

## Shepherds, Overseers; Acts 20:28-32

### I. Be Alert

- a. A religious official (elder) who is responsible for safeguarding the Gospel (overseer), and caring for the members of the body (shepherd)
- b. Shepherds are people and no one is perfect, all have sinned
- c. Romans 3:23 (ESV) 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
- d. Overseers must 'be alert'
  - i. To be in constant readiness, *be on the alert* (keep one's eyes open)
  - ii. 1 Peter 5:8 (ESV) 8 Be sober-minded; **be watchful**. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.
  - iii. Mark 14:38 (ESV) 38 **Watch** and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
  - iv. In the parable of the ten virgins, Jesus compares the Kingdom to 10 young women who are awake, alert, and made sure they had enough oil to make it through the night.
  - v. Matthew 25:13 (ESV) 13 **Watch**, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.
- e. We are all cautioned to be alert; that caution also includes Elders.

### II. Double Honor

- a. 1 Timothy 5:17–18 (ESV) 17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages."
- b. Several commentaries suggest this refers to paying elders who are also preachers.
  - i. I have seen Elders who are the paid preachers of the congregation.
  - ii. This verse would even suggest that paying Shepherds is acceptable if they are also teachers in the congregation.
  - iii. Paul uses this quote (from Deuteronomy 25:4) when writing to the church in Corinth defending receiving payment for preaching the Word (1 Corinthians 9:3-12)
- c. Again, we see where God's focus is for His shepherds; He wants them to guard and feed the flock.
- d. Some, who are not alert, fall into the traps of the Devil.
  - i. 1 Timothy 5:19–20 (ESV) 19 Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 20 As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.
  - ii. We cannot allow sin to run rampant in the church.
  - iii. We have a responsibility to face it, call it what it is, and remove it from the church (the church is the people)
- e. God lays out the personality traits, the characteristics He wants in His overseers.

### f. A Noble Task

- i. 1 Timothy 3:1 (ESV) 1 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.
- ii. Aspires – to seek, to strive for, to desire
- iii. You don't just 'fall into' an eldership.
- iv. Those who seek to be elders need to have established characteristics.
  - 1. Qualification, what someone has
  - 2. Characteristic, who someone is
- v. 1 Timothy 3:2–7 (ESV) 2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.
  - 1. To reproach is to blame, discredit, or disgrace.
  - 2. The husband of one wife
    - a. My introduction to Dr. John Hobbs at the SIBI workshop
    - b. "A one-woman kind of man" Dr. John Hobbs
    - c. Dr. Hobbs has two earned Doctor of Ministry degrees. One is from Harding Graduate School of Theology in Memphis, Tennessee in Church Growth (1990), and one is from Trinity Theological Seminary in Newburgh, Indiana in Theology (2005). Dr. Hobbs has also earned five Masters degrees and three diplomas from Bible correspondence schools. He has almost 600 college hours of Bible-related courses (59 of the 600 college hours are in New Testament Greek) {as of 2011}
  - 3. Sober-minded; being very moderate in the drinking of an alcoholic beverage, *temperate*
  - 4. Self-controlled; *Prudent, thoughtful, self-controlled* (the Hellenic model is avoidance of extremes and careful consideration for responsible action)
  - 5. Having characteristics or qualities that evoke admiration or delight, an expression of high regard for persons, *respectable, honorable*
  - 6. Skillful in teaching
  - 7. Drunkard: literally, 'sits long at his wine' – an alcoholic (addicted) who has no self-control (or cannot control) himself (opposite of sober-minded)
  - 8. Not a bully, but gentle; not insisting on every right of letter of law or custom, *yielding, gentle, kind, courteous, tolerant*
  - 9. Quarrelsome; apt or disposed to quarrel in an often **petty** manner: contentious *or* belligerent
  - 10. Managing his household

- a. “The emphasis in this verse is not upon procreative ability, but upon the ability to rule, a well-disciplined family being the surest evidence of such a trait in one considered for the eldership.
  - b. The captain of the sinking ship orders that women with children should enter lifeboats first. This does not mean that women with only one child would be denied entrance.”
  - c. Genesis 21:7 (ESV) 7 And she said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”
11. A recent convert is self-explanatory; how could one be an effective guardian of the gospel (overseer)?
12. ‘Well thought of’ is, in essence, a testimony of his character
- vi. This is who God wants his Shepherds to be, men who will care for the church, even giving their lives for us

### III. Shepherds, Overseers, Elders

- a. Not a board of trustees for a corporation
- b. Religious officials (elder) who are responsible for safeguarding the Gospel (overseer) and caring for the members of the body (shepherd)
- c. It is no small task that they consent to