

Does My Church Leadership Have It Right?

Mark 9:35: (NASB) *Sitting down, he called the twelve and said to them, If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.*



How is Christianity supposed to be organized? If we look at the countless denominations we have today, we will see a wide variety of interpretations regarding leadership. With some, it all boils down to one individual leader. With others it is a committee of several. In many cases, those in authority have the responsibility of delegating who is to oversee each of the local congregations. With so much variety, have you ever wondered if there is actually a right way to do all of this? If we are able to go to church and feel blessed, does it even matter? What did the early church do? How did they decide who would lead and where? Did the apostles give us a God-sanctioned system to perpetuate leadership for the flock down through the ages until now?

This podcast will give a specific perspective on church leadership that is uncommon. We are attempting to model our understanding of how the Christian church is supposed to work using the New Testament direction only. We are asking you to study and decide what you think for yourselves.

Did the early church have a hierarchy? Some say yes and take these next verses as positive proof that there is a hierarchy:

Matthew 16:15-18: (NASB) ¹⁵He said to them, But who do you say that I am? ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, you are the Christ, the son of the living God. ¹⁷And Jesus said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸I also say to you that you are **Peter <4074>**, and upon this **rock <4073>** I will build my church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

Peter: Strongs #4074 *Petros*; a (piece of) rock

Strongs **<4074>** is always translated *Peter* (stone or pebble) regarding Peter's name (John 1:42).

One traditional interpretation of Matthew 16:18 indicates Peter was to be the father of Christian church leadership. This leadership is believed to be passed down through all the generations of Christianity. This is NOT what the verse is telling us. Let's examine it critically.

Jesus says, you are Peter (a small pebble or a piece of rock,) and upon this rock I will build my church. However, the word rock (upon this rock) in this verse is different than the word for Peter.

Rock: Strongs #4073 *petra*; a (large mass of) rock

The ONLY time this word is used symbolically in the New Testament is when it refers to Jesus:

Matthew 7:24: (KJV) *Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a **rock <4073>**:*

Jesus used the word **rock <4073>** to symbolize himself in that parable.

The following verse is even more specific.

1 Corinthians 10:4: (KJV) *And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual **rock** <4073> that followed them: and that **rock** <4073> was Christ.*

In Matthew 16, Peter had just told Jesus, *you are the Christ, the son of the living God (the Messiah)*. Jesus told Peter; *upon this rock (meaning Jesus) I will build my church.*

Peter, with humility, saw himself not as above anyone in any hierarchy but as an equal servant:

1 Peter 5:1: (NASB) *Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed.*

Peter clarified that he was a witness of Christ. He told the brethren he was their *fellow elder* and not above the other elders.



Jesus is telling Peter that **Jesus as the Christ IS the rock**, the solid foundation of Christianity. Peter, the (small) “rock” would be fundamental to the church’s growth and success, **but Jesus himself is the foundation and leader.**

Ephesians 2:20-22: (NASB) *²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the corner stone (the ONLY cornerstone), ²¹in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²²in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the spirit.*

Peter is important, but he is not above the other apostles. He knew his role as a leader and was a humble example.

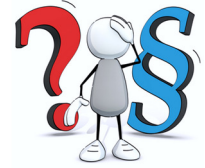
Didn't the Twelve Apostles, by definition, represent a natural hierarchy and foundation for the church?

We are in absolute agreement that the Twelve Apostles were in their own category. They were all called by God, chosen by Jesus, and are referred to as foundations and pillars. We see the title of a Jesus-appointed apostle reserved for the Twelve, as there is no scriptural description of qualifications to be an apostle. (Note: the Bible references 24 individuals as “apostles,” but only twelve authorized by Jesus.)



The reference for the apostles being pillars is found in **Galatians 2:9**. Those included were James, Cephas and John, and they acknowledged Paul. These and all the other apostles were built on the foundation of Jesus.

Is there a hierarchy of elders, bishops, pastors, overseers and shepherds?



NO. We believe these titles (descriptions) are various ways of describing any individual who is given responsibility for Jesus' flock.

These next verses use three of these "titles" to describe the work of any one **elder**:

1 Peter 5:1-4: (NKJV) ¹The **elders <4245>** who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow **elder <4850>** and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ²**Shepherd <4165>** the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; ⁴and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.



