

Servant Oriented Leadership

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Preacher: BK Smith

[0 : 00] As Dave read you our passage, we're actually in 1 Timothy as opposed to Ephesians. And I'm going to explain why in a little bit. But in order to understand, Timothy was actually written to the church at Ephesus.

So we're kind of tagging along on some teaching that occurred later on in the ministry of Paul to this church. When 1 Timothy was written, Timothy, a disciple of Paul, had been sent to the church of Ephesus after the letter of Ephesians had gone to help them work through some issues.

So I thought it would be really apt to go through this process. Because as we've been learning in this book of Ephesians that God has created this new people, this new nation called Christians. Believers in Jesus Christ that are made up of both Jews and Gentiles. No longer are we to worship as the Jews do. And no longer as we are to worship as the Gentiles do.

Which was pretty much whatever way of worship they could make up. And we're coming under God's way of worshiping. So as God creates this church, he gives two incredible gifts to the church.

[1 : 22] The first one is spiritual gifts. These works of the Spirit through us that connect us all together as living stones in this symbolic temple of God that God lives within.

That's really awesome. That God and the Holy Spirit lives within us. Not only individually, but collectively as well. And there's this power that comes from these spiritual gifts in order to serve Jesus and serve one another.

And that service isn't just to be kind. That service is to help others mature in their faith of Jesus Christ.

It's awesome. Now the second thing that other people don't consider a gift is leaders, right?

Sometimes people think of the leaders as the curse. You know, if you've worked in any kind of work, there's always the big boss man.

And that becomes your image of what work or leadership is supposed to be. If you've had really bad bosses, you do a lot of target practice.

[2 : 34] You know, you get their pictures up at 25, 50 yards and 75 yards. And, you know, and then you forget the distance and you just go at it with the shotgun, right? You just, you can't stand your boss.

But some of us through the years have had really great bosses. I remember in Cesus, I had this man who's my boss. And I used to say I'd go to hell and back with him because he was just an incredible leader who knew his people so well and served us so excellently and faithfully that he had my entire loyalty.

But sometimes when it comes to this idea of church, we get kind of mixed up about what leaders are supposed to look like, what they're supposed to do, say, and be.

But it's really cool. Is that a good hip word that people understand? Cool, right? Can I still use that? Anyway, in a really good way, God gives us information to help us in this function.

So we see these leadership that he's created. And it talked about last week, we learned starting from the apostles who had a word from Jesus, went out, started churches. That word brought to you by prophets who stood among God's people declaring God's word again going forth.

[3 : 57] Then we had these evangelist people who went into the world. And, you know, today we look at them as modern missionaries or people going into unchurched areas. So we had these evangelists going out.

Then we also had this group of people called shepherds and teachers. Those who opened up God's word for us that we could understand it. And the ultimate reason that God gave all these leaders was to, one, equip the saints, that is you, into that word saint or that word equip means to make ready.

To make ready. Why? Because there is a work that is done. Sadly, too often we believe that as that point of I'm saved, I'm not going to hell.

Hallelujah, I can do what I want. But we understand God's got something more for you as his child. You get that?

That's what we need to think about sometimes. What does God really have for me as his child?

Because my father was about something. And we are to be about something as well.

[5 : 16] That is that church. It's not this sitting back, I've arrived. But God has got something for us. Last week, I asked you two simple questions.

One, what do you think is my role as a pastor or the role of a minister? And the second question that I asked is, what is your role as a member?

Some of you have given me some feedback on that. Some, you kind of had it right. And on other things you really hadn't thought about. There's a couple of reasons why we tend to think differently on these things.

A few of them. I just thought of a few. What are some of the reasons of how we think about church role of leaders and role of members? One, whatever your particular church background is.

If you have a certain church culture that has done it always this way, sometimes it's right and biblical. Sometimes it's not.

[6 : 41] And most people in those positions need to ask themselves, are we really being biblical how we do it? My friend was sharing this story about how he was adjusting their leadership structure because it was indeed entirely not built on scripture.

And he just thought, all right, we're just going to go back to scripture and rebuild it. People were horrified. Horrified because they had thought for those 10, 15, 20 years, they were doing what was biblical.

And the problem was it was, A, never taught. And they failed to be like the Bereans who Paul says, hey, don't just listen to what I say. Listen to what God's word says.

