminary, 2002).

the Apostle Paul and this project is directed at bringing these qualities to life in the personal spiritual life of men who are being considered for the formal position of elder.

SECTION THREE

THE THESIS

The foundations from theology for this project are formed around three main themes: ecclesiology, because the project context addresses eldership in the local church; sanctification as the progression of Christlike character in the life of the potential leader; and biblical exegesis of the relevant passages on qualities for eldership from the Pastoral Epistles. Ecclesiology is first because the project is aimed at the meaning of quality eldership in the local church as designed and implemented by the Apostle Paul and the first century Church. Sanctification is vital to this project because the thesis is based on the progression of godly character, specifically in the lives of local church leaders. Therefore, personal maturation, Christlike character, and shepherding character are explored as foundations for the development of elder qualities. The exploration in development of personal qualities is assisted by a brief analysis of theories of human development and their implications. Finally, the Pastoral Epistles form the biblical foundation for the specific behaviors and qualities that are to be progressively engendered in the life of a potential elder through this project.

Ecclesiological

A section of systematic theology would have to flow out of ecclesiology, since this project is focused on leadership within the local church context. Of first importance would be the meaning, design, and necessity of eldership in the local congregation.

The Meaning of Eldership

Paul uses the term “overseer” (*episkopes*) in 1 Timothy 3:1 to refer to the office of “bishop” or “superintendent”¹ yet throughout the New Testament another term is interchangeably used to refer to this ruling position in the local church.² The other word used by both Paul and Luke (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7), “elder” (*presbuteros*), literally refers to one that is older therefore has more experience and maturity; one who possesses a long-term perspective on life.³ It is interesting to note that the first century Church would have had no “long term” Christians because the movement of the gospel into specific regions would have given the same opportunity to believers to come to Jesus all at the same time. The concept of the older generations leading the younger is as old as civilization and was common in the Greco-Roman society surrounding the birth of the Church. The elders of a given city or village would sit together in prominent places such as city gates, city wells, and central meeting houses to discuss the events and concerns of the city.⁴ The idea of elder leadership was also a vital part of the Jewish faith society. Under the historic tribal system of elder leaders and under the organized

¹ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 347.

² Archibald Thomas Robertson. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 3 The Acts of the Apostles, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1930), 346.

³ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. *BDAG*, trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 3rd ed., revised and edited by Frederick William Danker. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 699-700.

⁴ Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership, An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*, (Colorado Springs: Lewis and Roth, 1995), 121-23.

Levitical/Aaronic Priesthood, old age was a recognized part of the honored system.⁵ The general sense of leaders and councils seems clear within the later Qumran sect and diaspora synagogue management with similar structure and purpose as the eldership of the Pastorals including a representative function, hospitality, answering for funds, a fatherly role, explanation of the Scriptures, and oversight of admission to the community.⁶ What little is known about synagogue organization and management it is suggested that a council of elders (*gerousia* not *presbyteroi*) worked with one or more designated as the “ruler(s) of the synagogue” (e.g., Acts 13:15; 18:17).⁷ In the period of the Essenes, judges held a role similar to New Testament eldership:

This is the rule concerning the judges of the community. Periodically a complement of ten men shall be selected from the community. Four of them shall belong to the tribe of Levi and Aaron, and six shall be Israelite laymen. They shall be men versed in the Book of Meditation and in the fundamentals of the Covenant. Their minimum age shall be twenty-five and the maximum age sixty. No man over sixty shall occupy judicial office in the community; for through the perfidy of man the potential span of human life has been reduced and in the heat of his anger against the inhabitants of the earth, God decreed of old that their mental powers should recede before they complete their days.⁸

When Paul used the term *presbyteros* with the churches he planted, the people, whether Hellenistic or Hebrew, were very clear what he had in mind and were able to identify those who would naturally lead in the decision-making and management of the

⁵ Ed Glasscock, “The Biblical Concept of Elder,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, (January-March 1987): 67.

⁶Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy- A New translation with Notes and Commentary, The Eerdmans Critical Commentary*, gen. ed. David Noel Freedman (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 269.

⁷ Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus, New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 243.

⁸ Codex 10 Dead Sea Scrolls CD 10:4-10.

local church. Older age implies wisdom, and the fact that others in the community would know a potential elder's character would facilitate the choice of the right men. The modern-day local church has the task of making the right choice for leaders, maintaining the same level of high character expectations, but with a much more specific leadership application. Therefore, it is necessary to facilitate the development of these godly leadership qualities in the lives of potential elders.

Paul only describes three categories of leadership within the Pastoral Epistles: elders, deacons, and the women who accompany them. There are other places in Pauline literature where positions within the local church are discussed, such as Ephesians 4:11 where he lists apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. But nowhere in Luke's record of The Acts did Paul ever appoint any of these, whereas it was his regular practice to appoint elders to manage the church affairs.⁹ The fact that elders and deacons are mentioned together in Philippians 1:1 "implies that the functions of overseers and servers were features of Paul's foundations."¹⁰ There is a historical precedent for the role of deacons as servants who meet the everyday needs that would be a natural part of the local church in Acts 6. Scripture never mentions the appointment of deacons by Paul. This being the case, eldership becomes the typical leadership within first century congregations with those elders who serve as prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, applying their

⁹ Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5.

¹⁰ Raymond F. Collins, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, A Commentary*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 79.

gifts and skills to specific needs and roles in the ministry of the local congregation.

Therefore, there is a strong impetus to helping men toward selection as elders.

There is a difference of perspective as to whom the term “elder” is referring. One view is that the terms *presbyteros*, *episkopos*, and *poimenas* are interchangeably used in the New Testament and all refer to the office and role of pastor.¹¹ The other view, considered to be Reformed in its origins, is that while *presbyteros* and *episkopos* are used interchangeably, there is a third office of Pastor¹², or teacher.¹³ A final perspective is that the first two terms are interchangeable and that the term *poimenas* is actually referring to a function rather than an office; the function of pastoral ministry happens within the framework of the eldership.¹⁴ The plurality of elders¹⁵ focuses on an overall shepherding responsibility, but there are particular elders who are given the “most of all” (*malista*)¹⁶ task of preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17). Interestingly, Frank Segler states, “Pastoral authority is more an authority of influence than an authority of office.”¹⁷ To make a determination at this juncture as to which view is correct goes beyond the

¹¹ Robert A. Wring, “Elder Rule and Southern Baptist Church Polity,” *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry*, 3 (2005): 192-93.

¹² Robert D. Decker, “The Biblical Basis of Reformed Church Government,” *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal*, 39 (1996): 6.

¹³ Ed Glascock, “The Biblical Concept of Elder,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January-March (1987): 75-76.

¹⁴ Mark E. Dever, “Baptist Polity and Elders,” *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* 3 (2005): 32-33.

¹⁵ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Downers Grove: Zondervan, 1994), 912.

¹⁶ Wring, *Elder Rule and Southern Baptist Polity*, 195.

¹⁷ Frank M. Segler. *A Theology of Church and Ministry* (Nashville: Broadman, 1960), 73.

expressed direction of this project and has been handled thoroughly in many other excellent works. It is the thesis of this proposed project that whether the elder Paul is referring to in his Pastoral Epistles is the pastor of the local congregation, or elders as a group of pastors from several local congregations, or one of a plurality of elders within a single congregation, Paul is making a case for the character of the elder to be progressively exemplary and influential within the Church. Further, it is the conviction of this project manager that a small group of men studying a curriculum crafted expressly for the purpose of engendering these qualities within the safety of close accountable mentoring is the best way to strengthen Paul's listed virtues in the life a prospective elder. Since Mountain Park Church, as the project context, has traditionally practiced the third view, this proposal is written in that perspective.

The Design and Necessity of Eldership

The above leads to the questions of Paul's design and his convictions of the need for clear leadership structures in the local church. Paul knew general shepherding was needed in the local church based on the qualifications listed in the Pastoral Epistles and other general references to elders/overseers/bishops.¹⁸ It is clear that decisions would have to be responsibly made and that a qualified group of leaders be trusted to make them. Resources would have to be managed; people would have to be taught, protected, and nurtured; and strategies to extend God's kingdom would have to be implemented. So elders were given the primary tasks of shepherding, teaching, and administrating the local

¹⁸ Acts 19:20.

congregations.¹⁹ Paul would regularly report to the elders in Jerusalem and it was those same elders and apostles who made the crucial decisions that shaped the first Church.²⁰ It was the elders who would ordain and commission specific individuals for God's use and service.²¹ It was the elders who should be called when the sick needed a covering in prayer for healing.²² And it was the elders to whom Paul tells Timothy to give double honor when they manage (administrate) the affairs of the Church with exceptional skill.²³ So elders need to possess godly qualities in order to make all of these management decisions with sensitivity to the Spirit of God and to each other; that is why Paul makes such a strong case for the qualities of eldership in the Pastoral Epistles.

Sanctification

Personal Maturation

The biblical concept of sanctification comes into play when considering the character of the Christian life and specifically the character of the leaders within the local congregation.

In several instances *πρεσβύτερος* is associated with moral virtue apart from the concept of age. Philo wrote, "But not only do the oracles attest his possession of the queen of virtues, faith in the existent, but he is also the first whom they speak of as an elder, though those who lived before him tripled or many times

¹⁹ Merrill C. Tenny. *New Testament Survey* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 335.

²⁰ Acts 15; 16; 21:18.

²¹ 1 Timothy 4:14.

²² James 5:14.

²³ 1 Timothy 5:17.

multiplied his years. Yet in none of them do we hear that he was held worthy of the title and rightly so, for the true elder is shown as such not by his length of days but by a laudable and perfect life ... he who is enamored of sound sense and wisdom and faith in God may be justly called elder."²⁴

The topic is progress in the life of Christ. There are twin biblical concepts within the New Testament that are combined in the overarching concept of sanctification. The first is the sanctification accomplished in Jesus Christ, in that the true follower of Jesus has been set apart from the rest of society and creation for God's holy purposes (John 10:36). The second concept of sanctification refers to the ongoing process of becoming more and more like Jesus (Ephesians 4:15; 1 Peter 2:2) in that we are being set apart, piece by piece, in a progression known as maturity or growth, which is the goal of discipleship.²⁵

The aim of this project is to address the descriptive qualities of eldership in the Pastoral Epistles in view of sanctification in the progressive sense. It is asserted here that elders are those who have spiritually matured to the point of exemplary Christlike life and character so that they are trusted and respected as true spiritual leaders. Further, the project asserts that the process of sanctification can be encouraged through intentional activities and decisions by the guidance of the Holy Spirit and scriptural truth in the context of trusting, honest relationships. Therefore, it is important to consider church leadership within the theological realm of sanctification.

²⁴ (Philo, On Abraham 270-71).

²⁵ Barry Callen, *Authentic Spirituality, Moving Beyond Mere Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 208-9.

Evidence of Christlike Character

It is important to know Jesus' character if the progression of sanctification toward the character of Jesus is the goal of discipleship. The character of Jesus is reflected in various ways throughout the New Testament; sometimes as an actual list of character qualities or virtues, other times as examples of Jesus' behavior, while still others as principles reflecting the values inherent in Jesus' character. These character qualities become the goal of our discipleship, and are evidenced in the context of community. Jesus' character is evidenced in the context of the relationships one has with the Heavenly Father and with those God has placed in one's pathway. Without the context of relationship, the character qualities remain inert and lifeless; internal but not real until experienced in real life. In order for a potential leader to be considered as a candidate, there must be evidence of the character of Christ in his life.²⁶ Following is a brief exploration of the character of Christ as the goal of the process of sanctification as seen in the fruit of the Spirit, in principles of righteous living, in love as the first order of Christlikeness, and in the example of Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

Fruit of the Spirit

The Apostle Paul's list of character qualities in Galatians 5:22 and 23 serves as an example of a catalogue of Christly virtue as contrasted with the results of living life in the "flesh." Paul refers to positive character qualities as fruit of the Spirit, that is, the

²⁶ Aubrey Malphurs, *The Dynamics of Church Leadership* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 20-21.

character that results from submitting to the work of the Holy Spirit as opposed to the flesh.²⁷ The combined qualities of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control could certainly be used to describe character of Christ. The fruit of the Spirit is not a set of moral achievements but life-long pursuits for the true follower of Jesus as is also true with the character qualities of an elder. Surrender to the work of the Holy Spirit is at the core of discipleship. These qualities are attained through participation with the Spirit through obedience to scriptural truth and the Spirit's inner promptings. The attainment of the character of Jesus can be encouraged and the progression in that character is what qualifies a man to be a spiritual leader.

Righteous Living

Righteousness is imputed to the one who has trusted Jesus to be saved from his sin; that righteousness comes from God and is by faith, not by works, nor by the Law or any effort of man.²⁸ The righteousness imputed to the disciple by God's grace begins to be expressed in a life that is consistent with Jesus' life.²⁹ This righteous life is motivated by love and gratitude for all that has been done through salvation and is not an attempt to earn God's favor. The expression of inner righteousness through moral and loving behavior is an aspect of a spiritual leader's life that must be evident to all. The moral command from Jesus' lips to

²⁷ Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 429-30.

²⁸ Philippians 3:9.

²⁹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 725-28.

‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. (Matthew 22:38-40)

gives the reader a glimpse into Jesus’ intention to draw His followers away from the moral rigors of the law and legalism and into the moral standards of His kingdom: a perfect Law of love; love from man to God, love from God to man and love between men. The spiritual leader must live out the righteousness of Jesus in his relationship to God and in his relationships to those in the pathway of life. The leaders of the local congregation must be exemplary in this respect. Not just legalistically upholding a form of righteousness, but lovingly expressing the true righteousness that comes from God.