Peter is telling the ELDERS they are to SHEPHERD the flock and serve as OVERSEERS.



Observations on the message of the text before we define the roles listed:

- ♥ Serve, not because you must, but out of a willing heart.
- ♥ Serve, not for money, but out of sheer eagerness.
- ♥ Serve, not in a dominating way, but rather as a living example of Christlikeness.

It is God's spirit that drives the elders, and it should be God's spirit that gives them responsibility to serve the congregation. Without God's spirit, it is just a social gathering.

 **Not fit to lead, Dr. Ravi Zacharias, Christian Leaders + Pride**

- *For two things, speaking particularly to Christian leaders. Anybody who thinks that they have arrived there by virtue of their own capacity is not fit to lead because the whole issue of a calling is so well-worded by the Apostle Paul. He says to people: Look, you can boast in whatever you want; I've got more credentials against my name than I'd want to even testify. And he tells you of his tribe, he tells you of his studies in all of that. He says: I count all this thing but refuse. All this thing is garbage that I may gain the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. So, biblically and scripturally, forget it. As somebody once said to Winston Churchill that he was a self-made man, and Churchill said, "You have just relieved God of a very solemn responsibility." So, biblically and scripturally if you think you're a self-made person, just forget that and put that aside.*

It is not the qualifications or the degrees you have; it is your character and humility.



Please check out our CQ Kids video: [What Makes a Good Christian Leader? ChristianQuestions.com/youtube](https://www.christianquestions.com/youtube).

An elder has many responsibilities and wears many different hats.

Let's define each of the titles:

Elder: Describes the care for the flock of Jesus in terms of maturity.

Elder: Strongs #4245 *presbuteros*; comparative of *presbus* (elderly); older; as noun, a senior; specifically, an Israelite Sanhedrist

1 Timothy 5:17: (NASB) *The elders <4245> who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.*

Remember the Apostle Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12: (NKJV) *let no one despise your youth. Even though elder was defined as older and senior, Timothy was spiritually mature because of being mentored by the Apostle Paul.*



At a very young age, I became an elder (minister) in our church. We use the term elder. It was a very humbling experience, and still is. There was a lot of learning at a young age. After about 10 or 12 years, there came a point in my life where I told the congregation I needed to resign, I was not doing a good job and had some overwhelming things going on in life. I needed to back away because I was not serving appropriately. I felt guilty because I was not as present as I should have been. It was difficult, but a great learning experience.

Maturity does not always come with years. We can find maturity in younger ones and we need to recognize and honor that, but we want to be sure not to give someone too much responsibility and contribute to them becoming proud.

Bishop/Overseer: Describes the care for the flock of Jesus in terms of oversight.



Note: It is Jesus' flock, not the elders' flock. Elders are instructed to care for the flock.

Bishop/Overseer: Strongs #1985 *episkopos*; a superintendent

Part of the responsibility of an elder is an overseer or superintendent. This is about being organized. An elder oversees the operations of the congregation to keep services reverential, orderly and comfortable. Other duties are scheduling, supervising activities and tasks. It is about making it a God-honoring environment.

Bishop/Overseer: Strongs #1984 *episkope*; inspection, by implication, superintendence

Context: Apostle Paul speaking to the elders:

Acts 20:28: (KJV) *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the holy ghost (spirit) hath made you overseers <1985>, to feed the church of God...*

Philippians 1:1: (KJV) *Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops <1985> and deacons:*

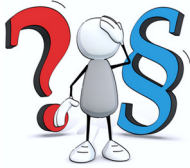
The words *bishop* and *overseer* are interchangeable.

1 Timothy 3:1: (NASB) *It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer <1984>, it is a fine work he desires to do.*

Shepherd/Pastor: Describes the care for the flock of Jesus in terms of feeding and wellbeing:

Shepherd/Pastor: Strongs #4166 *poimen*; a shepherd (literally or figuratively)
Shepherd/Pastor: Strongs #4165 *poimaino*; from #4166; to tend as a shepherd of

What do the duties of a shepherd look like? A shepherd is a watchman. His primary responsibility is the safety and welfare of the flock. He guides, cares for, feeds, protects and nurtures. This is very different than the qualities of a superintendent.



Why would they use many different words to describe the same person?