But know these things so that you would know these are true. And this sad group of people really didn't know how to read God's word or take it.

So through that, they've been able to change. They've been able to grow. And now they're a healthy church. But that was a big pill to swallow, right? Just think. You believe you've been going to church. You've been biblical in all those ways.

[7 : 52] Then you find out, whoa. Oh, I haven't been after God's ways of doing things. Then it starts making you think, what else am I wrong on? In other ways, it all depends whether you've been at a big church or a small church.

If you've usually been at a small church, a lot of people believe that the pastor does all the work, right? And if you're at a big church, you could have the position that all the pastors do all the work. You know, and that depends whether you come from a discipleship-driven model, which I believe is the biblical model, or a programs-driven church.

Program-driven, there's a lot of plug-and-play, I call it. You come, you take your kids, you just plug them into whatever area, whatever you go, and you sit back, you watch, you take in, then you go home.

Sadly, a lot of churches in this day are built on that model. But as we learned for the last couple of weeks, you are the ministers.

[8 : 55] You are the ones that God has calling, that God has equipped to do the work, yes, even amongst the body itself. And we learned that God's given this other station, these quote-unquote leaders, to equip you for this work.

And sadly, sometimes your view is based on sin. And I don't mean your sin, but some people hate elder-led churches because an elder or a pastor sinned.

That was an elder, therefore they don't want it. And they want to go with something else. The reality is if I sent you guys off to a Christian bookstore to come back with all the different points of view, you would actually have two main views coming back.

And if I asked you just to bring the books, you'd probably have a whole bunch of books this high on leadership, and then you'd have about books this high on what true spiritual leadership is.

And there's a reason for that. One, a lot of these books are built on worldly principles. And don't get me wrong, sometimes some worldly principles are really helpful.

[10:18] And the reason why people gravitate to that is people who've been using some of those, claiming they've been using some of those, but really weren't using some of those.

So they're like, hey, church isn't going, maybe we need to find some other avenue of wisdom. Sometimes someone failed us, whether it be an elder, a pastor.

Sometimes it's a congregation that has failed. What's interesting that one of the better books that I've ever read on organizational behavior is a secular book.

And it's quite interesting. It actually doesn't tell you how to do something. It just, well, it kind of does, but it brings out a statistical evaluation. Have you guys ever heard that book, Good to Great, by, I think it's Tim Collins.

Have you ever heard that book? It's kind of interesting. So basically, he did this survey of these companies for 15 years. And he talked about why, what makes a four out of five star company become a five out of five star company.

[11:27] So it's not like it's a book on how to be a complete bankrupt one out of five company. He's talking about companies that have, you kind of got it going together.

And, but how do you go to that next level of success? And one of the reasons why he's found his conclusions, which has led a lot of people to wonder if it's indeed Christian, is this remarkable quality he finds in the leaders of those five out of five star companies.

And it's humility. And it's humility. He said humility. He says that was one of the observations that they made compared to the other type of companies.

Now, a lot of people kind of thought, you know, is he Christian to be making that assumption that it's humble? But this is the point I'm trying to make.

Successful driven companies, as they stated, were never driven by one man. And out of the companies that they started, if it was a successful driven company, it wasn't one guy who drove the boat.

[12:42] It was driven by a team of people who all bought into the mission. And that guy didn't take credit, but he gave credit to the group and organization.

That's kind of the biblical idea. It's not about one man. And I'll tell you why this is so remarkable that's going on today.

If you're any student of evangelicalism, you would know in the last 10 years, three major ministries have collapsed. We're talking ministries with worldwide influences going around planting churches. But these ministries were all about one guy. Do you remember Mars Hill down in Seattle? That's the closest one to us. Massive started a church planting network, everything.

But they got to be about the branding of the one guy. So when he was preaching, you would see his initials behind him. Not a cross. They might put a cross up there, but his initials would be somewhere.

[13:49] One of them was actually a mentor of mine. When I was with Harvest Bible Ministry, I ended up pulling out at a time where I really believed there was some narcissistic views coming out.

And sure enough, in the last six months, a whole church of 15,000 people has collapsed. They've had 200 churches all over the world. Africa really building down in Central and South America.

It's sad. And there's a few other ministries like that. And what's really interesting, and people say, look, people are coming to Christ. There's a lot of really wonderful things are happening.