Loving Relationships

The relational theme of the Kingdom of God is love. Jesus is characterized as a loving friend, man, and Savior throughout the New Testament. Love is to be the hallmark of the Church and was the pre-eminent desire of Jesus for his apostles.³⁰ Love has many aspects, but generally in the New Testament, agape love is understood to be motivated by the will, not so much the emotion or familial relationships.³¹ It is to be the “tie that binds” the members of the Body of Christ together. It is also love that is to be the greatest evidence that the Church truly is the representation of Christ to the world (John 13:35). This means that the spiritual leaders of the Church should be the best at the art and skill

³⁰ John 15:12.

³¹ A.T. Robertson, *Epistles of Paul, Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 4. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1931), 176.

of Christlike love. If there is an apostolic tradition, it is the great heritage of love, acceptance and forgiveness that have marked the true Church since her birth at Pentecost.

Ministry of Shepherding

The concept of shepherding is assumed from the very wording Paul uses in this position of elder/bishop (*presbuteros*). The ministry within the community of Christ is tied to the image of shepherding a flock (Acts 20:28-30). There is no more clear connection between the character of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, and the character of an elder of the church as a shepherd of the flock of God. It is implied in the very word choice of the Apostle that the under-shepherd must reflect the virtue, spirit, and character of the over-shepherd. The ministry of shepherding is the ministry of Christ within the fold of the local church, which is why Paul places an emphasis on the character of the elder as opposed to the task of eldership. The true attitude of a shepherd comes out of a transformed character, not out of a job description.

The Process of Character Development

The problem this project proposes to solve is the advancement of elder-like character as described by Paul in the lives of potential elders through the process of study and small group mentoring, so some obvious questions that follow are: How do people change? Do they really need to? Doesn't God love us just the way we are? Are we on our way to a specific kind of character and, if so, what is it? The overall goal of this project involves the identification of the character qualities for eldership in the local church and the creation of a process of study and mentoring relationships that will offer the opportunity for men to attain the character of an elder (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9). To this end, a better understanding of the nature of how people change, progress, and

advance in character and positive behavior will lay the foundation for creating a curriculum that gives clear, encouraging, and helpful ways for the participants to excel in the character qualities necessary for eldership in the local church.

The first section is a brief survey of theories of human development as viewed through the lens of psychology. The second section goes into the realm of spiritual formation from a historical ecclesial perspective, offering, again, a brief survey of how the Church has viewed the progress of godly character. This section closes with a practical consideration of the way people really change and a final application of all of the above to the process of preparing men for eldership in local church.

Theories of Development

A large part of the investigation of human development involves the concern with personalities who develop dysfunctional emotions, behaviors, and thoughts, which lead to the question, “How can we help individuals develop in the healthiest way possible?” In order to help people, there has to be some idea of what constitutes “normal” development and how to guide individuals to the healthiest goals of being human. This survey gives a brief description of each attempt to define the process of human development.

Cognitive Development

The first to try to categorize the stages of development was Jean Piaget (1896-1980). Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development is based on the progress of cognitive capacities through the process of assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is the perception of new ideas and information; as an individual experiences new aspects of life,

he needs to find a way to categorize and assimilate the new ideas in order to use them in future thinking. Accommodation is the alteration of pre-existing assumptions and schemes to fit the new information and experience that has been assimilated. This function is followed by the process of adaptation, which is the re-establishing of equilibrium, “equilibration,” and balance in the mind, which in turn leads to individual intelligence.³² Piaget defined the progress of cognitive abilities in four stages: sensorimotor (reflexive thinking), preoperational (intuitive thinking), concrete operational (concrete thinking), and formal operational (abstract thinking), each of which is marked by perceptual powers and limits formed in schemes. These schemes form the process of development; “Those who understand the critical function of schema (rational mind) contend that a logical formalization and employment of knowledge involves assimilation and accommodation...this formalization then results in a reconfiguration of schema where faith emerges.”³³

Moral Development

Psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-87) modified and expanded upon Jean Piaget's work to form a theory that attempts to explain the development of moral reasoning. Obviously, he believed the two, cognitive and moral progress, were linked in the brain and that the development of the first was necessary to the development of the second. Christian educators have viewed morality as multidimensional rather than the

³² Estep, James R. and Kim, Jonathan H. *Christian Formation*, (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 68.

³³ *Ibid.*, 65.

monodimensional way Kohlberg has framed it. They describe morality as having three interrelated dimensions: cognitive, affective, and behavioral, with an outward movement of what has been comprehended finally becoming action.³⁴

Behavioral Development

One must include the behaviorists in this survey because they have made an indelible mark on the opinions about human development and have had more societal impact than any other theory. Most well-known is B. F. Skinner, whose entire system is based on operant conditioning: the behavior is followed by a consequence, and the nature of the consequence modifies the organism's tendency to repeat the behavior in the future.³⁵ The idea of positive and negative reinforcement is all too common and everyone has experienced some form of modification based on consequences. Behavioral theory is focused on human development because the operant conditioning becomes more and more formative in shaping either a fully functional or dysfunctional personality, based on the kinds of reinforcements and the individual's response to the various stimuli.

Faith Development

James Fowler asked 400 people to answer questions that would identify the development of the individual's faith. He first defines faith as a "response to action and being that precedes and transcends us and our kind; faith is the forming of images of and

³⁴ Ibid., 137.

³⁵ B.F. Skinner, *The Behavior of Organisms: An Experimental Analysis* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: B.F. Skinner Foundation, 1938), 61-62.

relation to that which exerts qualitatively different initiatives in our lives than those that occur in strictly human relations.”³⁶ These are the stages he discovered:

Stage 1 Intuitive-Projective faith is the fantasy-filled, imitative phase in which the child can be powerfully and permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions, and stories of the visible faith of primally related adults.³⁷

Stage 2 Mythic-Literal faith is the stage in which the person works hard and effectively at sorting out the real from the make-believe. The child begins to take on for himself the stories, beliefs and observances that symbolize belonging to his or her community.³⁸

Stage 3 Synthetic-Conventional faith is the stage in which the system of informing images and values through which they are committed remains principally a tacit system. Tacit means unexamined, presumed, or the shaping force for which one gives no account. Faith must synthesize values and information; it must provide a basis for identity and outlook.³⁹

Stage 4 Individuative-Reflective faith is particularly critical, for it is a distancing from one’s previous assumptive value system. In this transition, an individual must begin to take seriously the burden of responsibility for his or her own commitments, lifestyle,

³⁶James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith- The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (Harper and Row, San Francisco, CA. 1981), 33

³⁷ Ibid.,133.

³⁸ Ibid., 145.

³⁹ Ibid., 161-2.

beliefs, and attitudes. This involves an interruption of reliance on external sources of authority.⁴⁰

Stage 5 Conjunctive faith is a “dialogical knowing” where the known is invited to speak its own word in its own language, which requires a knower capable of dialogue. This stage develops a “second naivete” (Ricoeur) in which symbolic power is reunited with conceptual meanings, where there must also be a new reclaiming and reworking of one's past.⁴¹

Stage 6 Universalizing Faith is exceedingly rare. The persons best described by it have generated faith compositions in which they sense an ultimate environment inclusive of all being. They have become incarnators and actualizers of the spirit of an inclusive and fulfilled human community.⁴²

Ego/Personality Development

Erik Erikson wrote *Child and Society*, published first in 1950, in which he provides insight into how a person develops an understanding of self as a unique individual and the discovery of identity in the management of life's challenges.⁴³ His theory “asserts the development of a person as correlated to the interaction between one's mind and experiences. This premise offers an ontological perspective regarding the

⁴⁰ Ibid., 179.

⁴¹ Ibid., 185.

⁴² Ibid., 200.

⁴³ Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, (W.W. Norton: New York, NY; 1950).

nature of a person as a self-conscious being who is capable of thinking, feeling, and willing, “just like the biblical notion of the human soul.”⁴⁴ Erikson delineated this progressive ontology in eight stages:

Hope: Trust vs. Mistrust

Will: Autonomy vs. Shame & Doubt

Purpose: Initiative vs. Guilt

Competence: Industry vs. Inferiority

Fidelity: Identity vs. Role Confusion

Love: Intimacy vs. Isolation

Care: Generativity vs. Stagnation

Wisdom: Ego Integrity vs. Despair⁴⁵

Religious Development

For lack of a better way to describe the progress of transcendent convictions, devotions, and expressions, this section is called “religious development,” not as a way to define the world of religion but in an effort to define the way a person becomes more devoted to God in every aspect of life. There is a classic historical understanding of the journey or pilgrimage of spiritual formation as a commitment to develop a more intentional connection to God called “the three ways”:

Awakening describes an initial, as well as subsequent, encounter between God and self, leading to either comfort or threat.

⁴⁴ Estep and Kim. *Christian Formation*, 101.

⁴⁵ L. Aden, D. Benner, J. Ellens. *Christian Perspectives On Human Development*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House; 1992), 130.

Purgation is the renunciation of the deep-seated structures of being and behavior that can keep one away from God, which leads to trust.

Illumination is a total consecration to God in love through an internal experience and integration of being, giving rise to a new social concern; union with God by full abandon to grace, and quietness, attaining a perspective amidst darkness.⁴⁶

Implications from Theories of Human Development

In answer to the early developmental question, “How do people change?” there are four major implications that should be considered from this brief overview of developmental theories. The first is the general affirmation that people can and do change. Some change is intentional and guided; other changes are subversive and non-intentional, happening to an individual without their awareness. Every theory presented here reflects the certain assumption that people do continue to change throughout life and that they can have at least an awareness of the changes and may even be able to make intentional changes to improve life.

A second insight is that though change is possible, it does not necessarily happen nor is it always present. Each theory presented made some kind of statement that though people should progress as they mature chronologically, there is always the chance that some kind of tragedy, disaster or interruption to their psychological health could retard the developmental process. The stages, phases, or levels offered are general descriptions of what usually happens in normal development, which is vital in understanding when

⁴⁶ Ibid., 255.

development is hindered or stymied for some reason. Indeed, the point of psychoanalysis seems to be to help individuals who are stalled in the developmental process discover their roadblocks, remove them, and proceed.

Thirdly, there is a very positive atmosphere within the context of these theories, as each is looking for improvement in the individual as they develop. None of these theories assumes that people digress as life goes on, unless there is some identifiable dysfunction (defined by not being positive in direction) but all look for the individual to progress. Interestingly, the theorists don't agree as to precisely what the goal is to which an individual is progressing. They generally have a pragmatic approach and view progress as being more successful at facing the challenges of life. Even the morally focused theories seem to struggle to clearly define the nature of goodness and how it should be pursued.

Finally, all of these theories hope to offer some helpful insights and strategies to society at large and to specific endeavors such as education, vocational preparation, counseling, and criminal restitution applications. It is vital to be able to understand dysfunction in order to be able to address it and it is important to be able to identify what constitutes "normal" behavior development so that there is a goal to treatment.

So we see that people do change, though it is not necessarily so, and that when they change, it is for the better unless there is a mitigating psychological circumstance. Knowing the stages or levels of progression allows one to identify progress and possible roadblocks.

There are some practical considerations that inform the balance between spiritual transformation and human development and that give some insight as to how to proceed

in the facilitation of spiritual transformation. Obviously, God can do whatever he wants to and if he desires for someone to become a better person, then he will. But if a cooperative effort is more in line with the force of Scripture, tradition, and practical considerations, then it is important to know what could be done to promote spiritual human development.

Cognitive Versus Behavioral Change

The fact of revelatory truth, canonized in Holy Writ, is enough to demonstrate that God knew there was a need for a corpus of truth, a foundation of facts, and a force of narrative to inform both the individual in his pursuit of God and the Church in her pursuit of His Kingdom. One must know in order to grow. The knowing is done in the process of learning, but the body of what must be known is what separates truth claims and developmental goals. It is not possible to grow in a direction one does not know. It does not work to hope for progress unless you know the direction for positive change and how to attain it.

Piaget and the other cognitive theorists are right to assume that at the base of human development, there is a need to be able to comprehend both what needs to change in order to progress and how to do it. But they are not right in assuming that knowing is the sum total of development. There must be more.

Skinner and the behaviorists were right to understand that people are conditioned by their surroundings, and the events and circumstances they encounter every day. But being changed and making change are two very different things and the determination to change is the very nature of being human. There must be a cognitive

aspect: knowing to change, knowing how to change; and a behavioral aspect: conditioning ourselves to progress and develop.

Nature versus Nurture

Each theory starts at a point of pure, instinctual existence, and then builds a series of steps or stages where the thinking/behavior/morality/faith or religion becomes more and more sophisticated and better able to handle the challenges of responsible life. The presupposition is that, if an individual's progress is uninterrupted, they will become better people, or at least more capable, better at coping in a purely pragmatic sense. The question then comes up, "Does each person change the same way, at close to the same time and in the same direction (if unimpeded)?" The theories do make some allowances, but must, by virtue of being a theory offering some level of prediction, have norms that define the stages. These stages give the impression that each person is somehow predestined to pass from one to the next and that an individual psyche can be nurtured toward the goal.

In the old parenting argument around the issue of how a child's behavior is determined, experts have come down on both sides: some claiming people are hardwired with a personality profile, propensities for good and bad behavior and a nature that is for the most part unalterable, while the others claim that the child is something of a blank slate, whose behavior is determined by the way she is nurtured, guided, and forced to act. It is probably some combination of the two, a pre-programmed slate with open spaces filled in by experience and nurture. But the problem remains when one considers how he will become a better person. Will he give in to his nature, find himself challenged beyond

what he can do based on his hard-wired nature? Or will he find that intentional changes in his surroundings will inevitably shape his life for the better?

Progress and Regress

The final consideration here is the very positive assumption in these theories that individuals can and will progress, that they will get better, become good and more capable at handling life. This seems like a very hopeful enterprise, considering the continued decline of moral structure, responsible employment, and the fragmentation of the family unit in our society. Are people really becoming better people? If not, is it because of rampant psychological dysfunction? This seems to be the answer being clung to by the therapeutic world. It might be a more defensible position to allow that normal people vacillate between being good and being bad, being functional and being dysfunctional, progressing and regressing.

