

How to Deal with Elders

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[0:00] which is why it's in God's word. So God's manual for church life in this manual, this is the important aspect of the manual, the partner manual where you had to go to all the time.

It's this part, this important aspect, how to deal with elders. How do you deal with this? From 1 Timothy 5, 17 to 25.

How to deal with elders. Statement for you, Paul gave Timothy certain vital aspects on how he was to deal with elders, the shepherds of Christ's body.

This is one of the most significant parts of the church manual. Leadership. So Timothy, listen to me. I need you to listen.

And remember, we've talked about this before, but here's Paul, he's writing to Timothy to tell to the church. Here is God's word. To me, to speak to you.

[1:05] This is how we as a church, when we gather together, this is how elders should function, how we should function as a body. In reference to elders. And you'll be able to see different aspects where you can take these aspects, these vital, significant points, and apply them to your own life.

And yet realize that this is really directed to elders, leaders, to me as your pastor. So first, notice, I want you to actually go to verse 21.

We'll start there. I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and the chosen angels to maintain these things. First, Paul tells Timothy, guard these things.

Notice he says, I solemnly charge you, warn you, adjure you. Timothy, listen, how vital are these commands on elders? Seriously significant. And you'll see later, Timothy should do these without partiality, with total justice.

So notice, he says, I solemnly charge, adjure you, warn you, notice, charge you before God, the Father, who gives life to all, to whom we are all responsible.

[2:24] Jesus, who will be the judge of us all. And then he brings up the angels. So first, God the Father, who gives life, to whom all are responsible.

Jesus, who will be the judge of all at the end of time. And then third, the angels, which angels associated in the scripture with Christ's return is the work of judging the world.

It gives even more weight to Paul's charge. The charge is in God's presence. The charge is in Christ's presence. The charge is in the presence of the chosen angels. Maintain these things, or keep these things, or observe these things, or guard these things.

It's important. These things, the requirements that Paul laid out regarding elders, from verse 17 to verse 25.

God, Christ, the angels, were watching. They would judge him for his faithfulness to this task, plus, he was their representative to God's people.

[3:37] And not in the sense of like a priest. Jesus is our high priest. Not in that sense. But in the sense that he was commanded to keep these commands regarding elders. I am commanded to keep these commands regarding elders.

That's what I'm commanded to do for us as God's church. And notice how he does this, how he guards these things. Next part of verse 21, without bias.

with no discrimination or preconceived judgments or prejudices. Do not presume guilt or innocence.

Either way, let the facts be made known. And then he says, doing nothing according to partiality.

Partiality leaning toward or favoring someone, as one writer puts it.

Timothy was called to lead these men in truth that they may be men who lead in truth, who lead in grace, and yet who are firm. Don't waver.

[4:46] It's that way they don't waver. Nothing at all of the sort should be done in partiality, Timothy. You must see the facts. You must be about the words of the faith, the truth.

So that's the first aspect. Guard these things. What are these things? Well, here in verses 17 and 25, I split them up into two different parts.

First, it's shepherding the current elders and then selecting future elders. So that's how I put these verses in two different aspects.

First, it's shepherding current elders and then selecting future elders. And so we'll look at those.

First, shepherding current elders and then there's actually three points underneath each one of them.

That's nice. That's kind of nice. Yeah, yeah, yeah, of course. Three and three. First, number one, shepherding current elders, pay them. Pay them.

[5:51] Pay them. And he's going to name specific ones. This is verses 17 through 18. Notice, he begins here, what are these things to guard?

Let the elders who rule well. Stop there. Notice the word elders. This is the first time it's used in all of 1 Timothy. Elders. First time it's used.

Remember, there's the same office in chapter 3, verse 1 through 7. Overseers. It's the same guy.

These are men who are elders who oversaw the church, shepherding God's people.

The same person. So, these are the ones who led and shepherded the church body. Let the elders, the shepherds, the overseers, who rule well.