Different words are used to describe various aspects of the work of an elder, which are required to carry out to the best of their capacity.

Example: If you are your child's dad, it is not the only word used to describe a dad. A dad is a disciplinarian, motivator, supporter, nurturer...

Acts 20:28: (KJV) *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the holy ghost (spirit) hath made you overseers <1985>, to feed <4165> (to tend as a shepherd) the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

Let's take a look at the conversation Jesus and Peter had after Peter's denial in **John 21:15-17**. Jesus asked Peter - *do you love me more than these?*

1. Jesus said, *tend my lambs*. The lambs are the babes in Christ - new followers of Jesus. The babes need the milk (basic truths) of the word.
2. Next, Jesus said, *shepherd my sheep*. The sheep describe the body of the congregation (the middle-aged). The plan of God needs to be directed to them for a complete understanding.
3. Then Jesus said, *tend my sheep*. This refers to the older, mature ones in the way. They need the meat of the word - the deep things of God - to grow.

There are different ways of pastoring depending on the needs of the individuals in the congregation, but all should be fed.

Ephesians 4:11: (NASB) *And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors <4166> and teachers (an instructor).*



There is a simplicity in the early church's organization.

They were to have specific individuals in place who were personally and directly responsible for feeding and nurturing their spiritual well-being and environment.



An elder is the highest position within the church and encompasses ALL of the described duties. They are NOT divided into positions.

This is a very different take on Christian organization than most of us have ever heard! It seems really simple.

**These elders were to be in every local church.
Who decided who would be chosen as an elder?**

As we will see, the New Testament speaks of “ordaining” elders in every church. For us living now in the 21st century, the meaning of this process seems to be intuitive. It sounds like someone appoints individuals to the position. However, what seems intuitive to us is not necessarily true in history.

Paul and Barnabas are on a missionary journey. Here is the decision process in early Christianity:

Acts 14:21-23: (KJV) ²¹And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, ²²Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. ²³And when they had **ordained <5500>** them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Confirming the souls of the disciples - recognizing and acknowledging that these are strong, true disciples. They were following after Christ; the “called-out” ones.

Did Paul just appoint the leaders?

Ordained: Strongs #5500 *cheirotoneo*; from a comparative of #5495 and teino (to stretch); to be a hand-reacher or voter (by raising the hand), i.e. (generally) to select or appoint

The thought here is a voting process. These elders were chosen from within the congregations. Notice there is no reference to bringing men in from elsewhere to do the job.

(Source: Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Whole Bible)
Ordained: The word here refers simply to an election or appointment of the elders. It is said, indeed, that Paul and Barnabas did this. But probably all that is meant by it is, that they presided in the assembly when the choice was made.



In other words, Paul and Barnabas presided over the voting arrangements to make sure it was done appropriately and with reverence. **The congregation made the decision** as to who would guide them in their Christian leadership.

The only other use of this word *ordained*:

2 Corinthians 8:16-19: (NKJV) ¹⁶But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. ¹⁷For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord. ¹⁸And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches, ¹⁹and not only that, but who was also **chosen <5500>** by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and to show your ready mind.

How would this brother have been *chosen by the churches*? Raising of the hands - they would have voted for him. The churches did the choosing.



It should be God's spirit that drives and guides such voting and are NOT personal preference.

The portion of the next two texts where *ordained* was added are NOT in the original manuscript:

2 Timothy 4:22: (KJV) *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen. The second epistle unto Timotheus, **ordained <5500>** the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome, when Paul was brought before Nero the second time.*

Titus 3:15: (KJV) *All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. Amen. It was written to Titus, **ordained <5500>** the first bishop of the church of the Cretians, from Nicopolis of Macedonia.*



When my congregation elected me as an elder for the first time, I felt unworthy because of the great responsibility. Since God allowed it, I would do what I could because His spirit-begotten ones felt I should. If I turned it down, I might have been turning down what God's will was for me at that time. So, I did my best, felt unworthy, yet moved humbly forward. The Lord has helped me grow through that experience in ways I could have never grown any other way.



I was brought up as a very serious student of Scripture. My dad was an elder in our church, so I never knew anything different. As a kid, leadership was impressed upon me as a deep responsibility and the reverence of what "eldership" meant.