If people do not move in predictable static ways and if they are formed by both their nature and their nurture, and if progress is somehow connected to what can be comprehended, then it seems that the combined variables make it reasonable to think that progress is not a guarantee, but in fact may be the exception.

In order to get people to grow in the quality of their spiritual life as followers of Christ, all of these factors must be considered. Progress and development in the character qualities of an elder is attainable, and should be intentionally encouraged in the local church context. People do change and a man who feels he is not qualified to serve as an elder can change into a man who is qualified. But first those qualities must be clearly understood.

Biblical Character and Relational Qualities for Eldership

The Pastoral Epistles, specifically 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, are essential to outline the silhouette of a biblical elder from the qualities listed by the Apostle Paul. It is important for the very foundation of this project to understand Paul's intentional use in verse 2, "Now the overseer must be..." of the present active indicative (*einai*) translated in the NIV "must have" (literally "to be") as opposed to the past tense "must have been" or the aorist "must have become" or passive "must have been made." The verb expressing "necessity" and its infinitive "to be" continue to be in effect through verse 7.⁴⁷ Paul's choice suggests that he is not referring in these passages to finished accomplishments of character (qualifications), but continued character growth in the potential elder (qualities).⁴⁸ The distinction between qualities and qualifications is foundational to this project since the goal of mentoring and training in a small group context is based on the potential growth in leadership qualities as opposed to the achievement of leadership qualifications. It is also important to see that Paul never lists duties of eldership within these lists of qualities.⁴⁹ His focus seems to clearly be on the quality of man to be chosen, following that the duties would be achieved if the right men were chosen.⁵⁰ The urgency in Paul's words makes it "clear that the emergence of opponents in the church would have caused a number of problems related to

⁴⁷ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 249.

⁴⁸ Gordon Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, New International Biblical Commentary, (Peabody: Henderson Publishing, 1984), 78.

⁴⁹ Lea and Griffin *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 105.

⁵⁰ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 239.

leadership.”⁵¹ Some of the opponents themselves may have been elders, whose defection would not only create a vacuum of leadership ranks but also promote competition to fill their spots. Heresy may have spawned distrust for leaders and a reluctance to take up the responsibilities such leadership required, so Paul is trying to make a case for the exemplary and honorable position of elder.⁵² Following is a thorough investigation of the character qualities to which Paul is mandating that men aspire to in order to be truly qualified elders.

Above Reproach / Blameless / Upright / Holy

Most scholars view the first descriptive used by Paul in 1 Timothy 3:2, ἀνεπίληπτον, as an overall, primary quality for the overseer of which the following become the details of what could also be called blamelessness.⁵³ Whether it is the first of the list of fourteen qualities or the over-arching conviction of the Apostle, it is succinctly stated in a single word “irreproachable” in observable conduct.⁵⁴ This powerful word refers to being constantly self-aware and possessing Spirit-led behavior that exemplifies the follower of Jesus. Paul’s use of the concept of “upright” in Titus goes beyond human virtue or rule keeping. The orientation is in the Christ-event where justification by faith,

⁵¹ Ibid., 239.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ F.D. Gealy, *The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus, Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 11. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1955), 279.

⁵⁴ Gordon Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 80.

in the Pauline sense, becomes a behavioral reality in the life rightly oriented to Christ.⁵⁵ The literal definition is “not to be laid hold of”⁵⁶ which carries a powerful metaphor of “no handles” on one’s character or life-style, whether for our mortal enemy or for observers who are looking for exceptions to exemplary Christ-like behavior. “Blameless” is not to be understood as morally perfect, or without sin; that is not possible. The inclusion at this point of both “upright” and “holy” as used in Titus are bound to irreproachability but bring added emphasis possibly due to the relative immaturity of churches in Crete compared to those in Ephesus.⁵⁷ The fact that Paul sees deeper levels in this quality give support to the view that a potential elder can make intentional progress in the virtues and can become better at being beyond reproach.

Paul’s list is very much like a “duty code” traditionally used in first century Greco military as employed for various occupations. These virtue codes, contemporary with Paul, were used in the selection of generals, which probably reflects the effects of Greek ethics on Hellenistic literature.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*. The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, gen eds. J.A. Emerton, C.E.B. Cranfield and G.N. Stanton, (Edinburgh, T and T Clarke. 1999), 164.

⁵⁶ Ralph Earle, *1, 2 Timothy, Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, Frank Gaebelien, gen. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 364.

⁵⁷ Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 164.

⁵⁸ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 240.

Husband of but One Wife

Part of the reason for understanding this list of qualities as a continuum of spiritual maturity rather than accomplished “qualifications” is to help the reader understand this particular, often misunderstood, character quality.

The broader interests of the passage suggest that fidelity in marriage (understood to be monogamous and acceptable in the eyes of the community) is meant. This would assume the inappropriateness of any form of sexual immorality or marriage/remarriage in breach of acceptable patterns, though sexual immorality as such is not the sole concern. The domestic concerns of the code, which may respond to heretical tendency (4:3), present the overseer as husband and father. In such a context the candidate’s conduct within the marriage relationship (i.e., faithfulness to his wife) would be an anticipated topic.⁵⁹

If this list is describing moral achievements, implying that any of them are “perfectable,” then the potential overseer is qualified in part by achieving the possession of one wife. If, however, this list is viewed as a list of qualities wherein the potential elder is progressively becoming more like Jesus, then this particular quality must be seen, not as an achievement but an ongoing area of growth.

Therefore, four possible meanings must be evaluated in Paul’s use of this phrase, μιᾷς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα: (1) That the potential overseer must be married. But that does not explain Paul’s emphasis on “one,” nor is it consistent with Paul’s teaching in 1 Corinthians 7:1, 32-35; and Paul’s own singleness (1 Corinthians 7:7, 8). (2) That the elder must not be a polygamist. But that was not a part of Paul’s contemporary cultural context, and certainly not ever accepted in the first century Church. (3) That Paul is prohibiting a second marriage, whether by death of a spouse or by divorce. This supposes

⁵⁹ Ibid., 250.

that once a man is married and then either divorced or widowed, he remains married to that woman in God's eyes. The emphasis then is on only ever being married once in one's life. This is the most frequently applied meaning of this text, thereby disqualifying any man who has been divorced or widowed and gone on to be married to a "second" woman. If Paul is referring to divorce, then by the same simple sense of "one wife," a widowed and remarried man would also have to be disqualified. This far surpasses Paul's intended meaning for several reasons. Nowhere else is a widowed man disqualified from remarriage or from eldership. There is a word for divorce that Paul could have used (*apoleo*, cf. Matthew 1:9) but chose not to, and his choice of language is far too general. This interpretation also appeals to an overall misapplication of this full list as achievements rather than as ongoing tests of character. (4) That the overseer is to live with complete marital fidelity and have an exemplary marriage, with a more literal rendering of the text as "a one-woman kind of man."⁶⁰ As Howard Marshall, "The author is here not concerned with legal rules to be observed, but with the quality of conduct displayed by the church leader within the marriage relationship."⁶¹ This last option would of course rule out the others and would fit the presupposition that this list is not one of qualifications, but a list of character qualities that are part of a maturing leader's life.⁶² The context of a small group as well as the accountability of a mentor in the ongoing

⁶⁰ Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 157.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁶² Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 80-81.

virtue of being a one-woman-man combined with practical study and exercises in the practices of this kind of virtue is the very heart of this project.

Temperate / Not Quick Tempered

The potential elder must be free from rash actions in an ongoing proof of his character no matter the circumstances. He must continually exhibit self-control and specifically, in Paul's use of this word *νηφάλιον*, with regard to intoxicants, therefore referring to an aspect of mental control that rules out all sorts of excess. "The unequivocal reference to literal sobriety (1 Timothy 3:3) suggests here the moral sense of being balanced in thought. The overseer is to maintain command of his reason, to be watchful and observant of things going on around him, balanced in his assessments."⁶³ It is implied in Paul's word choice that a potential leader must be a man who understands moderation in all of his interactions, whether with people or with substances. He cannot prove impulsive or divisive in his reactions, which would inevitably lead to further complication of a problem rather than the resolution of a problem.⁶⁴ One of the reasons for creating a small group of men and connecting them in trusting relationship for this project is to enhance the ability to work through potential areas of immoderation with support and accountability.

⁶³ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 251.

⁶⁴ Gealy, *The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus*, 283.

Self-Controlled / Disciplined

It is interesting to compare the Apostle's choice of words in the preceding character quality and this word, σώφρονα. The preceding focuses on the chance that the circumstances could make the man act unbecomingly, while this word means the leader is a sensible person who proves this sensible nature in being trustworthy and balanced in judgment from the inside.⁶⁵ It is not only circumstances that can push a man to make a bad decision. There are also internal forces that need to be controlled in order to maintain a Christlike character. Paul chose "self-control" over against the idea of being self-willed or arrogant as one who pleases himself or is pleased with himself, he is driven to be self-satisfied rather than self-controlled.⁶⁶ The proposed project includes a survey of each participant by the ten closest people to him, who will be able to point out any areas lacking self-control, which allows the participant to address issues involving self-control and sensibility in the practical course of study.

Respectable / Upright

This next word κόσμιον is very close to the preceding two yet carries a further implication of dignity and orderliness in behavior as a reflection of inner stability. It can literally be translated "with modesty,"⁶⁷ referring to the sense that others are watching and good judgment is required in the determination of all actions. No one, and most

⁶⁵ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 251.

⁶⁶ Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 161.

⁶⁷ Earle, *1, 2 Timothy*, 364.

particularly, the circumspect leader, ever knows who and when someone is watching and judging behavior. For a leader, all observable behavior must be consistent with the character of Jesus and all unobserved behavior must maintain the same consistency.

Hospitable

In the first century it was quite common to host travelers, whether for financial gain or as a demonstration of neighborliness.⁶⁸ Paul uses this word, φιλόξενος “loving strangers,” as a way to describe the willing kindness needed to take care of other Christians who may be traveling in itinerate ministry, or visiting a new region. But the word holds a strong sense that this is the hosting of strangers, outsiders, which would be a highly respected aspect of first century culture. An elder must be devoted to the welfare of others as an evident trait within the congregation. The project survey of each participant’s behavior will help to identify areas where any of the men might be less careful of the welfare of others.

Able to Teach

The potential overseer must possess a demonstrable competence and skill in communicating biblical truth. The word διδακτικόν implies not just the intellectual capacity, but also the communicative abilities.⁶⁹ The quality does not necessarily refer to the spiritual gift of teaching, but the general ability to transfer biblical truth. Part of being able to teach is the quality of being teachable; the elders must always have hearts open to

⁶⁸ Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelman, *The Pastoral Epistles, Hermeneia- A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Helmut Koester, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 53.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

the progression of God’s truth in their own lives. In the parallel passage in Titus (Titus 1:9), Paul emphasized, with greater boldness, the need for elders to, “hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it had been taught, so that he can encourage others buy sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.” The “trustworthy message” refers to the Apostle’s teaching (Acts 2:42) as a body and constitutes the basis of the elder’s doctrinal function as a teacher and defender of the truth.⁷⁰

“This quality also involves strength in the refutation of heresy and false teaching as exemplified in Paul’s words to the elders of Ephesus as recorded in Acts 20:25-31. The word choice also implies the duty of teaching as a regular activity of the overseer’s life.”⁷¹ The use of “encourage” (*parakaleo*) in the Titus text (Titus 1:9) suggests instruction with a practical bent, something more than simply detailing the facts and doctrines carrying an element of persuasion and even command.⁷² Each participant in the project will be doing part of the teaching and facilitation of the small group study, which will allow practice in the skill of communicating God’s word.

Not Given to Drunkenness

“Not given to drunkenness,” is the first quality to be stated as a prohibition μὴ πάροινον in the list of ongoing qualities in the potential overseer’s life. The word is not understood as a prohibition of the elder to the use of alcohol, rather to the control of his

⁷⁰ Gealy, *The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus*, 285.

⁷¹ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 81.

⁷² Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 167.

thirst for alcohol. The word is actually describing an addiction to wine, not a prohibition of the use of alcohol. (1 Tim. 5:23)⁷³ Literally, Paul's word means "lingering long beside the cup"⁷⁴ and all the surrounding implications of this kind of consuming behavior. All of these character qualities have at their core the principle of moderation and balanced living. The use of alcohol is one of the areas of life that can quickly become imbalanced and compulsive. Paul knows this and therefore includes this very specific prohibition.

Within the safety of the project small group, each man will be given the opportunity to explore any areas of immoderation in his life and be able to build relationships of trust and accountability in the progress of his character.

Not Violent but Gentle

The next prohibition is accompanied by an encouragement toward contrasting behavior. Paul uses the phrase, μή πλήκτην, ἀλλὰ ἐπιεικῆ giving both a prohibition and a command, the elder cannot practice browbeating people with threats of violence. The word is the very picture of quick-temper: fists before words. The male temperament can lend itself to action instead of words when a situation clearly calls for words of reason and resolution. Anger, in the biblical tradition, is characterized as an aspect of unbelief.⁷⁵ So Paul adds a very interesting word ἐπιεικῆ, whose meaning is difficult to pin down. Translated as "gentle," the word holds deeper insinuations of elasticity in supervision;

⁷³ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34, gen. ed. David S. Dockery, (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 111.

⁷⁴ Earle, *1, 2 Timothy*, 365.

⁷⁵ Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 161.

sweetly reasonable, gracious, kindly, forbearing, considerate, magnanimous, and genial. The word subsumes all virtues in itself, coming to mean a “virtuous equilibrium” that expresses itself in a balance between honesty, tolerance, and gentleness. For a leader, the further implication is seen as reasonableness, courtesy, and tolerance involving the ability to give way to others.⁷⁶ Paul is saying that it is inadequate to only not be violent; the elder must also actively be gentle. Paul knows this violence well. It is a word he uses to describe his own behavior prior to his encounter with Jesus (1 Timothy 1:13) and part of what he knew must be transformed in his own character.