Rule means to lead, direct, head, be over, superintend, preside, have concern and care. Let the elders who ruled well, which kind ruled well?

[6:57] Were there elders who didn't rule well? Well, that's interesting. Well, you'll see how Paul considered specific elders among the plurality who ministered in the word.

Now, and before we continue on, I need to say something about there's a tension and you'll see different churches. They have two different types when they have elders.

They have two different types. Elder rule and then elder led. So, I think it's appropriate to have a word about elder rule. Because in one aspect, elders do rule.

Yet, the congregation has the final say. obey. Obey your leaders and submit to them. Hebrews 13, 17. There's an aspect of ruling.

Here, 5, 17 of 1 Timothy. But then, when it comes to discipline, in our very text, verse 20, you have the congregation that's involved in that.

[8:02] We're going to bring this up in just a few moments. The commands from our Lord. It's not the elders who discipline a member out of the church. It's the congregation. So, see, there's this tension where members must obey their leaders, yet leaders give an account.

Elders lead the body, but the final authority rests with its members. There's that tension that you have there and we believe in both as a church here at Conwell Bible Church. Another aspect which we believe coincides with this, with members being involved in the final authority is membership.

You as members have the final say of who's going to become a member here at this church, not me. I bring them to you, but you have the final say.

You as members have the final say with the budget. I don't have the final say. I can give you those things and those things are given to you, but you have the final say of what's done with the budget. You see, those are two ways where you have the final authority rests with the congregation and yet the elders are leading you. So you have both aspects. So I thought it was appropriate for us to mention that, why we believe in, how we would define this elder led versus an elder rule.

[9:25] It's like Presbyterian. Our Presbyterian brothers and sisters, they have elder rule. They have the congregation voting on different things necessarily, like we would do, like membership a bunch of things.

But notice, these are the elders who rule well, which means fitting, appropriate, beautiful. Certain specific elders ruled well in the church body.

So were the elders who didn't rule well? No. He's going to be specific. In what way did they rule well? Look at the text. They're worthy of double honor.

These ones who rule well, they deserve double honor, which seems to denote the twofold definition, respect and honor, but also some kind of compensation, honorarium.

So these guys rule well and they rule so well, you should pay them. Respect them and pay them.

They deserve final financial compensation.

[10:29] One writer says this, faithful preachers should be respected and remunerated. Unquote. Okay, so we got that.

Those rule well, they're worthy of double honor. They should pay them. Which ones? Who were the ones who ruled well? Notice the text.

It says, especially, a better way to translate that would be namely or that is. It's the same word that's used in chapter 4, verse 10. He's a savior of all men, namely, of believers.

Namely, those who work hard in word and teaching. Paul specified the ones who should receive remuneration. Notice the phrase work hard.

It means vigorous and laborious work to the point of weariness or exhaustion. They worked hard in what?

[11:33] In the word and in teaching. They worked hard in the exhortation and instruction of the word or of the words of the faith or of the word of the truth or in sound doctrine.

They led in the truth. It's those guys, them. So it seems like what Paul is doing is saying there's two groups of elders.

Those who ruled or shepherded the body and those who ruled well in the sense that they are ministering in the word of God. I have that up here, don't I? Yeah. The two groups of elders.

Those who ruled or shepherded the body and those who ruled well by ministering in the word of God. A subgroup of the overseers that were gifted in exhortation and teaching.

And it didn't mean that the latter group guys teaching that they weren't shepherding and involved in the congregation. It doesn't mean that. Nor does it mean that they didn't pay the other guys. It doesn't mean that.

[12:39] Not to the exclusion of that. But Paul is making a statement here. All elders must be able to teach chapter 3 verse 2. But there will be and should be elders or pastors who work hard in ruling the church body in the ministry of the word.

This is the primary means of oversight. So what Paul is doing, he elevated to Timothy the ministry of the word. by some elders.

One writer says this, quote, All ministry is significant and important but accurate study and proclamation of God's word is paramount and indispensable. End quote.