You, Jonathan, came from a different religious background. When called upon, you felt like, "It is too big for me." I appreciate that you did not want to turn down God's will. You saw His will in the voting of the congregation.

The holy spirit chooses. It is not just that you like the person. God puts in your heart that this individual would be a great shepherd of the flock.

It is a huge responsibility to accept such leadership.

How can we be sure **ordained <5500>** depicts a voting environment and not "ordination" as we might normally think? Compare it with the following:

Ordain: Strongs # 5087 *tithemi*; a prolonged form of a primary word *theo* (which is used only as alternate in certain tenses); to place

Greek/English Lexicon: (selected definitions) 1) to set, put, place; 1a) to place or lay; 1b) to put down, lay down; 2) to make; 2a) to make (or set) for one's self or for one's use; 3) to set, fix establish; 3a) to set forth; 3b) to establish, ordain

This definition "to place" is what many churches want the word *ordained* to mean within their organizations. Ordination is a way to control who is put in leadership positions, but this is not scriptural for *elders*. Voting is a more desirable environment than appointing, as the voting comes from those locally who know the individual.

Some of the many uses of this word:

Matthew 5:15: (KJV) *Neither do men light a candle, and **put <5087>** it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*

Luke 20:43: (KJV) *Till I **make <5087>** thine enemies thy footstool.*

Hebrews 1:2: (KJV) *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed <5087> heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (God directly appointed).*

<5500> - choosing as a function of a group.

<5087> - placing as a personal decision. This word is NEVER used within the context of deciding who will be an elder or minister of a congregation.

Early church eldership was a function of the church's decision - essentially the vote of those whom the elder would be shepherding. It was not a function of the decision of one individual or a committee.



The voting process by each individual congregation sets the powerful precedent of each group having God's spirit direct them to determine their own leadership.



The key factor is God's spirit. This is the linchpin of the process, which is why the power can be in the congregation's hands with God's spirit guiding them. These are people driven by God's will. If the members are not acting with God's spirit, they should leave that membership.

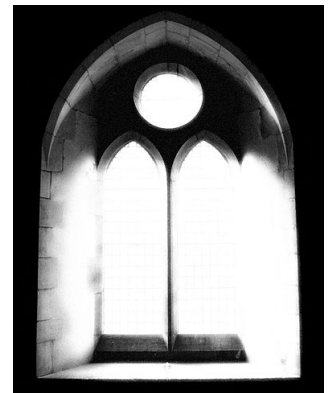
Is our church leadership following scriptural admonitions?

Wow! Decision-making responsibility is squarely on the shoulders of the congregation, as well as the leaders!

Doesn't this idea of each congregation guiding themselves sound like an invitation for trouble?

Looking back over the last 2,000+ years, we can say that setup was trouble; but to be fair, we need to look at Christianity's history. Once it became "organized and centralized," its factions were bigger and often violent. How many innocent lives were Christian denominations responsible for taking?

Let's look back at the history of the Dark Ages: Hundreds of thousands of innocent people were tortured and martyred in the name of Christ. When we look back over the last few hundred years, we see cases of physical, mental and emotional abuse among organized denominations. What has happened is based on improper organization. Giving power to individuals makes way for corruption, selfishness and greed. It does not represent Christlikeness. Remember - elders are supposed to be servants.





Looking at both religious and secular history, whenever there is an individual with too much power, what happens? This is why God set up the true church to act in a way where no one person had so much of that power. It was in the hands of all those in the church. It was a collective decision in the choosing of elders. It was done with clarity, realizing that His spirit would be able to guide and direct things.

Perhaps the simplicity of early Christianity can be compared to the simplicity of the system of judges in ancient Israel. The system of judges was not in the hands of one individual, but it was not appealing to the people because they wanted a ruler they could see and follow, just like the other nations.

Similarly, in Christianity, do we want that person in power to show us what we should do and how we should worship so we can feel we have good, strong direction from someone here on earth? Or, are we willing to look for that humble servitude in the true servant of God?