One of the most harmful aspects of elder board life that this project manager has witnessed is the inability to disagree within a ruling board without some men losing their temper. When this happens, all trust and progress is interrupted and the Spirit’s voice and leading are all but impossible to sense. This is a place most men need to make progress and learn to act with force and conviction but not with violence.

Not Quarrelsome

Paul goes on with a word similar to the previous phrasing; however, this word focuses more on the elder as a verbal fighter; a man who is contentious, grasping, and pugnacious, always looking for an argument. Once again, this word, ἄμαχον, reflects inner control; not that pugnacious words might not come to mind, but the Christlike character of an elder is to not allow the words to escape. This prohibition fits in this letter

⁷⁶ Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 253.

as a contrast to the false teachers referred to elsewhere (1 Timothy 6:4).⁷⁷ The proposed project is aimed at helping men to grow in their personal security, trust in the lordship of Christ in their lives and in the congregation, and the ability to work together with charity.

Not a Lover of Money /Not Pursuing Dishonest Gain

The next important word Paul uses, ἀφιλάργυρον, can only be translated as a full phrase. The elder is in touch with congregational finances and therefore must be trustworthy. If he is known to be stingy or grasping (needing to control), then he does not possess the necessary qualities of an elder; he is placing money before souls.⁷⁸ The elder board, working to control money, usually ends up controlled by the money. “According to 1 Timothy 6:5-10, greed turns out to be one of the ‘deadly sins’ of the false teachers, being directly responsible for their ruin.”⁷⁹ Dishonest gain is connected to shameful behavior, so it is not just the money ill-gotten, it is also the behavior that accompanies it.⁸⁰ The phrasing could also imply that a potential elder must be reputedly employed, honest in all money matters, and would not use his position as a means for financial profit.⁸¹ It can be a huge temptation for men who are close to church finances, which are often greater than personal finances, to extort congregational funds if they do not have this area of their lives under the control of the Holy Spirit.

⁷⁷ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 81.

⁷⁸ Debelius and Conzelman, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 54.

⁷⁹ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 82.

⁸⁰ Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 162.

⁸¹ Gealy, *The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus*, 284.

Manage His Family Well

There is probably no greater evidence for a man's character than the family setting.⁸² In using this sentence, τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου καλῶς προϊστάμενον, τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ μετὰ πάσης σεμνότητος, Paul is peeling back the house walls and looking for exemplary behavior in family management. If the children are known for their obedience and morally upright behavior, it is a testimony to a father's ongoing involvement. The word for "manage" does not refer to absolute, unrelenting control, but rather to wise governing in the issues that face families and parents. It refers to the effective exercise of authority bolstered by a character of integrity and sensitive compassion; showing mercy more than delivering ultimatums ("take care of").⁸³ As Ward states, "Either the children show respect for their father or the meaning is that his character and demeanor call it forth... this is not the martinets' paradise, but it is the Christian home, in which the husband exercises love as the context in Ephesians shows"⁸⁴ the skills developed in home management transfer over to the family of God. The implications are that these are house churches where the believers will be able to see the behavior of the family firsthand.⁸⁵ There is a fine line between demanding obedience and gaining it.⁸⁶ Paul is making an argument from the lesser to the greater that the leadership qualities of a healthy home are

⁸² Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 255.

⁸³ Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 112.

⁸⁴ Ward, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 57.

⁸⁵ Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 82.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.

the same that lead to a healthy church.⁸⁷ As one of the most practical of all the listed virtues and qualities, each man is evaluated by family members as part of the project and is given the opportunity to increase the level of respect he has within his own family.

Not a Recent Convert

Literally, the word νεόφυτον, means “newly planted,” having to do more with spiritual rather than chronological age. The problem with rising to a place of influential leadership in the local church too early following conversion is that the elder may become conceited. The word here literally meaning blinded (*tuphoo* “wrapped and therefore blinded by smoke”, or puffed up with smoke; too much of it). Whether wrapped and blinded by smoke or puffed beyond the ability to clearly see, Paul means that conceit can confuse spiritual alertness. The use of this phrase may be another reference to the false teachers previously alluded to by Paul who may have been conceited new believers (1 Timothy 6:4). Scholars vary in the interpretation of the genitive case in the next phrase, interpreting the phrase as either “judgment of the devil” or “same judgment as the devil,” asking whether it is a genitive of description objective or subjective. It would then mean either the judgment that the devil receives, or the judgment that the devil causes.⁸⁸ Verse 7 may help the interpretation with the reference to the spiritual traps that Satan causes.

⁸⁷ Earle, *1, 2 Timothy*, 365.

⁸⁸ George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles, The New International Greek Testament Commentary*, eds. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 164. (Cf. also Fee, 45-47).

A Good Reputation with Outsiders

The qualities of a godly church leader would not only be known in the context of the local church; the character of a man would be known both within and without the church. Paul is looking for a credible witness to those outside the Church in his phrase, δεῖ δὲ καὶ μαρτυρίαν καλὴν ἔχειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξωθεν. This means a good name and an exemplary standing in the wider community.⁸⁹ The term outsiders (ἔξωθεν) clearly refers to those who have not believed the gospel, so any taint here brings derision on the Church. The obvious trap is that nonbelievers will be dissuaded from the reality of the gospel because of living proofs of bad behavior from church leaders. This is one of the most painful repercussions of the lackadaisical attitude of the contemporary Church and her seeming inability to choose Christlike leaders and hold them accountable. The measurement survey applied to each participant includes friends and co-workers outside of the immediate local church congregation allowing each man to see how well he is respected and understood by those who may not share his theological convictions.

Conclusion

All of these qualities are vital to the proper functioning of the board of overseers. Each man has a role to play and must be able to contribute faithfully without feeling he is somehow not qualified to participate in the management and decision-making of the congregation. As seen above, every one of these virtues offers the chance of progress,

⁸⁹ Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 114.

improvement, and growth. A man can find himself qualified for formal eldership, if he is willing to join in a brotherhood with others who hope to continue to mature and develop.

Having reflected on the ecclesiological considerations for qualified leaders in the local church as Paul's desire and goal for the health of the Body of Christ and having reviewed the realities of Christlike character as necessary for leadership in the congregation of Christ, and having looked in detail at Paul's listing of required character qualities for elders, it is clear that there is a mandate for helping potential leaders toward formal eldership. The local church needs men who have seriously considered the character required for godly leadership and the local church needs to intentionally create a way for the characteristics of godly leadership to be developed in potential leaders. With these considerations in mind, the following goals are articulated for the fulfillment of this mandate.

SECTION FOUR

ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION

Curriculum

A fourteen-week study will be created based on the character qualities for biblical eldership listed in the Pastoral Epistles (Appendix D). Each participant will review specific passages and other literature chosen for each quality in weekly assignments and will be asked to specifically apply each quality to his life. As the group gathers weekly, the material will be reviewed with a particular focus on each participant's application of the character qualities to life.

The curriculum combines the qualities for eldership and leadership core principles derived from various sources that serve to practically implement the elder qualities from scripture. The weekly homework is based on answering investigative questions of various relevant texts and further application questions seeking to press the principles found in the Bible study into the individual's life. These weekly assignments will serve to get the men thinking about the truth of scripture as it applies to them and then becomes the conversational topic for each weekly meeting.

Small Group Mentoring

The context for working through the biblical study material is a small group of ten to twelve men, half currently active as elders and the other half joining the project as potential elders. The goal is to have the current elders mentor the potential elders through

the process.¹ Mentoring will become a more natural part of the project in the generations following this first course because, theoretically, the elders that will be mentoring by a subsequent offering of the curriculum will have been through it and will be better equipped to mentor the newer men.

The group will meet weekly for three hours, divided into study time and personal connection time. The study will focus on that week's topic as given in the biblical curriculum and the connection time will revolve around specific topics shared by the group or in mentoring teams of two, which will be shared around a meal.

Biblical Principles of Mentoring Relationships

The heart of this approach is the creation of relationships between existing and potential elders. This may mean older men working with younger men, which would have the added benefit of intergenerational connectivity. Mentoring becomes the primary way an individual man can have the encouragement, accountability, and brotherhood to press into areas of needed growth in his life. Just staying in a small group Bible study does not allow the deeper connection with a brother that is needed in order to deeply address some of these areas. As mentioned previously, the goal is for each man to literally change his character, and the security and accountability of a mentor/mentee relationship is vital to this depth of change. Following is a brief overview of principles from scripture in support of the conviction that mentoring is a very real aspect of growing in godliness.

¹ Rowland Forman, Jeff Jones and Bruce Miller, *The Leadership Baton*, (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2004), 146-47.

The first example in scripture of mentoring is Jethro and Moses (Exodus 18) as Moses' father-in-law joins the new leader guiding the people of God across the wilderness. Jethro notices that Moses is overburdened and launches the concept of delegation, which Moses grabs and places into the history and life of Israel.

Eli the priest and young Samuel the prophet-to-be (1 Samuel 2-4) form another of those relationships. God was disappointed with Eli's sons and had made a promise to Hanna to give her a son of "double portion." She dedicated her son to Yahweh and placed him in Eli's shadow so he could learn the things of God.

The prophets would carry the mantle of responsibility for a season and then would need to pass it to the next generation. Elijah was able to literally place his mantle over the shoulders of Elisha who took the responsibility after walking with Elijah for many years and watching the prophet at work. Elisha took Gehazi as a servant, but entrusted to him the ways and work of being a spokesperson and representative of Yahweh. Though Gehazi never took the full mantle of prophet, he did Elisha's work many times when Elisha was unavailable. (2 Kings 4, 5, 8)

Moving to the New Testament and beyond the pre-described ministry of Jesus, we see Barnabas taking Saul/Paul under his "protective custody" and giving Saul the confidence to pursue the calling he had received from Jesus. The man of encouragement was used by God to shape and direct the man who would become the primary vehicle of revelation after Jesus ascended. In turn, Paul would reach out and embrace several young men whom he would entrust with his life, example, and responsibility. Silas, Timothy, and Titus were hand-chosen by Paul to be the next generation of those who would birth the Church and guide Her through Her infancy.

Mentoring in the Old Testament

Listed here are many of the principles given in Scripture to encourage and guide the process of life-on-life mentoring. Some of these are anecdotal, rising out of narrative text; others are more clearly defined and offered in the didactic form. Robert Clinton is particularly helpful in this regard in his book *The Making of a Leader*.

The first principle is Divine Affirmation (Genesis 12:1-3; 39:2-3.21-23; 1 Samuel 12:13-19), which refers to the ongoing process of a person receiving “nods” from God and others that He has called a man or woman into a leadership position. In order for someone to be mentored for leadership they must have this stamp on them from God and be able to describe the call of God on their life and the affirmations He has given along the way to confirm the leadership convictions.² Combined with the affirmation of leadership is the Affirmation of Ministry,³ which goes beyond the personal call to a more specific call to a kind of ministry that is clearly identified by the mentee and the mentor together as a location of growth. The example cited by Clinton is in 1 Kings 19:1-16, where Elijah is affirmed by God after a weighty conflict with the King and the priests of Baal that left the prophet exhausted and disenchanted. The call back into the fray is one of the responsibilities of the mentor in the life of the protégé with a voice of encouragement and hope.

The next principle is founded on the biblical expectation of obedience (Genesis 22 with Hebrews 11:17-19) to God and to the one in whom a mentee is placing his

² Clinton, Robert, J. *The Making of a Leader*. (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988), 137-139.

³ *Ibid.*, 118-120.

confidence. The biblical example is, of course, Abraham's unquestioning obedience to God's command to sacrifice Isaac and therefore must be qualified in this context. The mentor is not expecting obedience "as unto the Lord" but would need to see a pattern of obedience in the life of the protégé in order to move ahead in the relationship, with the reasonable hope that the protégé will grow because of this willing submission.⁴ This obedience is tied closely to the principle of submission to authority (Numbers 12:1-16) wherein a mentee puts him/herself into a place of willing submission for the goal of becoming a better leader.⁵

The concept of mentoring is based on the shaping of a life and set of perspectives and values to the end that the mentee is an improved person and leader. This concept could be called Life Guidance and is exemplified in the dialogue between Moses and his father-in-law Jethro (Genesis 18). Usually, the emphasis of teaching on this passage is on the concept of delegation, a must for the true leader, but the focus for Life Guidance is on the free investment Jethro is making into Moses' future by taking the time to think through this concept with Moses, guiding his future decision-making and administrative prowess, to the end that Moses is left a better leader because of Jethro's involvement.

Another attitude or principle that is necessary to the task of mentoring is teachability or what Clinton refers to as "word check,"⁶ with the added example of the calling of Samuel by the Lord and Samuel's open-hearted response (1 Samuel 3:1-10).

⁴ Ibid., 63.

⁵ Ibid., 103.

⁶ Ibid., 67-68.

The protégé must have a heart that is open to both the mentor and to the change required to grow.

The penultimate principle from the Old Testament for this project is the search for and comprehension of godly wisdom⁷ (Proverbs 3:13) for which the mentor should act as a guide. It is tempting to give the answers when problems arise, but the Spirit-led mentor will create the space and opportunity for the truth, wisdom and Spirit of God to penetrate and bring the insight needed for the mentee.

Finally, the principle and characteristic of consistency and follow-through⁸ reflected in this interesting verse: “If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?” (Jeremiah 12:5).

Mentoring in the New Testament

The first of the New Testament principles to be discussed is the hand-picking of those who are chosen to be mentored. The primary writers on the subject of Christ-centered mentoring (Beihl, Clinton, and Hendricks) all conclude that a mentee must be hand chosen, though they differ on the guidelines for making such a choice. Jesus Himself made a specific hand selection of the twelve (Luke 6:12-16), as did Paul when choosing Timothy (Acts 16:1-4) to be a disciple of his.