But what's interesting, nobody cared to see. Is that what was taught in God's Word? Remember, it talked about in Ephesians 4.

Is that the example we have from the apostles? Was John about John? Was Andrew about Andrew? Was Philip about Philip? No, they were about Jesus Christ and his Word.

[14:53] Amen? Then you had these prophets that came back. We don't even know most of their names because it wasn't about them. It was about Jesus Christ, his Word.

Then he gave us these examples of evangelists. Evangelists don't go and preach themselves. They go out and preach Jesus with power. Amen? Then you have these shepherds and teachers who are to be about God's Word.

I think Paul leaves us this wonderful picture of a legacy for us. So today I want to look at the qualities we want to see for those in church leadership.

What does the Bible spell out which is so important for the church? What was interesting when I was a part of Harvest is when one of the other major churches said, I would never have James as one of my elders.

And he was the guy who founded the whole ministry. And I said, uh-oh, we're in trouble. Because if he doesn't have the character to be one of your elders, then how can he be the character to lead a whole church planning ministry?

[16:04] And sadly, those words ended up being prophetic. So we're going to be looking at this passage in 1 Timothy. And here, as Dave read, were the quote-unquote characteristics of an elder.

And I want you to see that these characteristics are not superpowers. These characteristics are not even spiritual gifts.

What's kind of interesting is, as Dave noted, they're truly the characteristics that we are all to aspire to. These are just holy men who are seeking a holy God.

Amen? And that's exactly what Paul tells us about. So turn with me to 1 Timothy 3. That's the passage.

Now, there's a lot to be said on this topic. But there's certain areas I want you to understand. The first one is the one I've already stated. It's the context.

[17:11] This church, Ephesus, was in trouble. All right? They had a letter. Letter to the Ephesians. A few years have passed. Paul's gone on.

But there was some problems at this church. So Paul decides to pen Timothy this letter to address some of these issues.

And some of the issues that they were failing at, and it's the roles that we're talking about. One, equipping the saints. Two, teaching them to do the work of the ministry.

One, fourth, third, sorry, I can't count. They were to build people up into discipleship and maturity of faith. And they were to make ready the believers.

So the first way that this is done, it notes, is they are to teach. They are to teach.

[18:10] Now, when we think of teach, we think of classroom teach. We think of teaching from the pulpit. But what Paul's talking about here is a ministry of one-on-one discipleship.

Elders, leaders in our church, whether they be in the role of an elder or not, need to be able to teach spiritual truths. That means teaching a person who has questions about life and being able to walk them through life's trials.

What are some of our trials, right? Marriage. Money. Finances. Personal holiness.

Work. How do you become a big, good worker? I know for some of us who are older, but some of us who are younger don't always know some of these truths that are out there.

You know, so a disciple or a teacher is one who talks about these aspects of life. How to deal with your personal sin. To teach someone, how come I feel shame?

[19:21] Am I ever forgiven? We're talking basic spiritual truths. So leaders, teachers, disciples are those people who are able to walk people through life's challenges.

And the greatest need for teaching in these lives on life issues. So sadly, this seems to have not been happening in Ephesus. In 1 Timothy, we read that some of the teachers were teaching false doctrine.

Some were getting into fruitless discussions. Some of them were going back to the law. They were saying to be a good Christian, you need to do this and you don't need to do that. And some, there was actually open sin in the eldership that needed public rebuke and it wasn't happening.

So here, Paul is setting out what needs to happen. So turn with me. Let's take a look at verse 1.

This is actually a loaded verse. Now before I get into this verse, I want you to understand what this idea of elder means. Perhaps you're new, you haven't heard it.

[20:36] Elder doesn't necessarily mean old. But usually elders are older or people who are more mature in the faith, who've got some years under the belt, who have proven themselves in some of these areas.

In the Bible, the Jewish biblical community would have been very familiar with this term elder. In Exodus 18, we find Moses appointing elders to teach and judge the people of Israel.

Now when I say judge, it kind of has the idea of an accord, but they're settling disputes. People would bring problems, you know, the kind that Marty brings when someone's sitting in his seat.

Listen, I need you guys to work this out for me. I always get this seat. How come someone else is here? You know, whatever it may be. Those kind of problems. They would sit at the front of the gates, whatever.

