

Elders

1TI 5:17 Let the elders who rule [oversee, govern] well be considered worthy of double [two-fold] honor, especially [particularly] those who work hard [labor] at preaching and teaching.

1. “elders who rule well” - Gr. “proistemi” - to stand before [in rank, authority], to lead, to rule, be over”

a. The words “rule well” are significant.

b. “Elders” or “bishops” have authority.

1) They are to lead by example. (1 Pet. 5:1,2). See qualifications 1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1

1PE 5:2 **shepherd the flock** of God among you, **exercising oversight** not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

1PE 5:3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but **proving to be examples to the flock.**

2) They also have authority. (Acts 20:28-30; Tit. 1:8, 9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; Heb. 13:17).

3) **God expects us to submit to this authority as long as these men are teaching the word of God.** We should not follow them if they are violating the word of God in the things they are violating.

2. “double honor” - “diples” - double, two-fold

a. This is honor (respect) plus financial support.

1) Context shows it involved support. (1 Tim. 5:18).

2) 1 Thessalonians shows it involves respect.

1TH 5:12 But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, 1TH 5:13 and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another.
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b. It is right to support preachers (1 Cor. 9:1-14), but not just preachers. (1 Tim. 5:17, 18).

c. The church supported some widows. (1 Tim. 5:9-16). 1) “Widows indeed.” 2) Enrolled Widows

Note:

- Some believe “double honor” means elders “who rule well” are “worthy of double [support].”
“Considered as deserving twice the salary they get.” Wms
- This could be the meaning, but the idea of respect and financial support is more likely.
- Furthermore,, being worthy of double support does not mean they received it. It appears that many were on the

church payroll- ministers, elders, widows, etc.

3. “especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching”

- NIV “whose work is preaching and teaching”
- ASV “especially those who labor in the word and teaching”
- “work hard” (NASB) is probably the correct idea, but literally the word “kopiao” means “labor, work, toil.”
- He is not saying there are 2 classes of elders - ruling and teaching.
 - a. “preaching” -- Lit “in word” (speech). Greek is “logos.”
 - b. “teaching” - “kai didaskalia” - “and teaching” - public & private teaching seems to be the idea.. The exact distinction of the words is not clear, and there is much overlapping of the words. See 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Cor. 1:21.
- Not all elders have the same skills.
- Some because of interest or skill may do more teaching and preaching than others, but all elders must be “apt (able) to teach.” (1 Tim. 3:2).
- They must have a good knowledge of God’s word and be able to defend and teach it. (Tit. 1:10, 11; Acts 20:28-30)..

1TI 5:18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing [treading],"and "The laborer [worker] is worthy [deserving] of his wages [pay]." Exod. 25:4; Lk. 10:7; 1 Cor. 9:14.

- “The Scripture” is from “he graphe.” The word “graphe” refers here to sacred writings.
 - “phimoo” [fee mo o] - shut, muzzle; “bous” - ox, cow
 - “Never tie up the mouth of an ox when it is treading out the grain..Let him eat as he goes along!”–Tay
1. The church had some full time or supported elders in the 1st century.
 - a. We do not know the number or percentage, but it was likely very common.
 - b. Great demands are placed on a shepherd’s time and energy.
 - c. We have become accustom for the need of full time paid ministers, but most often are not sure about elders being on the payroll.
 - d. It takes a lot of man hours to “rule, oversee, govern” God’s people as a shepherd.
 2. The church today would do well to have some full-time elders or at least some partially supported elders.
 - a. Great demands are placed on elders who usually work at another job and work for the church without compensation.
 - b. Special demands are placed on younger elders who have children and especially those who work at a full time

job.

c. Paul anticipated that many elders would have children at home. See 1 Tim. 3:1-8; Tit. 1:5-10.

3. It might also be expedient for some elders to be supplemented; thus, requiring fewer hours at their regular job.

Note:

- Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7 are called “he graphe” (the scripture) here. See also Matt. 10:10

DEU 25:4 "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing."	MAT 10:10 or a bag for your journey, or even two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support. LUK 10:7 "And stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.
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- The Old and New Testaments are inspired of God. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:21).
- It is not certain if Paul was quoting from the gospel of Luke or if he was quoting an unrecorded statement the Lord had made in His ministry. It is likely that he is referring to Luke 10:7 and Matthew 10:10.

“An accusation Against An Elder”

1TI 5:19 Do not receive [entertain as true] **an accusation** [charge of sin] **against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.**

- Gr. “karegoria” [ka ray go ree a]- accusation, charge
1. Here-say was to be rejected, and even an accusation from one person was to be rejected.
 2. Charges must come from “two or three witnesses” and then must be substantiated.
 3. Elders are safeguarded even against having to answer unsupported charges. “Do not receive an accusation” is an admonition against receiving unsubstantiated charges as true.

Note:

- The teaching of two or three witnesses originated in the Old Testament. (Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Num. 35:30).

DEU 17:6 "On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

DEU 19:15 "A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.