⁷ Ibid., 175-178.

⁸ Ibid., 33-34.

Both Jesus and Paul issue the invitation to follow the example they are leaving for those who follow closely (Matthew 4:19; 1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17). The three concepts of “following,” as in being a disciple; “patterning,” as in shaping one’s life around the shape of another; and “example,” as the offering of a model to those who are working at a project, are all used by Jesus and Paul in their descriptions of what those behind them can do in order to progress in the spiritual life.

The principle of relational authority⁹ refers to the willing submission of the protégé to the authority of the mentor within the context of their mentoring relationship. The response of the centurion to Jesus’ offer to accompany him to his home is captured by Jesus as a statement of faith and submission based on the positions of authority both men have in their personal contexts (Matthew 8:5-13). Both men recognize the authority that they have and the centurion puts himself in the right location within the realm of Jesus’ authority.

Leaders influence people; if they do not, then they are not leaders. For this project, it is to be a spiritual influence that comes from the facilitation of the mentor in the group setting, so that the Word of God and the group dynamic serve as the prime influencers. The mentor serves as shepherd to the next group of shepherds and so on, so that the flock has qualified leaders. (Matthew 9:36-38)¹⁰

⁹ Ibid., 105-106.

¹⁰ Ibid., 202-203.

Arising out of Matthew 25 and Luke 16:10 comes the principle of investing talents for the good and gain of God's kingdom.¹¹ The mentoring relationship is intended to be a place of investment and return for the kingdom.

One of the most important principles rooted in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) is the call to make disciples in the flow of life. Inherent in this command is the idea that a disciple is one who makes disciples, who in turn makes disciples, and so on. The process of leadership mentoring fits this pattern perfectly in the transmission of ministry heart and skills in the making of disciples.

This project will be based on a group mentoring model which is firmly based in the scriptural model of Jesus having chosen not one but twelve to join Him in ministry (Luke 10:1-12). The accountability of a small group is the adopted model for church-wide disciple-making at Mountain Park Church and so this project fits well into the established ministry context. Without accountability, people will tend to leave beliefs, attitudes, and habits unchallenged – to their own detriment. (Acts 15 w/ Col 4:10)

The next principle is based strongly on 2 Corinthians 1:3 where Paul encourages the church to benefit from the sharing of life experiences. He recognizes that God is purposeful in every experience His children live through and that part of the benefit is what can happen in the life of another because of these experiences. Shared suffering can bind people together as well as to God. Mentoring is the sharing of life from the beginning of Scripture to the end. God's followers are called into community and to shared experience learning about God and life together.

¹¹ Ibid., 197.

The final and most direct principle is found in 2 Timothy 2:2 where Paul encourages young Timothy to pass on what he has received from Paul. This is the very heart of mentoring: to take what one has learned and share it with another in the context of a close trusting relationship, offering the encouragement to move on in Christ.

SECTION FIVE
ARTIFACT SPECIFICATION

The overall goal of this project is to expand the ministry of Mountain Park Church by equipping men to lead the church as elders through small group mentoring, offering personal and ministry character development. Following are the specific objectives that can bring this overall goal to reality.

Goals And Strategies

What are the main goals for your Artifact?

Project Process Goals

1. To develop a curriculum out of the qualities of eldership as listed by Paul in1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9 for use in a weekly small group gathering.
2. To instill a vision of leadership mentoring by setting an example and teaching participants how to lead mentoring groups.
3. To develop an instrument of measurement by which potential participants will be measured prior to, during and after the project.
4. To recruit five to twelve men for a fourteen-week ministry of leadership mentoring.

Church Eldership Goals

1. For Mountain Park Church to have an ongoing elder mentoring ministry.
2. A new pool of qualified leaders to engage in ministries of eldership and discipleship within Mountain Park Church.
3. To bring the standard for church eldership up to biblical expectations within the ministry of Mountain Park Church.

Ministry Equipping Goals

1. To confirm a viable and reproducible ongoing ministry for encouraging biblical eldership in the local church.
2. To enhance the relational ministry of Mountain Park as opposed to program-based ministries.
3. To strengthen the understanding, interpretation and application of biblical truth in the elders of Mountain Park Church.

How will you measure the success of your artifact?

1. Friends, family members, and colleagues will be asked to evaluate each man (Appendix C) in the interest of measurable success and to encourage further progress of the participants.
2. There will be a series of evaluations submitted by ten people in each man's life in order to know if a participant is progressing. These will be collected at the beginning and end of the process.
3. The measurements are based on the qualities of biblical eldership as listed in the Pastoral Epistles, and are judged by those closest to each man in order to gauge true maturity in each area.
4. Inclusion in the project will require each man to choose ten (Appendix B) individuals with whom he is deeply connected who will evaluate his character at the outset. This survey (Appendix D) is based on the material and reflects the elder qualities addressed in this proposal. Each survey participant will be asked to carefully answer each question on a continuum of observable behavior. The survey will be applied twice, once before the course of study and once after to

encourage the men to continue in their growth. Each participant will also score himself before, and after the program. If effective, the church will have new, qualified leaders for biblical eldership.

How will you adequately maintain the finished product over the life of the project?

1. The curriculum will need constant refinement in order to maintain its relevance.
2. The use of the curriculum is adaptable to its context, but will remain rooted in the specific passages of its origin.

Audience

Who is the primary intended audience/user of your completed artifact?

1. Non-liturgical churches which utilize a plurality of eldership to govern their church that desire to choose men who truly possess the qualities of an elder.
2. Men who aspire to eldership and want an opportunity to grow in Christlikeness, specifically addressing the qualities of an elder.
3. The men chosen for the project will be individually screened as to their personal readiness and maturity for eldership (Appendix A). They will then be placed in the group for the 14-week period of study and life change. The goals of this project will be reflected in the perceived progress of those who are participating by evaluating the individual group members.

What do you want the audience/user to do/think/experience upon encountering your Artifact?

1. A chance for mentoring relationships that will lead to deep friendships and the crafting of godly character.

2. The opportunity for men to deeply question their character and strategize to develop more godly character in the safety of brothers who are making the same progress.

What task will your audience/user be trying to accomplish wherein your artifact will be utilized?

1. A church utilizing this project will be trying to build generations of men who aspire to be elders in the true sense of the New Testament injunctions.
2. Churches who want an atmosphere wherein men are encouraged to true godliness.
3. Healthy church government.

Scope and Content

Define the scope of your Artifact. What will be the technical and context parameters for your Artifact?

1. The character qualities can apply to both lay leaders/elders and paid clergy referred to as elders in many contexts, but is not particularly useful in liturgical contexts.
2. The material can be used as well in church contexts where women are invited into eldership, as the qualities wrap around all of life, not just male life.
3. Any faith community that holds the authority of scripture in matters like these over the traditions of men can use this curriculum.

How will the content of your artifact be organized?

1. The curriculum is in fourteen sessions built around the specific qualities mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

2. The weekly meeting will be divided into three parts: (a) gathering as a group to enjoy being together over a meal; (b) a group study time on the character quality for that week; and (c) time in pairs with a mentor and mentee.

What special technical or functional requirements are needed?

1. This entire approach is based on building relationships between existing and potential elders. No technical support is needed other than the presentation of the curriculum.

Budget

What is the entire budget for the Artifact?

1. Only the cost of reproduction of the curriculum.

How will you market or make your Artifact available to your intended audience?

1. It is possible that there is a wider market for a curriculum like this; it would have to be marketed by a publisher with such specialization.

What is your overall marketing strategy?

1. None at this time.

Action Plan

Identify the various components of your Artifact.

1. The evaluative tools used to distinguish those men who will be involved in the mentoring program: The “Initial Questionnaire for Participants” (Appendix A), “The Relationship Listing” (Appendix B) and the “Questionnaire” (Appendix C).
2. The artifact curriculum: “Aspiring to Eldership” (Appendix D)

Identify the technical skills required to use your artifact.

1. Basic Bible Study skills will be adequate for the depth needed in leading this study.
2. Progressive mentoring skills will need to be taught and exemplified for elders who are preparing the potential elders for qualification.
3. The highest skill in this endeavor is not technical, but relational. The trust required for men to be vulnerable enough to grow in these sensitive areas of life is extraordinary and the security of authentic relationship is vital.

Identify the timeline for the launch of your Artifact.

1. I would like to begin this program at Mountain Park Church in January of 2013 in order to have a several men connected in mentor relationships and headed for qualification by April.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Initial Questionnaire for Participants

Name _____ Date _____ Age _____

Approximate Number of Years' Experience as a Christian _____

Address:

Phone Number:

Introduction

The following questions and exercises help me understand some of your spiritual maturity. I mean the work of the Spirit in your life as indicated by a growing personal relationship with Christ, an inner life that is alive to God, harmonious relationships with others in the body flowing from this relationship with Christ, a Spirit-led and empowered ministry, a sensitive obedience to the Holy Spirit, a character being transformed toward Christ-likeness as manifested uniquely through the person and a readiness to serve as an elder.

Answer all the questions. Even a “don’t know” or “not sure” or “maybe ...” is preferred to a blank. Some questions or exercises require that you write something. If there is not enough room, then answer on the back (clearly identify question or exercise on back) or do your work on another paper and attach it to the questionnaire.

I. WHO ARE YOU?

1. Place an “x” somewhere on the continuum as you see yourself:

Introverted-----Extroverted

Closure oriented-----Open-Ended

Cooperative-----Competitive

Facts-----Intuition

2. What are your spiritual gifts:

3. How do you learn?

- ___ a. I am a self-learner, dominantly through
 ___ (1) reading or studying ___ (2) process of writing or trying to express
 my thoughts in some literary form ___ (3) reflective times, thinking alone
- ___ b. I generally learn best in an interactive relational way with other people:
 one-on-one or in small groups.
- ___ c. I learn best by trying out things, experimenting with them--ideas, skills
 or whatever.
- ___ d. I learn best by observing what I need to learn being modeled by
 someone else.
- ___ e. I learn best when someone teaches me clearly what it is.
4. Is there some person, a contemporary model or a historical model, that appeals to you
 strongly that is, you would like to be like that person? Or to put it a different way
 there is something in terms of lifestyle, call, values, struggles or whatever about the
 person that appeals to you?
- ___ a. Yes, there is. Person's name:
 ___ b. No, new thought to me,
 ___ c. No, there isn't but come to think of it, I wish there were.
5. What experiences describe the ways or times when you are most aware of God
 meeting with you?
- ___ a. Word Oriented (written)--I usually hear from God best through preaching,
 teaching, or Bible study.
- ___ b. Service Oriented--I usually experience God best as I minister to others
 via missions, evangelism, helps, administration or the like.
- ___ c. Word Oriented (mystical or contemporary revelation)--I usually hear
 from God best by inner impression, inner conviction, inner voice, or even
 external voice.
- ___ d. Sacramental or liturgical--I usually hear best from God in the great
 symbolic rituals in the church or described in the Bible.
- ___ e. Nature--I best hear from God when I am in nature or observing the
 beauty of the creation.
- ___ f. I am unsure how to answer this.
- ___ g. Other. You explain:
6. Which of the voices of God are you most responsive to?
- ___ a. God is one
 ___ b. God is True
 ___ c. God is Good
 ___ d. God is Beautiful
7. Considering the way you learn best (question 3) and the various ways God meets and
 speaks to you (questions 5, 6), what are the most significant things God has revealed
 to you up to this time:

II. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

8. In what ways have you or do you use some of your innate abilities and/or acquire skills in the development of your relationship with God?

- a. I have used writing (creative, poetic, journaling, designing study materials, or other literary devices).
- b. I have used organizational skills or abilities.
- c. I have used analytical abilities and skills to study and teach about God.
- d. I have used my creative abilities and acquired skills to work through music and develop my relationship with God.
- e. Other innate abilities or acquired skills that have helped me in developing my relationship with God include:

9. What kind of ministry experiences have been the most positive in terms of fruitfulness? Describe especially those that have seemed to be the most natural.

III. WHAT IS GOD DOING?

12. What has God revealed to you about your life purpose via:

- a. A clear word spoken or prayer said over you--
- b. Inner response to a preached message--
- c. Call to Ministry--
- d. Written Word of God--

13. What is the deepest identifiable longing in your heart about God or God's purposes for you?

14. Could you identify your present pilgrimage in terms of relationship to Christ by checking the ones you have personally experienced?

- a. I know Christ personally as my Savior.
- b. I know Christ presently as Lord of my life.

- ___ c. I experience regularly Christ as strengthening my inner life to meet daily circumstances.
- ___ d. For me it is more than having Christ come alongside and strengthen me when I need it, it is a conscious awareness that my source of life is within me.
- ___ e. I know an intimate oneness with Christ, who is not only within me but is joined with my spirit to make a unique being, and this is the source of my life and activity.