You know what? One of my lambs drifted into the neighbor's yard and he went and slaughtered it and ate it. What do I do? Right? You know, those are some of the things that can cause problems

between people.

[21 : 44] So that was part of their role. It was almost functioning on a community judicial level. So throughout the Old Testament, God's people were represented and governed by elders who sat at the city gates and taught in synagogues.

So we see the same thing happening in the New Testament. In Acts 11, when the first Christians, I don't know if you remember, but Jerusalem, temples wiped out.

They were in great need. Churches from all over the New World were bringing gifts to help the starving Christians in Jerusalem. But they would present them to the elders. They made sure they were doing it under the direction of elders.

Acts tells us that on their missionary journeys, Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in all the churches. So by the time we get to 1 Timothy, this idea of elders is a well-established office or role in the church.

Basically, it's people who care for the people. So they already have that. So what kind of qualities is Timothy to look for? So let's look at verse 1. It says, The difference is this is a role, not a position.

[23 : 27] Okay? And we're going to understand this in a little bit, how this flushes out. I remember when I was in high school, I went to high school with someone pretty famous. It's true.

It was a couple people and it wasn't me. All right? And you guys might, I'll forgive you if you haven't heard about him, but his name was Lance Storm. Does that, anybody know who Lance Storm is? Guys, he was the WWE Intercontinental Wrestling Champion for like two years. All right? He became a pro wrestler.

All right? And I remember when we were in phys ed, he was massive. Okay? Like he had a body like Atlas. Now, did I aspire to have that kind of a body?

And this is the difference between wishing, hoping, and aspiring. No. If there was a pill that I could take that would make me look like him, I would have taken it.

[24 : 28] Okay? And what it's saying is, to be an elder is not just to have a thought that would be nice. You actually went home like Lance did every single night and you worked out.

He worked out till his body was a fine chiseled machine. His chest was so big, he could hug us. I know this has nothing to do with anything important. But he could hug us because of his sternum. He could create so much suction, we could stick to him. Right? He was such a big guy. He'd wrestle us and go, ah! Anyway. But he would work out so hard to be that person.

It wasn't a position he was after. It was a role of a wrestler. And to be that role of the wrestler meant hours and hours and hours and hours of training, going home, hitting the weights, getting that perfect form, but then learning all these type of moves.

The same thing with eldership. It's not something that you think, hey, that's something I want to be one day. It's something you have to strive for. You have to work at it.

[25 : 42] And what's interesting is when we say work, we think it's a bunch of actions.

But as we're going to see here, it's something else. If you have an NIV, it sadly uses the word, have your heart set on being an overseer.

That is wrong. That's like having my heart set on looking like Lance. No, no, no. If I wanted to be like Lance, I would have been working out. It isn't this wishful thinking of idea.

The idea of aspiring cares with it the idea of working hard to strive to exert much effort and energy to stretch yourself. Why?

Because it's not a position you have to actually function in a role. You have to make life choices.

Now, some elders are making life choices and they don't even know what they are.

[26 : 38] And I mean by that, they're not making these life choices to become elders. They're making life choices, which I pray every single person here would be qualified at some point.

Is there following Jesus Christ? They're after him, pursuing him. So the reality is the duties of an elder are intense. Although Timothy 1.5 indicates that there are different types of elders.

There's elders who teach. There's elders who administrate. But they all have this essential function. And it has to be about liking people.

Elders have to like people. One of my favorite elders that I had in my past had this saying, Elders need to smell like sheep. They have to know the people.

And it's like a shepherd doesn't sit back on a watchtower and direct his sheep through a bullhorn, right? A shepherd who's involved with sheep has to get in there.

[27 : 38] He's got to hug them. He's got to hold them. He's got to wrestle them. He's got to push them over. And sadly, you don't want a shepherd coming over to your house for dinner at any time, right? They stink like sheep.

But that is the idea that Paul is trying to get a cross. So it's not about just knowing God's word. It's not just about being organized with your information.

It's not sitting high in a desk chair in my office or white towers and making these great decisions. It's a process about being involved in the life of people.

I think what sadly destroys this whole idea of biblical eldership, it's seen as a position of status rather than a position of service. Sadly, we see sometimes men push for the role.

Some churches choose men because of their business credentials, their professional experience. They're a strong leader, a great communicator. They ask their question, well, you know.