This is important. The primary means by which elders shepherd the flock is the word of God. The preaching and teaching of the word of God. This is why we devote this time in our service to this, what you're doing.

This is a vital primary way by which you're being shepherded. By which I'm shepherding you. I have an agenda.

[13:59] My agenda is that your mind would think biblically. My agenda is you would be able to think biblically and holistically about scripture, about life and how life pertains to scripture, how it connects with God's word and how you apply that.

That's what I'm trying to do. To influence your thinking so that your thinking becomes more biblical. That's my agenda. I have an agenda. That is my agenda.

That's what I'm trying to do. I want to influence your thinking towards scriptural truth. And notice Paul, he doesn't just give the statement, he actually proves it from scripture.

The reasons, verse 18. For, the scripture says, you shall not muzzle the ox while threshing. The reasons for this come from scripture.

He quotes Deuteronomy 25, verse 4. Don't muzzle the ox while he's threshing. When I was at Master's Bible Church in Sedona, I was the assistant pastor with Pastor Roy McAtee and we'd be doing something or whatever and then we'd be eating or something.

[15:10] And I would just, this is a pastor joke, okay. We'd be doing something, I'd say, don't muzzle me while I'm threshing. He'd start laughing. You know, it's just, that's a pastor joke.

Don't muzzle me while I'm threshing. He thought it was funny. You guys don't think it's funny because you're not pastors but that's okay. And Paul quotes this verse too in 1 Corinthians 9, verse 10 and 11 saying that Deuteronomy is waiting for our sake.

He says, God wasn't concerned about oxen, is he? God's really concerned about oxen so he puts that in there. Well, of course, this doesn't mean he hates oxen but the verses they're actually specifically, more specifically for laborers in the gospel.

in ministry. And, not only is he going to quote the Old Testament for don't muzzle the ox while he's threshing, Jesus' words from Luke chapter 10, verse 7, which Paul regarded as scripture.

Maybe he had a copy of Luke's gospel with him there or had known that Luke was writing that. The one who labors in God's kingdom is worthy of just wages.

[16:20] the one who's about preaching the kingdom of God and even calling people specifically in the ministry to repentance. That you would trust in Christ alone who died for sinners and resurrected from the dead.

We should be judged because we're sinners and yet Jesus died on our behalf and rose from the dead. Repent and believe. That gospel truth, that's about God's kingdom. and the one who labors in God's kingdom is worthy of just wages.

Those who labor in ministry are worthy to be paid. The church should take care of those who work hard in word and teaching and not the kind of wages where it warrants a BMW or like a Rolls Royce or like a Mercedes.

Although having said that, hear me out. If there's a church and in that area the members have BMWs and they're driving Mercedes and they're being really nice and their pastor is driving a 1982 Plymouth Grand Voyager, that's a problem.

You see what I mean? There's two extremes you can go to that. There's a prosperity gospel, those wicked demonic doctrines that they preach.

[17:53] You know what I'm talking about. But then you can go the other way too. And Paul's gonna deal with these guys who really want some more bling bling.

He's gonna deal with it, we're gonna look at it in like a couple weeks in chapter six. But those who care for the body, that's right, those who care for the body and the ministry of the word should be cared for by the body.

They deserve and are worthy to be paid for the work of the ministry, the ministry of the word and teaching. They deserve that. So again, shepherding current elders, one, pay them.

Number two, protect them. Look at verse 19. Just the very first part. Do not receive an accusation against an elder.

Stop right there. Paul's trying to make a statement because he knew the attack that would come. Those in leadership are subject to scrutiny, criticism, rumors, cynicism, and people just flat out misjudging them.

[19:08] Because of this, Paul, Cosh and Timothy, don't accept or acknowledge accusations that may be unsubstantiated. Only rumor or mere innuendo.

You know, it's, it's said that here, as the pastor's preaching, I have a big target on my front of my chest.

it says, please kick me. Right? It's the target. And Paul knew that. That's why he tells Timothy, pay these guys, but you gotta protect them.