NUM 35:30 "If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness.

- This concept is also supported by the New Testament. (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Tim. 5:19). See 2 Cor. 13:1; Heb. 10:28.

- Jesus indicated His witness alone was not considered true or sufficient for confirmation. (Jn. 5:31). Jn. 8:13, 14-18

4. **The evangelist has authority in these matters, but not necessarily exclusive authority.**

- a. Paul is writing Timothy and says “Do not receive an accusation.”
- b. This is not generally practiced today.
- c. This is usually handled by the elders if an eldership exists. Evangelists are not often involved.
- d. The evangelist is also to exercise authority in his preaching. (2 Tim. 4:2; Tit. 2:15).

Note:

- Timothy was “at Ephesus” when Paul wrote this epistle. (1 Tim. 1:3). Most think 1 Timothy was written about 62-64 A.D. after Paul’s 1st Roman imprisonment. (Acts 28:30).
- Ephesus had elders. (Acts 20:17; 20:28-30). Acts 20 was about 57 A.D.
- Evangelists are submissive to elders, but have the divine authority to rebuke elders who sin and will repent.

Rebuke Elders Who Will Not Repent

1TI 5:20 Those [elders] who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest [of the elders or the congregation or both] also may be fearful of sinning.

- “those who continue in sin” is literally “the [ones] sinning.” It denote continuous action.
 - “Rebuke” - “elegcho” - to rebuke, reprove
1. “Those who continue in sin” refers to elders who do not repent.
 2. Elders who will not repent are to be rebuked “in the presence of all.”
 3. The “all” may refer “all the elders” or perhaps “all the congregation.”
 4. Timothy was to do the rebuking.
 - a. It is not certain he was to act alone.
 - b. The other elders, serving with the sinning elder or elders, may have assisted and probably did.

“**in the presence of all**” - this is the literal translation of the Greek.

- enopion [e no pee on] - “before, in sight of, in the presence of.”
1. This could refer to all the elders.
 2. It could refer to all the church or both the elders and congregation.
 - a. “rebuke offenders publicly” - TCNT

- b. “in front of the whole church” - Taylor
- c. These translations are interpreting “all.”
- d. It is most probable Paul is speaking of a situation where an elder, despite all the efforts made by Timothy, the elders, the accusers, etc. would not repent.

“the rest also may be fearful of sinning” - It is literally “in order that also the rest may have fear.” NIV translates “so that the others may take warning.”

Elders And Sin

1. Elders are not perfect men.
2. They, like all men, sin and fall short of the glory of God. (Rom. 3:23; 1 Jn. 1:8, 10).
3. We must have some tolerance, and not expect them to be perfect in life and their decisions.
 - a. Elders must be willing to repent like everyone else.
 - b. They must not be forced to resign because of sin, assuming they repent, unless the sin ruins their influence from those within the church and without the church. (! Tim 3:1, 7a).
 - c. They have scriptural decisions they must constantly make.
 - d. There are many decisions involving judgment and opinions, and every decision will not be perfect.
4. Paul makes it plain that elders must repent like everyone else who sins.
5. Paul makes it plain that elders must sometimes be rebuked if they do not repent.
 - a. The teaching of 1 Timothy 5:1 would be applicable in this situation.
 - b. Elders should be shown the same respect as any other older man.
 - c. Those who would not respond to a gentle and respectful appeal must be rebuked.
6. They should never be rebuked or corrected on the basis of here-say.
7. If we have a personal problem with an elder, we should go to him. (Matt. 18:15-17).
 - a. This passage is talking about someone sinning against us.
 - b. It is not binding in all situations involving sin.
 - c. There are many sins not committed against us personally.
8. Some elders become “savage wolves” or men “speaking perverted things” (Acts 20:28, 29).

“I Solemnly Charge”

1TI 5:21 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain [follow] these principles [rules] without bias, doing nothing in a spirit [attitude] of partiality [favoritism].

- “chosen angels” - Matt. 25:31. Gr. “eklektos”
 - “prokrima” [prok ree mah] - a prejudgment (prejudice, bias)
 - Lit. “I solemnly witness before God and Christ Jesus and the chosen angels”
1. **“ I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels”**
 - a. God and Christ view our actions.
 - b. Angels are described as viewing our behavior. (Matt. 18:10; 1 Cor. 4:9; 11:10; Heb. 1:14).

2. **“to maintain these principles without bias”**

1Ti 5:21 I charge <i>thee</i> in the sight of God, and Christ Jesus, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing by partiality. ASV	1Ti 5:21 I testify fully, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the choice messengers, that these things thou mayest keep, without forejudging, doing nothing by partiality. YLT
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- Lit. “in order that these things you guard without prejudgment.”
- Angels view our behavior as well as God and Christ.

1CO 4:9 For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, **both to angels and to men.**

1CO 11:10 Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, **because of the angels.**

- a. He is to be fair and objective and apply the instructions to all without bias.
- b. He is not to have his pets.