 **Servants, Dr. Ravi Zacharias, Christian Leaders + Pride**

- *If you go through the New Testament, you'll find the word "leader" hardly ever comes, but the word "servant" comes hundreds of times. We are really called to serve. So, the second thing I would say to you is, if you are a leader make sure what you believe. Don't get carried around by the wind of every new doctrine that comes around. Study the Scriptures to know what the Bible tells you about life, about meaning, about sacredness, about your eternal destiny, about what God teaches us, about the condition of human beings, even at the end of life. All kinds of newfangled theories are coming out. Be careful that you don't get swallowed up by every wind of doctrine. So, remain humble. You didn't arrive where you are because of your own skill. Remember that the word of God tells you, you are called there by His grace and by His mercy.*

Christian leadership is supposed to be humble:

John 13:12-14: (NASB) ¹²So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments and reclined at the table again, he said to them, Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.



Joshua from our Facebook Group says: A good Christian leader must set an example in their lifestyle. They must tell us what is right, but more importantly, they must show us in their actions. Jesus set the standard, and Paul has some great examples in his writings, and he set a great example for us as well.

Spirit-driven humility is our basis for God's providence to even be able to work. Last week, (**Episode 1139: Thou Shalt Not Covet - Is It Wrong to Want?**) we talked about how we need to raise our longing up to a humble, God-pleasing level.

Humility is the basis of our lives - that is why Jesus washed his disciples' feet. Just previous to the feet washing, the disciples were talking about *who among them would be greatest in the kingdom of heaven*. Jesus saw the need to teach them a lesson in humility. So, their Master got down on his knees and



washed their feet as the lowest servant would do. That is a great example of humility.

Christian leadership is to be of good character and integrity in *all* areas of life. This is a list of the qualifications for an elder:

Titus 1:5-9: (NASB) ⁵For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint **elders <4245>** in every city as I directed you, ⁶namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. ⁷For the **overseer <1985>** must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, ⁸but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, ⁹holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

- *The husband of one wife* - not a wife with one husband. God's word requires a male in this position. **For more on the treatment of women in the Bible, please search our archives for Episode 865: Does the Bible Advocate for Women's Rights?**
- *Dissipation* here is related to drunkenness, a dissolute (lax in morals) life. *Unruly or rebellion* indicates we should not be part of rioting, or causing unrest.
- The elder should *not be self-willed*. He is the *servant* of the congregation. The congregation directs the elder on what *they* would like to learn and study.
- *Not fond of sordid gain* - if someone is preaching just for the payment, for the position, he is not in the right place. He needs to want to *serve*. Jesus and the apostles were not paid to serve. The elders should not be paid to serve.
- *Holding fast to the faithful word* so he can not only teach but *defend* the sound doctrine of the gospel.

Being an elder is NOT to be taken lightly. This kind of character is essential, but so also is a fidelity to the gospel and all it stands for. It is not just about being a good person; it is about having your mind and heart set in Scripture and having the truth of Scripture permeate through you with God's guidance. An elder needs to learn, teach and be an example. It is about being of good character and integrity, especially when no one is watching.

A Christian leader is to be well-versed in the Scriptures and teach based upon Scripture:

2 Timothy 2:14-16: (NASB) ¹⁴Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. ¹⁵Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. ¹⁶But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness.

To be before God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed because he is accurately handling the word of truth is a challenging, constant and often difficult task. An elder needs to refresh his knowledge, revisit subjects, read the Scriptures, grow, and listen to sermons from other elders he respects. When we revisit what we have studied before, we find new insights and deeper meanings. Leaders are expected to make the truth of Scripture their own - know the "what" and the "why."



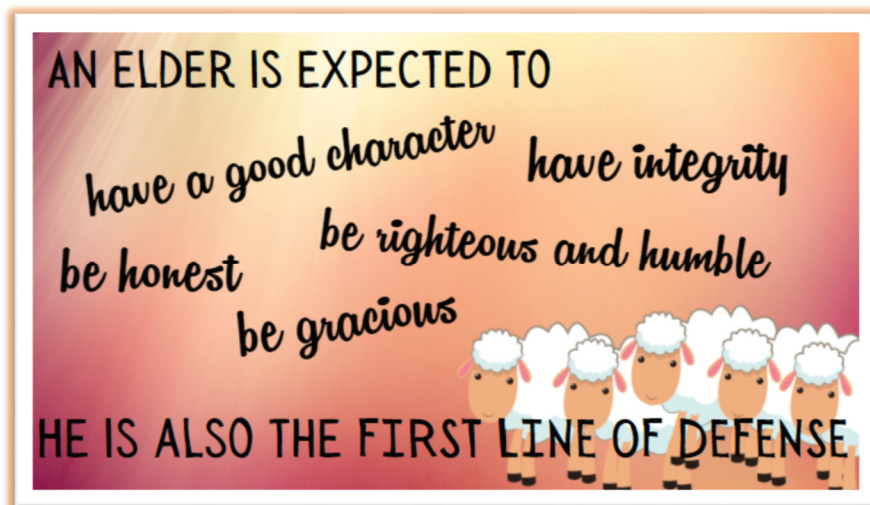
A good example of this is, we have been broadcasting Christian Questions for over 22 years. Over that period of time, we have gone over certain subjects several times. Personally, I go back to a subject and find extra depth and more to understand.