Because these guys are targets for all these different things. Scrutiny, criticism, rumors, cynicism, this blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, all these different things. Having said that, pay, protect, but, number three, purify them.

Except upon two or three witnesses, leaders are not immune to sin or being confronted. I am not immune to being, to sin or being confronted.

[20:28] I'm not. It should be accepted only by two or three witnesses. And these two or three witnesses are witnesses to the sin.

The witnesses testify to the sin done. That's how I take Matthew chapter 18. I think it's those who actually testify to the sin. Not necessarily to the response of being confronted, but to the actual sin. That's how I believe the context of Deuteronomy 19.15 should be read and the words from our Lord in Matthew chapter 18. Two or three witnesses.

By them, they testify. So the principle given Deuteronomy 19.15 and then later by our Lord in Matthew chapter 18 should be followed.

So it seems that the first step given by our Lord in Matthew 18 was followed but did not amount to that leader repenting. So the two or three testify to the sin of that leader as well.

[21:36] And maybe this was happening in the church. Maybe this was happening because of the false teachers that had risen up in the church. Paul doesn't give us those details. He just says, you're going to pay these guys, you're going to protect these guys but you've got to purify these guys.

They're going to need to be confronted. And by the way, this does not mean that members go to another elder or other elders or to a deacon or deacons and tell them of the sin when they haven't gone to the elder themselves.

That's called gossiping. You don't do that. Go to the elder. No, those two or three should go to the elder and confront them with the sin.

At times, Travis had to confront me. Michael had to confront me with my sin. I'm appreciative of that. I went that far too, huh? That's probably wise to have another elder there.

They should be confronting that elder. And notice what he says. The next part here in verse 20. Numeric sentence is those who continue in sin.

[22 : 57] Literally, it's just those who are sinning. So the idea is they're continuing in that sin. So the idea is they haven't repented. So if the accusation is true and the elder is not repented, then it goes before the whole body or congregation.

The rebuke should be public. This means that either the elder did not repent when confronted or the sin is of a public nature. For example, 1 Corinthians 5.

The sin was so public. He wasn't a pastor. He was an elder. But the sin was so public. Paul bypassed the different steps and said, remove the man from among yourselves. This is horrible. Do it now. By the way, the congregation is the ones doing it. Notice, rebuking the presence of all. They're the ones that are doing this.

It's the congregation involved in this. So whatever the case of what's going on, the elder continued to hold some sinful pattern.

[24 : 06] And if so, he should be rebuked or reproved or corrected and it happens only when the other steps have failed. Then a rebuke is in order as he tells Timothy.

And notice what he says. In Matthew 18, the goal is to restore. But notice what he gives as the goal here in verse 20.

so that the rest also literally may have fear. Fear of what? The fear of a public rebuke but also the fear of sinning themselves.

Deuteronomy 13, verse 11. Chapter 19, verse 20. That God's people would be afraid of the discipline and withdraw from sin themselves. That you would see the sin and you'd repent and be like, oh man, there's an elder who's doing this?

What am I doing? You see, this is how you apply these verses to yourself. If God is so concerned about elders being pure, where does that leave the rest of us?

[25 : 16] You know what I'm saying? Say, Lord, thank you that you saved me. Please purify me. Yeah, right, amen. If these accusations come with two or three witnesses, let objectivity rule.

That's where this whole thing, don't let bias come in. Don't let discrimination come in. Do it without partiality. Those who commit sin publicly rebuke, all of this must be done without any kind of prejudgment, any kind of partiality.

Truth must rule. Guard these things, Timothy. Shepherding current elders. Pay them, protect them, purify them.

And now what I think Paul does here with Timothy, now he begins to talk about choosing future elders. And this is where you have verse 22 to 25. And there's three points underneath this too. Verse 22, number one, be patient. What is a sure way to keep the things that he talks about in verse 19 and 20, how do you keep that from happening?