3. **“doing nothing in a spirit of partiality”**

- NIV - “do nothing out of favoritism”
 - Gr. “prosklisis” [pros klee sis] - “a leaning towards, partiality, favoritism.”
- a. He must never allow himself to show favoritism and overlook wrongs in those he likes or who have a lot of power or money or influence.
 - b. Preachers, elders, deacons and all Christians must not be respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34,35; Jas. 2:1).

“Do Not Lay Hands Upon Anyone Too Hastily”

1TI 5:22 Do not lay hands [ordain] upon anyone too hastily [quickly] and thus [thereby] share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.

“thus” - Greek “mede” - and not, but no, nor ---- “tacheos” [ta ke os] - quickly, hastily

1. **“Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily”** - appointing as elders or deacons. (1 Tim. 3).

“Never be in a hurry to ordain a presbyter” – Mof.

2. **“thus [nor] share responsibility for the sins of others”**

a. If he were too quick in appointing men, he would make grave mistakes and appoint unqualified leaders who in turn would lead others into sin.

b. Timothy would share in the responsibility for these sins if he “too hastily” appointed unqualified men as elders.

3. **“keep yourself free from sin”** - Lit. “keep yourself pure.”

a. Lit. “hagnon” - pure. KJV has “pure.” See 1 Tim. 4:12.

b. In context Timothy is not to be responsible for the sins of disqualified elders.

c. “keep thyself clear of fault” – Knox

Note:

1. When men are appointed today it should be done with prayerful consideration of the candidate for the office and his qualifications.
2. The men must first be tested. (1 Tim. 3:10). Testing comes before appointment - not afterwards.
3. Rushing or yielding to pressure is potentially hazardous to the church.
4. A reasonable time frame does not always immediately reveal sin, but results are better than actions done in haste.
5. This does not mean a man must be with a congregation a long time before he is appointed an elder, but it does mean careful and thoughtful consideration and checking must be done.

“No longer drink water exclusively”

1TI 5:23 No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

- Lit “No longer drink water” - This is an ellipsis - “water only” being the meaning.
- “Do not continue to drink water only” – TCNT
- “puknos” [pook nos] - “frequent, numerous” -- “stomachos” - stomach

1. Timothy was a teetotaler.

a. He drank water only. “Only” is contrasted with one who drinks both “water” and “wine.”

b. This was likely because he guarded his influence and had observed what wine had done to others. See Prov.

20:1; 23:31.

- c. Paul earlier admonished him to be a good example. (1 Tim. 4:12).
2. He is encouraged to take “a little wine for the sake of” his “stomach.”
 - a. The Orient water was most often unsafe.
 - b. It [the wine] was for medicine not for refreshment or pleasure or social drinking or intoxication.
 - c. Paul speaks of his “frequent ailments.”
 - 1) Drinking unboiled water could cause attacks of dysentery and other medical problems.
 - 2) Drinking nothing but boiled water could also create medical problems.
 3. **The passage cannot be used as scriptural justification for social drinking.** See Matt. 18:6; 1 Cor. 10:31, 32.
 4. “oinos”- Wine could refer to intoxicating wine or non-intoxicating wine.
 - a. Too much of either would not be healthy.
 - b. See also 1 Timothy 3:3, 8; Tit. 1:7

Sins Of Men

- Verses 24 and 25 may refer back to 1 Timothy 5:22. “keep yourself pure”
- Timothy was warned not to appoint men to the eldership or deaconship too quickly.
- Hasty appointments could result in the church not having proper spiritual leadership and being led into sin.

1TI 5:24 The sins of some men are quite evident [obvious, conspicuously open to the eyes of all], going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after.

1 Tim. 5:24 “The sins of some men are out in the open, going before to the judgment, but others show up later.” McCord	1Ti 5:24 The sins of some men are evident to the world, leading the way to your estimate of their characters, but the sins of others lag behind.
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NIV “reaching the place of judgment ahead of them”

1. The sins of some are conspicuous to all eyes and make it easy to make the judgment whether to appoint the man to office.
2. The sins of some are secret to men, but time and questioning and investigation would bring them to the surface.
3. No one is infallible in the appointment of elders. Mistakes are sometimes made.
4. Reasonable caution should be used, but mistakes are made and those who have used reasonable caution must not feel shame or be rebuked.

5. Furthermore, men change - some change for the better and others for the worse.

1TI 5:25 Likewise [in the same way, similarly] **also, deeds** [works] **that are good are quite evident** [conspicuous, clear beforehand], **and those which are otherwise** [not conspicuous, known] **cannot be concealed** [indefinitely hidden, escape notice forever].

- NIV - “those that are not cannot be hidden”
 - NRSV “and even when they are not, they cannot remain hidden.”
 - McCord - “Likewise, honorable deeds are also out in the open; otherwise, they cannot be hidden.”
1. The point is that good deeds cannot be hidden, and that if hidden for a time that they cannot be indefinitely hidden.
 2. Others see our lives and deeds - good or evil.

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