“Wow, I never saw *that* before.” We want to always be digging deeper into the word of God.



Christian leadership is to be the first line of defense against wolves in sheep's clothing:

Acts 20:28-30: (NASB) ²⁸Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the holy spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with his own blood. ²⁹I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.



Several places in Scripture say to *be aware of savage wolves who will come in, not sparing the flock*. They want what they want; they see people willing to follow. They will take advantage of them, teaching what is earthly, not spiritual. We see this all the time in churches now, and we have to stand up against it and protect those put into our care.

It is necessary to go back to the purity of the original gospel, using it to make sure the flock is secure in that foundation so that they are not swayed or taken advantage of by these *wolves*. This is why the teachings of the church need to have depth. We need lessons that are character-driven and inspirational, but we need to also have deep studies as to the “why” of the Scriptures. Spiritual danger lurks from *without* and from *within* - elders need to be aware and protective.

Christian leadership is to be focused on staying entirely in line with the original gospel truth, as complacency and error EASILY creep in with the passage of time:

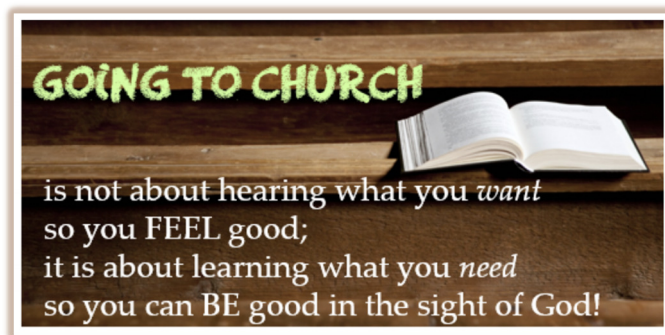
2 Timothy 4:1-4: (NASB) ¹I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ²preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

This is a beautiful group of instructions from the Apostle Paul to Timothy, who was a young elder. Paul was encouraging him. He was telling him: here is your job. *I solemnly charge you; you need to be ready at all times. Even when you think you do not need to be ready, to reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction - not anger.*

³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

Do we go to church to get our *ears tickled*, to hear things that make us feel good about the way we are? The gospel is about challenging us to understand how to follow the footsteps of Jesus rather than feel good where we are right now. We need to learn how to boldly follow his steps with humility and grace and wisdom.

Going to church should be instructional, inspirational...and in some ways disturbing. We should always walk out afterwards thinking we should be doing better in God's sight. Elders should also evaluate their service, always challenging themselves to do better - this is essential for growth.



Good men of character who are called of God and begotten of His spirit may be called upon to humbly shepherd the flock of Jesus in their congregation.

The simplicity of this spiritual setup keeps power out of the hands of individuals and into the hands of the congregation.

We have presented a perspective on Christian leadership many have never heard before. This is a process that is equitable, clear and avoids the pitfalls of ego as far as it possibly can. It relies upon God's spirit, the congregation, cooperation and fellowship. It is a process that indicates we choose our leadership because we want to be taught in the word, will and way of God. Do not teach us things that just make us feel good; teach us things that help us to become mature enough to be that body of Christ that works together.

This is how Christian leadership is supposed to be chosen according to Scripture, and how it is supposed to work.

*So, does my church leadership have it right?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on August 31, 2020
Ep. 1141: Does Christianity Preach the Gospel?