[26 : 27] By doing these three aspects. Be patient, being pure, being perceptive. All Ps. And by the way, I don't think that it connects with verse 20 in the sense of reestablishing an elder who sinned.

I don't think that's what Paul was talking about here in verse 22. I think he's actually talking about selecting elders in general. So he says, verse 22, do not lay hands upon anyone quickly.

What does he mean? He means, allow an appropriate amount of time to pass before you ordain another man to be an elder. Goodness gracious, I learned this the hard way.

I learned this the hard way. Not with Daniel. I learned this the hard way. And the laying on of his hands was a commissioning. Commissioning him to elder work, to be a shepherd in God's church. Don't put yourself in a bad predicament by commissioning someone too fast, Timothy. Be patient. Friends, this is hard.

[27 : 47] Especially if you have very few men from which to choose. And from the men you have to choose some have no desire to be an elder. And you're a solo pastor.

And people make accusations against you because you're the only pastor. You get judged and you get criticized. Notice I'm speaking from experience.

It's been hard. It's not easy. I had a friend of mine. He was a pastor at, excuse me, Crossroads Bible Church when I was 14 years old.

And he left when I was 17. And I saw him like four years ago, five years ago, four years ago, at Shepherd's Conference. He told me he waited, I think it was 10 or 12 years before he got another elder.

10 years before he waited to get another elder. 10 years. Can you imagine that? Be patient.

[29:06] Notice what he says as well. New American Standard says, and thus share, but literally it's just, do not share in the sins of others. It's a command. Because if Timothy, I, were to lay hands on a man too quickly, it would seem like he was condoning his sin.

Timothy became responsible for those sins. You're going to have problems if you commission someone too soon, Timothy. Verse 19 to 20. Be patient.

But number two, be patient. Number two, not just be patient, but number two, be pure yourself.

Timothy, you focus on you being pure. Notice verse, last part of verse 22. New American Standard says, keep yourself free from sin.

Literally, it's be pure. Or stay pure. avoid this by staying pure yourself, Timothy.

[30:21] Watch yourself in your own life. First time he said this to him. He was leading these men in godliness and in the words of the faith. So, Timothy, watch your own walk.

And notice, he, he, he, he talks about something, and this says, baffled commentators for centuries. All of a sudden, don't drink water, use a little wine. You're like, oh, what? Right? Verse 23. No longer drink water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent sicknesses. What is this all about? So, Pastor's supposed to drink wine. Well, to be pure, Timothy had been drinking only water, being careful not to be addicted to much wine.

Remember chapter 3, verse 3? But Paul encouraged them not to forego a little wine for medicinal reasons. Those times, you did not want to drink the water.

[31:36] You think, Cottonwood and Clarkdale water was bad? Oh, my. You would get sick from the water, which is why they mixed the wine with water. Everyone drank wine. And the wine was watered down big time.

And then the strong wine or strong drink was straight wine, no water involved. Because the wine would kill the bacteria. Timothy had some kind of stomach issues.

I can identify with that. He was sick with something, but Paul didn't tell us what it is, but wine would help him. So he's telling Timothy, look, Timothy, stay pure, but also take care of yourself else the ministry will suffer.

Be pure, but take care of yourself else the ministry will suffer. And you're selecting of future elders. Be mindful of where you're at with Christ, Timothy.

Be patient, be pure, but also, here's number three, be perceptive. This is where you have verse 24 to 25, which seems odd. Like, what's he talking about? He's still in the subject of elders.

[32:46] Why must he be careful in verse 22? Why must he be patient? Notice verse 24. The sins of some men are made quite clear going before them unto judgment.

For others, their sins follow after. What's he talking about? Be perceptive. Be perceptive so as to give adequate time for sins to surface to eliminate any accusations.

One writer says this, quote, not all is as it seems to be at first glance. Or, how do we normally put it? Don't judge a book by its cover. Interesting, these verses actually state the same truth.