Appendix B

RELATIONSHIP LISTING FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

This is a listing of the ten people you are to enlist as your evaluators. They will each receive a letter from me describing the project and why they have been chosen to evaluate you before and after you go through the mentoring program. Please enter the name, and contact information for each person:

Name	Address, Phone and email
1. Best Friend	
_____	_____ _____
2. Wife	
_____	_____ _____
3. Colleague	
_____	_____ _____
4. Neighbor	
_____	_____ _____
5. Employer/Employee	
_____	_____ _____
6. Family Member (Outside Immediate family)	
_____	_____ _____
7. Church Leader	
_____	_____ _____
8. Friend (1)	
_____	_____ _____
9. Friend (2)	

10. Someone in this group

Appendix C

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer decisively; medium scores are not generally helpful to participants. Your answers will be anonymous and included with nine other friends and family of the participant for an average score on each questions. 1 is low and 10 is high

1. Overall Spiritual Maturity- How would you rate this potential elder's overall maturity as a Christian?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2. Above Reproach- How would you rate this potential elder's reputation as a Christian both among fellow believers as well as among non-Christians?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3. Marital Faithfulness- How would you rate this potential elder's relationship with his spouse?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. Temperate- How would you rate this potential elder's degree to which he is maintaining balance in his life?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5. Prudent- How would you rate this potential elder's ability to be wise and discerning?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6. Respectable- How would you rate the way this potential elder's life reflects the life of Christ?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
7. Hospitable- How would you rate the over all friendliness of this potential elder?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
8. Able to teach- How would you rate this potential elder's ability to communicate and model the truth of God's word?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
9. Not given to drunkenness- How would you rate this potential elder's ability to control various obsessions, temptations and compulsions?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
10. Not Self-willed- How would you rate this potential elder's ability to relate to other people without being self-centered or controlling?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11. Not violent- How would you rate the way this potential elder handles his anger?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12. Not pugnacious- How would you rate this potential elder's ability to control his reactions, and confrontations?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
13. Gentle- How would you rate this elder's ability to be objective and fair-minded in his relationships with others?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
14. Uncontentious- How would you rate this potential elder's ability to positively resolve arguments?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
15. Free from the love of money- How would you rate this elder's materialistic tendencies?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
16. One who manages his household well- How would you rate this potential elder's ability to function in and manage his family relationships?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
17. Loving what is good- How would you rate this potential elder's ability to overcome evil with good?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
18. Just- How would you rate this potential elder's ability to be fair in all his relationships?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
19. Devout- How would rate this potential elder's life as a reflection of God's holiness?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
20. Disciplined- How would you rate this potential elder's ability to live a disciplined life?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Appendix D

ASPIRING TO ELDERSHIP

A strategy to develop men for eldership in the local congregation based on I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Written by Gregg Borrer

Outline

Session 1

Elder Quality- Above reproach / Blameless / Holy
Leadership Core Principle- Role of an Elder

Session 2

Elder Quality- Husband of but one wife
Leadership Core Principle- Integrity

Session 3

Elder Quality- Temperate / not quick tempered
Leadership Core Principle- Accountability

Session 4

Elder Quality- Self-controlled / Disciplined
Leadership Core Principle- Soul Care

Session 5

Elder Quality- Respectable / Upright
Leadership Core Principle- True Authority

Session 6

Elder Quality- Hospitable
Leadership Core Principle- Building Bridges

Session 7

Elder Quality- Able to teach / He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.
Leadership Core Principle- Passing the Baton

Session 8

Elder Quality- Not given to drunkenness
Leadership Core Principle- Discipline and Restoration

Session 9

Elder Quality- Not violent but gentle

Leadership Core Principle- Seeing people and circumstances through God's perspective

Session 10

Elder Quality- Not quarrelsome / Not overbearing

Leadership Core Principle- Making and Keeping Peace

Session 11

Elder Quality- Not a lover of money /not pursuing dishonest gain

Leadership Core Principle- Generosity of Spirit

Session 12

Elder Quality- Manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect, must believe and not be wild and disobedient

Leadership Core Principle- Shepherding

Session 13

Elder Quality- Not a recent convert

Leadership Core Principle- Nature of Discipleship

Session 14

Elder Quality- A good reputation with outsiders

Leadership Core Principle- Consistency

Session 1
An Elder is Above reproach / Blameless / Holy
Leadership Core Principle- Role of an Elder

Above Reproach, Blameless

Most scholars view the first descriptive as an overall, primary quality for the overseer of which the following become the details of what could also be called blamelessness.¹ Whether it is the first of the list of fourteen qualities or the over-arching conviction of the Apostle, it is succinctly stated in a single word “irreproachable” in observable conduct.² This powerful word refers to being constantly self-aware and possessing Spirit-led behavior that exemplifies the follower of Jesus. Titus’ use of the concept of “upright” goes beyond human virtue or rule keeping, the orientation is in the Christ-event where justification by faith, in the Pauline sense, becomes a reality in behavior in the life rightly oriented to Christ.³ The literal definition is “Not to be laid hold of”⁴ which holds a powerful metaphor of “no handles” on one’s character or life-style, whether for our mortal enemy or for observers who are looking for exceptions to exemplary Christ-like behavior. “Blameless” is not to be understood as morally perfect, or without sin; that is not possible. The inclusion at this point of both “upright” and “holy” as used by Titus, are bound to irreproachability but bring added emphasis possibly due to the relative immaturity of churches in Crete compared to those in Ephesus.⁵ The fact that Paul sees deeper levels in this quality give support to the view that an individual can make intentional progress.

Paul’s list is very much like a “duty code” traditionally used in the military of Paul’s time employed for various secular occupations. There are similar codes contemporary with Paul that were used in the selection of generals which probably reflects the effects of Greek ethics on Hellenistic literature.⁶

Also read:

Epictetus qualities that should honor a human being “the duties of citizenship, marriage, begetting children, reverence to God, care of parents, in a word, desire, avoidance, choice, refusal the proper performance of each of these acts.”

¹ F.D. Gealy, *The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus*, IB, vol 11. Nashville, Abingdon, 1955. 279

² Gordon Fee. *New International Commentary*. (Peabody: Henderson Publishing, 1984) 80.

³ Marshall. 164

⁴ Frank Gaebelien, Gen Ed. *Expositors’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 11(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978) 364.

⁵ Marshall 164

⁶ Towner 240

Onasander- we must choose a general because he is temperate, self-restrained, vigilant, frugal, hardened to labor, alert, free from avarice, neither too young not too old, indeed a father of children if possible, a ready speaker, and a man with a good reputation.” (The General 1.1)

1. Why is character important to the tasks implied in the role of an overseer whether military or in a local church context?

2. After looking at the other times Paul uses the word “blameless” in the NT (1 Cor. 1:8; Eph 1:4, 5:27; Phil 1:10, 2:15; 1 Th. 2:10, 3:13, 5:23; He. 7:26) what other words would you use to describe being “above reproach” or “blameless?”

3. Looking at two other lists of virtues in the New Testament (Gal 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7) and comparing these to 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 what differences and similarities do you see?

4. Can you think of someone in your life who is as close to “blameless” s you can imagine? If so how would you describe that person to me?

5. What do you need to do to be more like that person?

Role of an Elder-

Read Elders and Leaders- God’s Plan for Leading the Church by Gene Getz

Chapters 5- Elders in Jerusalem

10- Respect and Esteem

Read the following passages to gain Luke’s perspective on eldership in the First Century Church:

Acts 11:27-30

Acts 14:21-23

Acts 15:1-4, 22-29

Acts 16:1-4

Acts 20:17-38

Acts 21:17-26

Discuss:

1. What is your own personal history of church leadership?

2. What were some of your main questions as you read the Scripture passages about eldership?

3. Which of these interchangeable terms do you prefer for our board and why?
 - Elders
 - Overseers
 - Bishops
 - Shepherds

4. How do you respond to some of Getz' "significant questions" in Chapter 5?
5. What are some of the strengths MPC's current governance?
6. How might we improve?

Application:

1. How could you change your life so that you are nearer to "above reproach" right now?
2. What can you do at MPC to improve our congregational governance?
3. Pray for our church leadership.

Session 2
An Elder is
Leadership Core Principle- Integrity

Husband of but one wife

Part of the reason for understanding this list of qualities as a continuum of spiritual maturity rather than accomplished “qualifications” is intended to help the reader understand this particular, often misunderstood, character quality.

The broader interests of the passage suggest that fidelity in marriage (understood to be monogamous and acceptable in the eyes of the community) is meant. This would assume the inappropriateness of any form of sexual immorality or marriage/remarriage in breach of acceptable patterns, though sexual immorality as such is not the sole concern. The domestic concerns of the code, which may respond to heretical tendency (4:3), present the overseer as husband and father. In such a context the candidate’s conduct within the marriage relationship (i.e. faithfulness to his wife) would be an anticipated topic.⁷

If this list is describing life achievements, implying that any of them are “perfectable,” then the potential overseer is qualified in part by achieving the possession of one wife. If, however, this list is viewed as a list of qualities wherein the potential elder is progressively becoming more like Jesus, then this particular quality must be seen, not as an achievement but an ongoing proof of growth.

Therefore, four possible meanings must be sorted: 1) That the potential overseer must be married. But that does not explain Paul’s emphasis on “one,” nor is it consistent with Paul’s teaching in I Corinthians 7:1, 32-35; and Paul’s own singleness. (I Corinthians 7:7,8) 2) That the elder must not be a polygamist. But that was not a part of Paul’s contemporary cultural context, and certainly not ever accepted in the First Century Church. 3) That Paul is prohibiting a second marriage, whether by death of a spouse or by divorce. Supposing that once a man is married and then either divorced or widowed, he remains married to that woman in God’s eyes. The emphasis then is on only, ever being married once in one’s life. This is the most frequently applied meaning of this text, thereby disqualifying any man who has been divorced or widowed and gone on to be married to a “second” woman. If it refers to divorce, then by the same simple sense of “one wife,” a widowed and remarried man would also have to be disqualified. This far surpasses Paul’s intended meaning for several reasons. Nowhere else is a widowed man disqualified from remarriage or from eldership. There is a word for divorce that Paul could have used (*apoleo*, cf. Matthew 1:9) but chose not to, and his choice of language is far too general. This interpretation also appeals to an overall misapplication of this full list as achievements rather than as ongoing tests of character. 4) That the overseer is to live with complete marital fidelity and have an exemplary marriage, with a more literal rendering of the text as “a one-woman kind of man.” As Howard Marshall, “The author is

⁷ Ibid. 250

here not concerned with legal rules to be observed, but with the quality of conduct displayed by the church leader within the marriage relationship.”⁸This last option would of course rule out the others and would fit the presupposition that this list is not one of qualifications, but a list of character qualities that are part of a maturing leader’s life.⁹

1. Which interpretive option would you choose in determining the meaning of Paul’s phrase, “A one woman man?” Why do you choose this interpretation?

2. Describe a “one woman man”- at home, at work, at church, at recreation.

3. After reading Ephesians 5:21-33 what is the role of a husband in his marriage and what ways do you need to improve?

4. How is an elder’s marital fidelity crucial to his role as an elder?

5. Ask your wife to rate you as a “one woman man.”

Character

Read Elders and Leaders: God’s Plan for Leading the Church

Marshall, I. Howard, The Pastoral Epistles. Edinburgh, T and T Clarke. 1999. The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Emerton, J.A. Cranfield, C.E.B. and Stanton, G.N. Gen Ed. 157

⁹ Fee, 80,81

Chapter 12: Leadership Qualifications
Chapter 19 A Doctrine of Character

Also read “A Parable- The Bus Driver” (Handout)

1. How could the parable of the bus driver relate to character requirements for church leadership?
2. To what extent do leaders need to be “mature” in the character qualities of the Pastoral Epistles (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9) and how might a man progress in character?
3. How is the health of a man’s marriage a good indicator of his character?
4. After reading Philippians 3:1-21 why can Paul say in vs. 17 “Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.” What would it take for you to say the same thing?

Application:

1. Please talk through this whole session with your wife sharing your answers and asking for hers. Record your wife’s contributions.
2. Pray for your wife and her life in Christ. Pray also for the man God will eventually put on your heart to mentor in the life of Christ

Session 3
An Elder is Temperate / not quick tempered
Leadership Core Principle- Accountability

Temperate / Not Quick Tempered

The potential elder must be free from rash actions in an ongoing proof of his character no matter the circumstances. He must continually exhibit self-control and specifically in the use of this word, with regard to intoxicants, therefore referring to an aspect of mental control that rules out all sorts of excess. “The unequivocal reference to literal sobriety (3:3) suggests here the moral sense of being balanced in thought. The overseer is to maintain command of his reason, to be watchful and observant of things going on around him, balanced in his assessments.”¹⁰ It is implied in Paul’s word choice that a potential leader must be a man who understands moderation in all of his interactions, whether with people or with substances. He cannot prove impulsive or divisive in his reactions which would inevitably lead to further complication of a problem rather than the resolution of a problem.¹¹

1. If you were on trial for your temperament, what evidence would you give as to being moderate in temper and whom would you call as witnesses?

2. After reading these Proverbs (15:1; 21:14; 27:4; 29:8, 11; 30:33) describe what anger can accomplish and what averting it can accomplish.

3. After reading Ephesians 4:22-32 what role does anger play in you “old self” vs. your “new self” and why, if anger is a natural response to circumstance, might one be held morally accountable for his anger?

¹⁰ Ibid. 251

¹¹ Gealy 283

4. What does it mean to have a moderate temperament?

5. How do various character-altering substances play into Paul's word choice; he chose a word that literally means "sobriety"?

Accountability

Read Elders and Leaders: God's Plan for Leading the Church
 Chapter 1- Flying in Formation: A Community Project
 Chapter 28- "Principle 2: A Unified Team"
 Handout- A Work of the Heart- Reggie McNeal: Chapter 7

1. After reading Psalm 133; John 17:20-23 and Romans 12:9-13, why is it vital that we learn, grow and lead in the atmosphere of healthy community? What would be missing without community?

2. Why is accountability so scary?

3. What walls in your own heart need to be broken down to enhance your participation in and the health of our community?

4. How does a lack of transparency cause disunity in a friendship; in a governing body; in a church?

5. What can elders do to create true community in a church?

Application:

1. How does your pursuit of a moderate temperament help to create honesty accountability and healthy community?

2. What are your areas of potential immoderation and would you be willing to share those with your mentor?

3. Pray for God's Spirit to be your main accountability partner and for the wisdom to listen to His voice.

Session 4
An Elder is Self-controlled / Disciplined
Leadership Core Principle- Soul Care

Self-controlled / Disciplined

It is interesting to compare the Apostle's choice of words in the preceding character quality and this word. The preceding focuses on the chance that the circumstances could make the man act unbecomingly, while this word holds a sense wherein the leader is a sensible person who proves this sensible nature in being trustworthy and balanced in judgment from the inside. It is not only circumstances that can push a man to make a bad decision. There are also internal forces that need to be controlled in order to maintain a Christlike character. The word choice of the Apostle is over against the idea of being self-willed- or arrogant as one who pleases himself or is pleased with himself he is driven to be self-satisfied rather than self-controlled.¹²

1. How would you describe the difference between being balanced in temperament and being self-controlled?

2. After reading 2 Peter 1:3-9 why is self-control central in this list, what is missing without it and how is a lack of self-control like being "near sighted and blind?"