[28 : 47] But what we read in scriptures is God doesn't work the way the world works. God seems to call those that the world would hardly notice.

The reality is a church will become what a leaders are like. If a leadership is friendly, discipleship-minded, gracious, generous, sincere, kind, and hospitable, that's what happens in the church.

If the leadership is distant, aloof, negative, stingy, judgmental, that will be reflected in the church. Yes, there are certain qualities of functions that need to be carried out, and you need certain characteristics.

The first one is an elder needs to care about the gospel. Amen? We're all to care about the gospel. But an elder, you should note, has a care about the gospel. Two, he has to care about God's commands, not only for you, but for him.

As every believer is to be holy, he's supposed to have a compassionate heart, kind, humble, meek, patient, forgives easily, bears with others through difficult times, does not complain and understands God's forgiveness towards them, loving.

[30 : 11] And they have this peace of Christ rule in their heart. This is the message of the New Testament. So, how do these characteristics manifest themselves in the life of a believer?

Take a look at verse 2. It says, Therefore, an overseer, elder, pastor, must be above reproach. Must be above reproach, or the other word would be irreproachable.

And he's going to be irreproachable in four areas. And I want to talk to you about those four areas. One, he's got to be above reproach in relation to God.

So, one, he's got to be a believer. 1 Timothy 1. He needs to be blameless as a steward of God. He needs to be not a novice, not a new convert.

But he has to be somebody who's been around church and Christians for some time, and grown in his maturity. And the other aspect is, he has to be able to teach.

[31 : 16] And what it means by teach, not preach, but teach. And what that means is he can exhort other believers and refute false teaching. Sadly, I've seen some churches who elders can't tell if the...

There's actually a saying. It's easier to go in and teach false doctrine to a church than it is to disrupt a culture. So, what it means by that is, I can come in, preach solid biblical, but if I change things in the culture, I'll get turfed quick.

The other way is, if I don't upset the culture, yet preach false doctrine, chances are I'll have a long career at that church.

It tells you about the state of the church. People want peace in a church. And if the culture's upset, people get upset, but they don't really pay attention to doctrine in right biblical teaching.

So, that's his first play. It's a relationship to God that exists. The second aspect, it's relation to family. He needs to be a husband of one wife. And the way we used to call this at seminary, it's called a one-woman man.

[32 : 34] What that means is, his whole life is about his wife. It doesn't mean he's got one marriage, because sadly we know people who've got one marriage, but their affections are elsewhere.

So, he's talking about a one-woman man. His eyes don't wander. His emotions aren't involved with another woman. As one of my mentors always said, if there's ever a woman that you want to hang out with more than your wife, get away.

Whether it be hiking, biking, reading, even talking, stay away. You want to be a one-woman man.

The other thing is, he rules, or he's able to oversee his own house. Well, his children are faithful, and they're not accused of rebellion to God. Now, if you go over to Titus, it says that your children should be saved.

And I believe, if you want to get into the Greek, I don't believe it's saved, because the fact of the matter is, although you as parents are their number one influence on your children being saved, it's ultimately the work of the Spirit, right?

[33 : 46] And their own decision before the Lord. But they should still respect you. I know some elders have non-Christian kids, but they worship their parents. They love their parents.

Just God, at that time, hasn't turned their heart yet. It's still something they're struggling with. But they respect their parents. Sadly, I have known some elders disqualified, because the kids are out of the house, and it's basically the elders were kind of keeping a top notch on their kids, and their kids get out, and their kids are completely destructive.

In every sort of way, men in their integrity will step down. At that point, they'll say, well, those kids aren't under your authority anymore.

But one of them just clearly said, obviously, they were hiding their authority when they were living with me. One of the greatest stories I ever heard was one of my professors, his daughter got pregnant out of wedlock, so she took off.

Didn't want to embarrass her dad. Moved across the states. What he did was he quit being an elder, gave up his pastor position, and he moved across country to where she was.

[34 : 57] Because there's these ministries that help. Because in a lot of Christian circles, sadly, I don't know if they're Christian, but we'll call them fundamentalist circles, it's such a great, if a woman's pregnant outside of wedlock, she's ostracized, pushed out.

So these homes have been created to give these young girls love and support during that time. And she thought she would have to be that for her dad. So it's interesting, he chased her down, and through that process, she got saved because she saw a level of intensity of love that the mother and father had for her.