Bonus Material and Study Questions

A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way. — John Maxwell

Ephesians 4:11-16: (NASB) ¹¹And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as **pastors <4166>** and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Notice how all of these positions are for the purpose of creating a *mature man*, a collectively complete individual called *the body of Christ*, and not “mature men” (plural), each standing on his own.

¹⁴As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; ¹⁵but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

Growing up in Christ - even for leaders - is to grow into a strong functioning part that contributes its value mightily to the whole.

¹⁶from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

The lesson: Finding and growing towards our potential should not be a lonely road.

Let's focus on the list of elder qualifications:

1 Timothy 3:1: (NKJV) *This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.*

(Source: Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary) Desires - literally, "stretch one's self forward to grasp"; "aim at": a distinct Greek verb from that for "desireth." What one does voluntarily is more esteemed than what he does when asked (1 Corinthians 16:15). This is utterly distinct from ambitious desires after office in the Church (James 3:1).

1 Timothy 3:2-4,6,7: (NKJV) *A bishop then must be*

- Blameless, - not arrested, (by implication) inculpable

Philippians 2:15: (NKJV) *that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,*

- the husband of one wife
- temperate, sober, meaning circumspect

1 Corinthians 9:25: (NKJV) *And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.*

- sober-minded - safe (sound) in mind, meaning self-controlled (moderate as to opinion or passion)

1 Peter 1:13: (NKJV) *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

- of good behavior - orderly, meaning decorous
- hospitable - fond of guests
- able to teach - instructive

2 Timothy 2:15: (NKJV) *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

- not given to wine

Ephesians 5:18: (NKJV) *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,*

- not violent

Titus 3:2: (NKJV) *to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.*

- not greedy for money

1 Timothy 6:6-10: (NKJV) *⁶Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*



- but gentle

1 Thessalonians 5:14: (NKJV) *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.*

- not quarrelsome

2 Timothy 2:24: (NKJV) *And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,*

- not covetous

2 Peter 2:3: (NKJV) *By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.*

- one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence

- not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride, he falls into the same condemnation as the devil

1 Timothy 4:12: (NKJV) *Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

1 Timothy 6:17-21: (NKJV) *¹⁷Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. ¹⁸Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, ¹⁹storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. ²⁰O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge - ²¹by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.*

- Moreover, he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil

Matthew 5:14-16: (NKJV) *¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

Christian Questions Weekly
Newsletter

CQ Rewind Show Notes and
Study Questions

Text

CQREWIND

to **22828** to get started.



christianquestions.com



Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1140: Does My Church Leadership Have It Right?

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/church-leaders/>

See:  CQ Rewind
SHOW NOTES

1. What role did the Apostle Peter play in the early Christian church? What does his name indicate? Who is the true leader of Christianity? How do we know this from Matthew 16? (See Matthew 16:15-18, Ephesians 2:20-22, 1 Peter 5:1)
2. Should there be a hierarchy in our church leadership *today*? What example does Peter set for all the apostles and for Christian leaders today? What are the three admonitions for elders in 1 Peter 5:1-4?
3. Describe the roles elders, bishops/overseers and shepherd/pastors play in Christian leadership. (See 1 Timothy 5:17, Acts 20:28, Philippians 1:1, 1 Timothy 3:1)
4. Why are so many different words used to describe the same person? (See Acts 20:28, Ephesians 4:11) What does this teach us about the responsibilities of the leadership in our churches?
5. What is the definition of the word translated “ordained” in Acts 14:21-23? How is this word properly used in the Scriptures? (Matthew 5:15, Luke 20:43, Hebrews 1:2)
6. What can we learn about how early Christianity chose its leaders? (See 2 Corinthians 8:16-19) Where were these men taught? Was there a seminary or school for them? What does this tell us about the level of knowledge of Jesus’ teaching in the congregation?
7. Where does the responsibility of these decisions on leadership fall? How does the simplicity of the early Christian leadership structure protect it from the problems that plagued religious and secular history? (See John 13:12-14) When power is put into the hands of a single individual or a small group of leaders, what inevitably happens?
8. What are the requirements for Christian elders? (See Acts 20:28-30, 2 Timothy 2:14-16, 4:1-4, Titus 1:5-9)
9. Are you meeting *your* responsibility in your congregation by studying and seeking to understand Jesus’ teachings? Are you comfortable with your Christian leaders? Do they uphold the requirements set down in the Scriptures?