3. Look at these verses:

1 Thessalonians 5:6-8

Titus 2:2-12

1 Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8

Why might it be getting harder to be self-controlled and what can you do about it?

¹² Marshall. 161

4. Why would you describe yourself as a sensible person?

Soul Care

Read Elders and Leaders: God's Plan for Leading the Church

Chapter 30- Modeling Christlike Behavior

Chapter 31- Principles for Leadership Functions

Handouts- Natural and Spiritual Leadership- Oswald Chambers

Gauges and Blinking Lights: Warning Signs for Christians

1. After reading these passages- why should a leader care for his inner life?

Acts 6:1-7

1 Timothy 4:11-16

1 Timothy 6:11, 12

2 Timothy 2:22

2. What warning signs might be blinking in your life and what are you going to do about it?

3. If your wife received the same amount of personal attention as you gave God this week how happy would she be with your marriage? How happy might God be?

4. How does unconfessed sin affect the leader's spiritual condition?

5. Right now, are you qualified to be an elder? How and how not?

Application-

1. Write out goals for your soul care that this session has prompted.

2. What outcomes would like to see for our elder board and our church based on our soul health?

3. Pray through some of the dubious parts of your soul health with your mentor.

Session 5
An Elder is Respectable / Upright
Leadership Core Principle- True Authority

Respectable / Upright

This next word is very close to the preceding two yet carries a further implication of dignity and orderliness in behavior as a reflection of inner stability. It can literally be translated “with modesty,”¹³ referring to the sense that others are watching and good judgment is required in the determination of all actions. One never knows who and when someone is watching and judging behavior. All observable behavior must be consistent with the character of Jesus and all unobserved behavior must maintain the same consistency.

1. Ask three people who are close to you if you have their respect and how you can either gain it or build on it.

2. Rate your life on these aspects of respectability:

	Low	High
Cleanliness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Timeliness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Orderliness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Physical shape	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Balance in Schedule	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Fun	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	

3. Any places in #2 for improvement if so what will you do to progress?

¹³ Gaebelien. 364

4. Describe the differences between being “upright” and being “uptight”
5. After reading these verse describe how one gains and keeps respect.

Romans 13:7

Ephesians 6:5

1 Thessalonians 4:12

1 Thessalonians 5:12

1 Timothy 6:1, 2

Titus 2:2

1 Peter 2:17, 18

1 Peter 3:15

True Authority

Read Elders and Leaders: God’s Plan for Leading the Church

Introduction “Who Leads the Church” pp. 17-19

Chapter 21 Serving with Joy

Chapter 29 Principles for Leadership Appointments

Handout- A Nonessential Andy Stanley

1. Give insights for authority in the local church from these passages:

1 Peter 5:1-4

1 Thessalonians 5:12, 23

Hebrews 13:17

2. How do personal motives play into leadership authority; could this be an issue for you?

3. After reading Philippians 2:5-8 evaluate your leadership approach in

Attitude

Servanthood

Obedience

4. Based on Stanley's article how is the polish on your invisible badge?

5. How would you rate the real (spiritual and moral) authority of our current elder board and what can we do to improve it?

Application-

1. What steps need to be taken:

Personally

Corporately

2. What is the "Climate" of authority in our body?

3. Tell of at least one circumstance that shows your character as a servant leader.

Session 6
An Elder is Hospitable
Leadership Core Principle- Building Bridges

Hospitable

In the first century it was quite common to host travelers, whether for financial gain or as a demonstration of neighborliness. Paul uses this word, (philoxenos) “loving strangers,” as a way to describe the willing kindness needed to take care of other Christians who may be traveling in itinerate ministry, or visiting a new region. But the word holds a strong sense that this is the hosting of strangers, outsiders, which would be a highly respected aspect of first century culture. As a trait within the congregation an elder must be devoted to the welfare of others.¹⁴

1. This seems like an odd character quality for Paul to add to his list. Why do think it is here and what does a man’s hospitality say about his ability to lead?

2. Read these passages and describe hospitality as it is used:

Romans 12:13

Romans 16:23

1 Timothy 5:9, 10

1 Peter 4:9

3 John 1:8

3. If “hospitable” is a character quality and not an action (i.e. having people over for dinner) what is a hospitable character? Are you a hospitable character?

¹⁴ Gealy 284

4. Describe how the people in your contact circle feel welcomed, comforted, nourished and eased by your friendship and leadership as an elder.

5. How does your hospitality range outside of our church family? Are there strangers who feel the warmth of Christ in their lives because of you?

Building Bridges

Read Crossing the Room, Bill Hybels

1. Some of us are gregarious by nature others are more withdrawn; is that a basis for deciding how friendly we are as followers of Jesus leading a local congregation? Why or why not?

2. What is the largest issue for you in building bridges to those outside your current circle of friends?

3. Look at these circumstances and describe the bridges that were built:

Acts 3:1-10

Acts 4:32-37

Acts 8:26-40

Acts 10

Acts 17:16-34

4. How would you rate MPC as a bridge building ministry? How could we do better?

5. Think of two people within the body at MPC that you need to build a bridge toward and two people outside the body.

Application

1. Tell your mentor of the four people mentioned above and discuss with him how you will intentionally go about building the bridges.
2. Bring two bridge building ministry idea your Community Group, or small group or the elder board this month.
3. Pray for the courage to cross every room god places you in.

Session 7

An Elder is Able to teach / He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Leadership Core Principle- Passing the Baton

Able to teach

The potential overseer must possess a demonstrable competence and skill in communicating biblical truth. The word implies not just the intellectual capacity, but also the communicative abilities. The quality does not necessarily refer to the spiritual gift of teaching, but the general ability to transfer biblical truth. Part of being able to teach is the quality of being teachable; the elders must always have hearts open to the progression of God's truth in their own lives. In the parallel passage in Titus (1:9) Paul emphasized, with greater boldness, the need for elders to, "hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it had been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." The trustworthy message is that passed down in the Apostle's teaching as a body and constitutes the basis of the elder's doctrinal function as a teacher and defender of the truth.¹⁵

"As exemplified in Paul's words to the elders of Ephesus as recorded in Acts 20-25-31, this quality also involves strength in the refutation of heresy and false teaching. The word choice also implies the duty of teaching as a regular activity of the overseer's life.¹⁶ The use of *parakaleo* in the Titus text suggests instruction with a practical bent, something more than simply detailing the facts and doctrines carrying an element of persuasion and even command.¹⁷

Read Elders and Leaders: God's Plan for Leading the Church

Chapter 23 Specific Leadership Functions

Handouts- The Functions of an Elder- Wayne Grudem

Able to Teach- Alexander Strauch

1. From these passages, what does it mean for an elder to be a teacher:

Acts 20:25-31

1 Timothy 3:1, 2

¹⁵ Ibid 285

¹⁶ Fee, 81

¹⁷ Marshall, 167

1 Timothy 5:17

Titus 1:9-14

2. How well would you say you know Scripture:

	Not Well	Well
Old Testament		
Law	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
History	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Wisdom /Poetry	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Prophecy	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
New Testament		
Gospels	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Acts	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Pauline Epistles	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
General Epistles	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Systematic Theology		
Theology Proper- God, Triunity, Scripture	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Christology- Jesus	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Pneumatology- Holy Spirit	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Soteriology- Salvation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Ecclesiology- Church	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Anthropology- Man, sin, creation, fall	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	

3. Would you say you are ready to be a teacher why or why not?

4. What context would you say is your optimal teaching circumstance? (eg. 1 to 1, or small group...) Are you teaching this way?

5. Who has been an important teacher in your life? What makes this person stand out to you? How can you model this teacher's ability and impact in the lives of those you teach?

Passing the Baton

Read Elders and Leaders: God's Plan for Leading the Church

“Observation 5” A Noble Task

Chapter 33- Age Requirements

“Apostles, Prophets and Teachers” Appendix D

1. Why is it necessary that elders mentor and equip upcoming generations for church leadership?

2. How could MPC facilitate the equipping of younger men?

3. What are the obstacles to incorporating a training component into the task of eldership?

4. Agree or disagree with this statement: training is more about shaping the church than about personal development.”

5. What patterns of training have succeeded in your life and should be incorporated into the mentoring of next generation leaders?

Application

1. If you have not yet made a choice, this week begin to contact potential mentees with whom you would work to equip for leadership.
2. What is your plan for expanding your knowledge of Scripture as a leader?
3. Pray for the Spirit to begin to overcome any doubts you have about your ability to pass along- “the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.”

Session 8
An Elder is not given to drunkenness
Leadership Core Principle- Discipline and Restoration

Not given to drunkenness

In the list of ongoing qualities in the potential overseer's life, this quality is the first to be stated as a prohibition. The word is not understood as a prohibition of the elder to the use of alcohol, rather to the control of his thirst for alcohol. The word is actually describing an addiction to wine, not a prohibition of medicinal use of alcohol. (1 Tim. 5:23)¹⁸ Literally, Paul's word means "lingering long beside the cup"¹⁹ and all the surrounding implications of this kind of consuming behavior. All of these character qualities have at their core the principle of moderation and balanced living. The use of alcohol is one of the areas of life that can quickly become imbalanced and compulsive. Paul knows this and therefore includes this very specific prohibition.

1. Why is this a character quality and specifically how does it relate to men as elders and leaders in God's body?

2. After reading these passages, is the above description consistent with what Scripture teaches?

Luke 5:36-39

Luke 7:31-35

John 2:1-11

Ephesians 5:15-20

1 Timothy 5:23

Titus 2:3

¹⁸ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr., *The New American Commentary*, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992). 111

¹⁹ Gaebelein, 365

3. Why not just avoid all forms of alcohol at all times? Is that the nature of these qualities?

4. What other substances, patterns and consuming behaviors can be included in a prohibition like this and why?

5. Are there areas in your life that could use some evaluation and moderation? Please share these with your mentor.

Discipline and Restoration

Read Elders and Leaders: God's Pa for Leading the Church

Chapter 30 pp. 268-270

Chapter 17- Protection and Discipline

Handouts- For What Sins?- Mark Lauterbach

Spheres of Accountability- John Ortberg

After reading these passages, please answer the questions

1. What responsibility do we each have in the Body of Christ to address sin in each other's lives?

Proverbs 27:5, 6, 17

Matthew 7:1-5

Romans 15:14

Galatians 6:1-4

2. What are the purposes of church discipline?

Matthew 18:15

2 Corinthians 2:5-12

1 Timothy 5:17-22

James 5:19, 20

3. Which sins should we discipline?

Matthew 7:1-5

Matthew 18:15-20

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Titus 1:10-14; 3:9-11

2 John 9-11

4. How do we develop a plan for restoration?

Luke 15:11-31

2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Galatians 6:1-5

James 5:19, 20

5. What should you keep in mind as you confront sin in the life of a brother or sister in Christ?

Application

1. Articulate the steps you would take if you felt yourself becoming entangled in sin.

2. Do you know someone you should go to now and confront their sin with a view toward restoration?

3. Is there someone you know who needs to be restored to a healthy relationship with the Body of Christ? What will you do as a leader to facilitate restoration?

Session 9

An Elder is Not violent but gentle

Leadership Core Principle- Seeing people and circumstances through God's perspective.

Not violent but gentle

The next prohibition is accompanied by an encouragement to contrasting behavior. Paul says the elder cannot practice browbeating people with threats of violence. The word is the very picture of quick-temper; fists before words. The male temperament can lend itself to action instead of words when a situation clearly calls for words of reason and resolution. Anger, in the biblical tradition is characterized as an aspect of unbelief.²⁰ So Paul adds a very interesting word, whose meaning is difficult to pin down. Translated as "gentle" the word holds deeper insinuations of elasticity in supervision; sweet reasonableness, gracious, kindly, forbearing, considerate, magnanimous and genial. The word subsumes all virtues in itself, coming to mean a "virtuous equilibrium" that expresses itself in a balance between honesty, tolerance and gentleness. For a leader, the further implication is seen as reasonableness, courtesy and tolerance that involves the ability to give way to others.²¹ Paul is saying that it is not enough to be not violent, the elder must also actively be gentle. Paul knows this violence well. It is a word he uses to describe his own behavior prior to his encounter with Jesus (1 Timothy 1:13) and part of what he knew must be transformed in his own character.

1. Where are you on this contrasting continuum?



Do you like where you are? Do you have a natural bent to one side of the continuum?

2. Is there a time when violence can be useful to God- how, when, where, why?

3. Respond to each of these words from the perspective of local church leadership:

Elasticity

²⁰ Marshall, 161

²¹ Towner. 253

Sweet reasonableness

Gracious

Kindly

Forbearing

Considerate

Magnanimous

Genial

Honesty

Tolerance

Courtesy

4. After reading these verses describe a gentle leader:

Matthew 11:25-30

Matthew 21:5

1 Corinthians 4:18-21

1 Thessalonians 2:6-9

1 Peter 3:1-6

5. How would it work as a leader incorporate America to have gentleness as a cardinal virtue?

Seeing people and circumstances through God's perspective.

Read The Shack by William Young pp.

1. After reading Mark 6 why would Jesus send them out when he could just go himself and accomplish so much more?

2. After reading Acts 10:1-11:18, Answer what did Peter need to learn about seeing people through God's eyes? What were his "blindnesses?" How did he overcome his perspective?