And what's interesting now, she's married to a godly guy, and he's like a traveling university professor, and her and her husband travel him the world over. Wherever he is, she lives in the next lot next to him with their kids.

That's how great that love Tia has for her dad. It's incredible. So he rules well. He's not covetous. He doesn't love her of money.

He's not greedy for base gain. So that's relation to God, then a relation to family. Then we see a relation to self. One, to be temperate. A sober individual.

[36 : 07] He's willing to think about things. He's not going to rush into decisions. He wants to be prudent. He's not given to wine, which we know can lead us to make wrong decisions.

He's not self-willed. I remember MacArthur teaching us, go into an elders meeting and lose. Lose a vote. And he says, if you're winning every time, there's probably a problem with you.

That there is going to be certain things that your elders are going to see different than you are. And if you feel like it's a hill to die on, you've probably gotten ahead of yourself. And you have to be a lover of good.

An elder is to love good. Then the fourth area of relationships is to others. Good behavior. He's orderly, respectable. He's given to hospitality.

He's not violent. He's not pugnacious. And that word pugnacious means he doesn't want to argue all the time. If you have a pastor who always wants to argue all the theological points with you till you agree with him, there's a problem with that.

[37 : 16] Sometimes we get that way on hobby horses. It's not worth it. It's to be patient. It's to moderate, forbearing, gentle.

Not a brawler, contentious. Not quick-tempered. Outsiders actually think well of him. You go to his place of work, he will have a good reputation.

They will be friends there. He's to be holy and devout. Self-controlled. And he has a desire for justice. What this all means is that there's no credible attack could be made against a man of this character.

Now, let me be the first to tell you, because you guys probably don't know this, but elders aren't without sin. It's true.

I remember struggling with some of these aspects when I was at seminary. And coming to him, because there were some areas that I didn't think I measured up in. And some of it is, well, what is your trajectory?

[38 : 25] Where are you going? Are you growing in certain areas? So, some areas, you're going to be 10 out of 10. Some areas, you're like a 5 going on a 6 on. And those are just some of the aspects.

We're all different. We're all built different. The elders here, we all have, I don't know if you guys clued in, but we all have some pretty different personalities. You know that? It's true. Those guys don't like baseball.

I do. Well, sorry, Steve. Didn't mean to. You know, but there's just different aspects. Some like to run. Some like to not run. Some like to bike, motorcycle. There's just different things the way God has created us.

So, in the same way, in our maturity in certain areas, there's certain areas, some are stronger, some are not. But what he's talking about is an elder, you want an elder who's quick to repent, quick to confess, and one who hasn't accomplished a scandalous sin.

And they should be blameless in their outward, observable conduct. There is a reason why the Bible teaches there needs to be two or three witnesses when making an accusation against an elder.

[39 : 39] It's kind of funny. I was thinking about some of the crazy accusations I've heard through my own life and some of my friends, and some of them are really heartbreaking. I knew in one church, they wanted to disqualify an elder because his car is not clean.

And they were very serious about that. I've been disqualified my whole life then. Right? One person submitted that he didn't drive a domestic car.

He had an import. So, if he can't make the right decision on what kind of car to buy, which should be a Ford, Chevy, or I guess he forgot that Toyota is made in America now, he should not be an elder.

And I'm being serious. I'm talking about people being really upset about these things. Some people don't want him to be an elder because they don't like his wife. He's too old, or he's too young.

He's not gifted enough, or he's not rich enough. They don't like his profession. He doesn't have enough education. And sadly, one of the most, my one friends, they were trying to disqualify him, is because he wasn't good looking enough.

[40 : 50] We laugh, but it's sad, you know. We can't have you as an elder. You don't look good looking enough. This is what happens when we get away from the word of God.

And we appreciate what God has to say on this subject. One of my friends is doing his doctorate on this subject, and he essentially boils down elders and church leaders into three essential categories.

One, character. Does their life reflect their faith? They're not going to be perfect, but they will reflect Jesus Christ in their life. Amen? The second one is conviction. Does he have the ability to teach his faith?

One of the most important aspects of being an elder is sharing the gospel and the truths of scripture. And it's helping people grow in their faith.