But first is in regards to sin. Verse 25 is in regards to good deeds. See, time always tells the truth and reality of a man's life.

[33:49] Give it time and be discerning. That's why you should be patient. That's why you as a church should be patient and you should be discerning as you begin the process, as you continue the process of selecting elders for this church.

So the sins of some men, he says, are made quite clear. For some men, their sin is so evident and so obvious that an early judgment can be determined and thus you don't commission them.

And I believe this is talking about human judgment, not God's judgment in the future. I don't think he's talking about that. There's not anywhere in the context. But then he says the next part of verse 24, but others, their sins follow after.

See, it's not so much the guys that are really obvious, the sins that are really obvious out there in the open, that's not necessarily the concern. The real concern is sin that is not so obvious.

In other words, you need to allow time to get to know some men before you start putting them into leadership because it may take time before their sin becomes apparent. Timothy, you gotta be discerning in this.

[35 : 03] You gotta have discernment. Be perceptive. Don't be in such a hurry to select elders because it can prove to be a huge disaster to the church body.

Test it with time and prayer. Verse 25, likewise, likewise, likewise, also deeds that are good are made quite clear.

The same can be said about deeds which are good. Some are evident, obviously, initially you just see it, but then he says this, and those which are otherwise are not able to be concealed.

Good deeds that are not immediately evident will eventually come to light, though they're now otherwise hidden. Good deeds can't be concealed. It's just gonna come out.

God's gonna bring it out because God's gonna bring out who he wants to shepherd his church, right? Godliness is the evidence of one's faith in Christ.

[36 : 15] That's what we've seen in Timothy. And that evidence is seen by good deeds. They are the evidence of one's love for Christ and his body. Timothy, Timothy, if you move too quick, you'll miss out on some really fine men.

So, be perceptive, keeping in mind that it's a good thing to be slow to lay hands upon a man because you will discover men whose worthiness of the overseer position was not readily apparent. It takes lots of patience, grace, discernment, thinking, perception, and prayer.

And you know what? God in his time will eventually make known the men he wants to shepherd his church body. He'll make it known.

And it takes those things, patience, grace, discernment, thinking, perception, prayer. I've been burned in the past. I'm a whole lot more gun shy on this.

[37 : 29] I'm going to be very careful. And I think you should be too. And the last side I want to put up here, I put up here on a reason, for a reason, for all of us to do this together because I think this is vitally important for us as a church.

I ask you, please pray with me that God will raise up men to be elders or shepherds in Christ's body and deacons who will serve, be servants. Pray for God to do that too.

Pray for God to raise up men to be leaders. Pray for God to raise up men to be shepherds. I need you to pray with me in this. And we've seen the commands.

Let's be patient, be pure ourselves, and yet let's be discerning and perceptive in this and work together in this.

Let's ask God to pray. Let's ask God to help us with this as we pray. Can we do that? We do pray for this, oh Lord. We need your help. So that's why we stop and we pray and we ask.

[38 : 46] Raise up men to be elders. Raise up men to be shepherds in your church, in your body, oh Jesus, with you as our senior pastor. Encourage us to be patient.

May we be driven to our own purity and seeking out Christ. Thank you for the gospel truth and your grace given to us.

Help us to be discerning as we think and consider the direction of your church and what you have for us. We're excited to see what you're going to do. Use us to that end and bring about and raise up men.

We need it. I want to encourage you this time, we have our normal time of silence where maybe you would pray.

Pray for that. Pray for that. Raise up elders. Maybe you want to pray as you're considering the gospel and how God has saved you and he's declared you pure and maybe you want to pray, God, keep working your work of purity in me.

[40 : 14] Different things you can pray for, different things you can focus on. fill your minds with gospel truth. I encourage you to do that. You know, we'll sing, we'll pray.

I encourage you, please, judo music, I'll be home for those genres. Congratulations, deariring sound, thanks for your skills. You need The Moment of Hopeirds, I'll be even able to pray for many stories. vor ■■■■ out.

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