3. What is Paul's point in 2 Corinthians 5:14-21?

4. How would you describe a ministry of reconciliation- not in the local church setting but everywhere else?

5. Picture Jesus hanging on the cross- pain, exhaustion, certain death, holding all of sin, and then think of this passage: Luke 23:39-42. Write out your response.

Application

1. Describe three ways the gentleness of Christ is going to be evident in your life this week.

2. How can seeing others through God's perspective give you the ability to patiently lead them?

3. Pray for those who are hard to love in your life- by name! and commit to their spiritual progress as gently ministered through you.

Session 10
An Elder is Not quarrelsome / Not overbearing
Leadership Core Principle- Making and Keeping Peace

Not quarrelsome / Not overbearing

Akin to the previous phrasing however, this word focuses more on the elder as a verbal fighter; a man who is contentious, grasping and pugnacious, always looking for an argument. Once again, this word holds overtones of reflection of inner control; not that pugnacious words might not come to mind, but the Christlike character of an elder is to not allow the words to escape. This prohibition fits this letter as a contrast to the false teachers referred to elsewhere (1 Timothy 6:4).²²

1. Again our purpose in meeting together is to encourage the character of Christ in each participant with the goal of progress in the qualities of eldership. The character quality of “not quarrelsome” is of vital importance to the smooth working of a governing board in any context- why is this so and why is not being quarrelsome even more important in the governance of a local body of Christ?

2. Read Proverbs 26:21 and think up two more idioms for a quarrelsome man- be creative!

3. Do you know someone whom you would describe as overbearing? What is it about the person that would make you think of him or her right now? If he came to you and asked for advise in relationships what would you tell him?

4. In these following lists of virtues, what qualities would you see as remedial for a quarrelsome, overbearing personality?

²² Fee, 81

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

2 Corinthians 6:3-10

Galatians 5:22-25

Colossians 3:12-17

5. Describe your latest quarrel- who with, over what, when and how it was (or wasn't) resolved. After doing this much of this session, what would you do differently?

Making and Keeping Peace

Read Elders and Leaders: God's Plan for Leading the Church

Chapter 8- The Law-Grace Controversy

Chapter 23 pp. 196-198

Handouts- What Makes a Good Board? Marshall Shelley

Reconciliation Intervention: Overview- Bent Tree Bible Fellowship

1. After reading these passages sight clear principles that can help the body of Christ make peace:

Matthew 5:23-24

Romans 14:1, 13-23

Romans 16:17, 18
Ephesians 4:1-6

Titus 3:9-11

2. After reading the handouts share your thoughts on these crucial issues:

What constitutes “sin” in the body?

What is the primary goal of church discipline and why?

Must we use discipline in the church, or can we just be loving?

How do church discipline and making peace fit together?

3. How is conflict resolution in a church governing board the same as or different from resolution of conflict in the wider church body?

4. What can churches do to help heal past hurts? Do you know of any which we should address?

5. How do robust debate and peaceful unity work together in a healthy board? Church?

6. How can church elders prevent division in a church body?

Application

1. Create steps you will personally take to create and maintain relational peace in you life.

2. What should MPC do right now to make peace or resolve conflict?

3. Pray for the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to give courage, peace and unity in our Elder Board and in our church.

Session 11

An Elder is Not a lover of money /not pursuing dishonest gain Leadership Core Principle- Generosity of Spirit

Not a lover of money /not pursuing dishonest gain

The elder is in touch with congregational finances and therefore must be trustworthy. If he is known to be stingy or grasping (needing to control), then he does not possess the necessary qualities of an elder; he is placing money before souls. The elder board working to control money usually ends up controlled by the money. “According to 1 Timothy 6:5-10, greed turns out to be one of the “deadly sins” of the false teachers, being directly responsible for their ruin.”²³ Dishonest gain is connected to shameful behavior, so it is not just the money ill gotten it is also the behavior that accompanies it.²⁴ The phrasing could also imply that a potential elder must be reputably employed, honest in all money matter and would not use his position as a means for financial profit.²⁵ It can be a huge temptation for men who are close to church finances, which are greater than personal finances, to extort congregational funds if they do not have this area of their lives under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Read Elders and Leaders: God’s Plan for Leading the Church

Chapter 16- Financial Support

Chapter 30 pp. 270, 271

Handouts- Stewardship of the Lord’s Finances- Paul Winslow and Dorman Followill
Stewardship with Integrity- John MacArthur

1. How would you describe your feelings about the financial stewardship of our elder board? Could you recommend us to a potential congregant who had been hurt in the past by church financial mismanagement?

2. After reading these passages sight clear principles about leaders and finances:

1 Chronicles 29:14-17

²³ Fee, 82

²⁴ Marshall. 162

²⁵ Gealy, 284

Psalm 78:70-72

Proverbs 3:37, 28

Acts 11:29, 30

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

1 Timothy 5:17-20

1 Peter 5:2-4

3. What are some potential pitfalls that face church leaders as they handle church finance?

4. After reading the tasks of our “Treasurer” in the Constitution what might you change?

5. What place does faith have in creating and utilizing our annual budget and budgeting process?

Generosity of Spirit

1. Rate yourself:

Stingy-----Generous

Needy-----Comfortable

Not enough-----Enough

Not a Tither-----Regular Tither

Indebted-----No debt

2. Describe how your personal finances are under the control of the Holy Spirit, why should this influence the congregation's confidence in you as, among other things, a financial overseer of our congregation?

3. After reading these passages describe one who is Christlike in view of his money.
Matthew 6:24-34

Matthew 25:14-33

Luke 9:1-6

Luke 14:25-35

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

1 Timothy 6:6-10

1 Peter 5:1-4

4. What does it mean to you to have a generous spirit?

5. How do your faith in God's providence and your tendencies toward or away from generosity find resolution in your lifestyle?

Application

1. Talk through some of your findings both personal and congregational with your wife and ask her for more input that you can share with our small group.

2. List out any changes you want to make to be a generous and responsible financial leader in the Body of Christ.

3. Pray for God's provision for the ministry we share together.

Session 12

An Elder must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect, must believe and not be wild and disobedient
Leadership Core Principle- Shepherding

Manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect, must believe and not be wild and disobedient

There is probably no greater exhibit for a man's character than the family setting.²⁶ In using this phrase, Paul is peeling back the house walls and looking for exemplary behavior in family control. If the children are known for their obedience and morally upright behavior, it is a testimony to a father's ongoing involvement. The word for "manage" does not refer to absolute, unrelenting control, but rather to wise governing in the issues that face families and parents. It refers to the effective exercise of authority bolstered by a character of integrity and sensitive compassion; showing mercy more than delivering ultimatums ("take care of").²⁷ "Either the children show respect for their father or the meaning is that his character and demeanor call it forth... this is not the martinets' paradise, but it is the Christian home, in which the husband exercises love and the context in Ephesians shows"²⁸ the skills developed in home management transfer over to the family of God. The implications are that these are house churches where the believers will be able to see the behavior of the family first hand.²⁹ There is a fine line between demanding obedience and gaining it.³⁰ Paul is making an argument from the lesser to the greater that the leadership qualities of a healthy home are the same that lead to a healthy church.³¹

Read Elders and Leaders: God's Plan for Leading the Church

Chapter 20 Managing the Family Well pp. 168-171

Chapter 22- Observation 3 Managing pp. 187-88

Handout- Homebase First- Rowland Forman

1. What would your wife say about the way you are managing your home over the last six months?

²⁶ Towner, 255

²⁷ Lea and Griffin, 112

²⁸ Ward, *1 and 2 Timothy and Titus*, 57

²⁹ Fee, 82

³⁰ Ibid. 83

³¹ Gaebelien, 365

2. How is the home the perfect testing ground for a potential elder's ability as a manager? What parts of home life really don't relate at all?
3. What should the guy in Forman's article have done differently?
4. If we asked your children about your character qualities as a potential elder what would they say?
5. What could we do as a church to foster healthier families?

Shepherding

Read- Elders and Leaders: God's Plan for Leading the Church
Chapter 18: Shepherding God's Flock
Handout- A Good Shepherd- Philip Graham Ryken

1. Briefly describe the last three "Shepherding" contacts you had within our congregation.
2. After reading these passages describe the ministry of shepherding:

Ezekiel 34:11-16

John 10:1-15

Acts 20:15-19

1 Peter 5:1-4

3. What makes it difficult to function as a shepherd-leader in a modern local church?

4. What will happen to any local congregation if the leaders cease to shepherd the people individually and corporately?

5. List out some practical ways we can be better shepherds as the leaders of this congregation.

Application

1. Would you describe yourself as a shepherding kind of personality if so why or not why and what can you do to develop this character quality in your life?

2. Give the names of two people in our body whom you know to need some shepherding care right now. (If you can't think of any- turn this response into a prayer)

3. Pray for our shepherds and our flock.

Session 13

An Elder is Not a recent convert

Leadership Core Principle- Nature of Discipleship

Not a recent convert

Literally the word means “newly planted,” having to do more with spiritual rather than chronological age. The problem with rising to a place of influential leadership in the local church too early following conversion is that the elder may become conceited. The word here literally meaning blinded (tuyoo “wrapped and therefore blinded by smoke”, or puffed up with smoke; too much of it). Whether wrapped and blinded by smoke or puffed beyond the ability to clearly see Paul means that conceit can blunt spiritual alertness. The use of this phrase could represent another contrast to the false teachers who may have been conceited new believers previously referred to in this epistle. Scholars vary in the interpretation of the genitive case in the phrase, interpreting the phrase as either “judgment of the devil” or “same judgment as the devil,” asking whether it is a genitive of description objective or subjective. It would then mean either the judgment that the devil receives, or the judgment that the devil causes.³² Verse 7 may help the interpretation with the reference to the spiritual traps that Satan causes.

Read Elders and Leaders God’s Plan for Leading the Church

Chapter 33- Age Requirements

Chapter 34- Leadership Selection

1. If the idea of “recent convert” means “Newly planted” what metaphor would you use to describe someone who is qualified in this respect?

2. Describe the time and circumstances when you were “planted.”

3. Why (or why not) might there be an age requirement that fits with the idea of spiritual maturation? So how old should a man be to be considered?

³² Knight, George W. III. *The Pastoral Epistles*. *The New International Greek Testament Commentary*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans. Eds. Marshall, Howard I. and Hagner, Donald A. 1992. 164 (Cf. also Fee, 45-47)

4. After reading these passages describe your conviction regarding the potential consequence Paul states for electing a man too early in his spiritual life.

Ezekiel 28:1-19 (A prophetic vision of Satan's oust from heaven)

Luke 10:17-24

1 Corinthians 5

1 Timothy 1:18-20

5. Practically, list some clear ways we can know that a man has been planted long enough to be considered a candidate for eldership.

Nature of Discipleship

Read Disciple Making Church- Bill Hull

Chapter

Handout- MPC Philosophy of Ministry

1. What best describes your progress up to this point in your life as a follower (disciple) of Christ and what evidence can you sight for your choice:

Come and See (John 1:46) - invitation to examine the claims of Christ

Follow Me (Matthew 4:19; 10:38)- invitation to leave where you have been and follow Jesus

Be With Me (Mark 6:7-13; 30-44)- invitation to join Jesus in His Kingdom work

Remain in Me (John15:1-8)- invitation to view all your life as a mission from God

2. Describe the major mileposts in your progress with Jesus.

3. What are the primary characteristics of a disciple-making church? Is MPC a disciple-making church?

4. After reading Matthew 28:18-20 what would you say Jesus was telling his followers to do and how was he suggesting they do it?

5. What do you see as your next step in discipleship? How do you see it coming about?

Application

1. Make an action plan now for your next step with Jesus.

2. Now that you have prayed for someone to mentor specifically and have looked at the nature of progress in Christ- it is time to ask that man to begin praying about meeting with you.

3. Pray for men and women in our church to make their next move forward with Jesus.

Session 14
An Elder has A good reputation with outsiders
Leadership Core Principle- Consistency

A good reputation with outsiders

The qualities of a godly church leader would not only be known in the context of the local church; who the man is would be known both within and without the church. Paul is looking for a credible witness to those outside the Church. This means a good name and an exemplary standing in the wider community.³³ The term “outsiders” clearly refers to those who have not believed the gospel, so any lack here brings derision on the Church. The obvious trap is that nonbelievers will be dissuaded from the reality of the gospel because of living proofs of bad behavior from church leaders. This is one of the most painful repercussions of the lackadaisical attitude of the contemporary Church and her seeming inability to choose Christlike leaders and hold them accountable.

1. It is time to reach outside the comfort of our group- Please ask two “non-churched” friends to answer these questions for you:

What three words would you use to describe me?

Am I a man you would trust as credible?

If I asked you to prove I was a follower of Jesus- could you think of any proofs?

2. Read Acts 2:42-47 how would you describe the attitudes of those outside the Christ community toward the early Church?

3. After reading these passages describe the reputation these people had with those around them:

³³ Lea and Griffin, 114

Acts 10:34-38

Acts 16

Acts 28:1-10

4. Read 1 Peter 2:11-25, How does Peter describe the reputation his readers could have in the face of great persecution?

5. How would you describe the reputation of MPC in this community? What could we do that would give us a more favorable reputation?

Consistency

Read- Practicing the Presence of God- Brother Lawrence

1. Please read 1 Corinthians 9:19-27. How does this show Paul's consistency and what can it mean for yours?

2. List some convictions rising out of reading "Practicing the Presence"

3. How does the concept of consistency in my relationship with Jesus relate to my having a good reputation with those outside of the community of Christ?

4. Read Psalm 1. How can a man sustain consistency based on this beautiful poem?

5. After looking at all these passages and answering the questions in this session, are you a man who holds a consistently good reputation both within and without the Church. If so to what do you attribute this progress? If not what will you do in order to progress?

Application

1. Create action steps for question 5 above.

2. Who are you mentoring now and how is he progressing?

3. Pray for the elders and leaders of MPC.