If we have an elder that constantly says, you got to go talk to the pastors about that, we probably need to beef him up in those areas of the Christian faith. And as under conviction, he needs to come beside fathers who may be struggling and provide biblical answers for being a husband and a dad.

[42 : 01] These words are all under the word discipleship. He has to be willing and able to disciple others. And the third area, so you have character, you have conviction.

The third one is competence. Can he lead others to greater faith in Christ and do the task or the work of an elder? Do you trust him for sound biblical reasons?

We're not talking about silly personal preferences here, but are they able to confront sin and be used by God as God's instrument to carry out God's will for the church?

When it says it, can he manage his home? Does his wife love him? Do his children appreciate him? Does he have an ability to guard against false teaching?

The reality is when elders lack the courage to confront, the church loses its convictions. Sadly, the sign of the times is not to mention the word doctrine.

[43 : 02] The reason why? Because it divides, we can't have for it. If there's no doctrines, there's no convictions, and false teaching is free to flourish.

Acts 20:28 gives us this wonderful warning. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the church of God which he obtained with his own blood.

Think about that for a second. This is a word that God gives the overseers. I paid with my own blood for these people.

And I'm handing it off to you. I need you to pay careful attention to yourselves. I need you to pay careful attention to your flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.

Then notice in verse 9, it says, I know that after my departure, fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. And if from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things to draw away the disciples after them.

[44 : 26] these were words written to the elders at Ephesus. It's going to happen. So how does this affect us here at SBC?

One of the challenges that I've been here, one of the challenges that you always have is because of, I'll tell you my pet peeve, I hate the word board of elders. I do. I hate board of elders because it has the idea that there's just a group of men in a room, round table, smoking cigars, making big decisions.

When it's not true. It's usually on the golf course, smoking cigars, making big, no, just kidding. But it's not a board, it's a group of men who care judiciously for your faith.

That's what elders do. That's why we pray. I'm guilty of not praying enough and meeting with the elders enough to continue praying.

Just as it was suggested, we usually meet every two weeks. It's been put, should we meet every week to pray, to hold up, to connect with you, to know and understand what's going on?

[45 : 46] We all need to have, so all our elders are leading small groups except for Steve at the moment, just where Steve's at in his life.

He's not able to do that because of his work schedule. But if you know Steve, you know he's a man who connects with people and he speaks truth into their lives, right? You need something done, you want to meet, he's there, he's available, he's going to teach and every single one of us are like that. One of the things is I'm very thankful for the leadership here. I was very, that was my biggest interviewing piece was how the elders run, who they were, what their qualifications were.

And listen, it's not lost upon me that some of you had a bad experience. You had a pastor that failed in his role. And for some of you, this isn't just one, it's twice, three times.

I don't want to ever see that happen here again. And a big part of that is you guys being active in the ministry. If we start to get isolated, doing everything apart from you, guess what's going to happen?

[46 : 59] It makes your elder easy target before Satan, right? If he doesn't have a body of believers around him, praying, encouraging, speaking into his life, guarding the pastor's marriage, guarding your own marriages, things are going to fall apart.

One of the things that was interesting that a few people have brought up is from last sermon, they said, we didn't really realize that it's the church itself that God is the one who keeps accountable, not the leaders.

Because you're going to be judged on who you allow to lead you and the expectations that you have. So my prayer is that you guys would elevate expectations for us, that you'd be praying for us, needing encouragement, letting us know.

That doesn't mean pastors are to be your personal friends. I've been in churches where they expect the pastor to do all the visitation and to be everybody's friend. That's not our role.

Our role is to equip you to be friends to the body, right? to serve within the body. So I'm encouraged. I was encouraged that Steve was willing to step up.

[48 : 13] He has shown an ability from the past to be willing to do the work because he knows it's tough. It takes time. There's seasons of life where some elders need to step out.

Carl, good, godly, incredible man who really is still an elder. He doesn't love you any less because he doesn't sit on the board. He just loves us a little less, but it's okay.

But there's a blessing here, guys. And we've got young, like me, older guys like Dave, that serve, you know, a good variety of people.

Newer guys, Chris. The vets like Steve. So there's a really good mix. And, you know, our hope and prayer is that God will continue to raise up. And whether or not the person becomes an elder is

totally irrelevant, I want us to see all of you raise up to be these type of men and women to serve in those areas where God doesn't prohibit.
Is that good? All right, let's pray. Let's pray.