

Expanded Report: Qualifications for Church Leaders (Titus 1:5-9)

Prologue: The Importance of Godly Leadership in the Church

As the family gathered for their evening study, Ryan opened the Bible to Titus 1:5-9. In this passage, Paul provides specific qualifications for church leaders, known as elders or bishops, and instructs Titus to appoint men who meet these standards in Crete. Paul emphasizes that church leaders must exemplify godly character and be committed to teaching sound doctrine. These qualifications not only help maintain order and integrity within the church but also ensure that the leaders reflect the character of Christ, providing a godly example for the entire congregation.

“Tonight, we’re going to look at Paul’s instructions to Titus about choosing elders in the church,” Ryan said. “Paul gives a clear list of qualities that church leaders must have, including being blameless, faithful in marriage, and disciplined. These leaders are called to be examples of godliness and to teach the truth of God’s Word.”

Ariel, curious about the qualities of a good leader, asked, “So, Paul is saying that church leaders need to live in a way that reflects God’s character and teach the right things?”

“Yes,” Ryan nodded. “Church leaders should be role models, not just in their actions but also in their teaching. They have the responsibility to guide the church in truth, and that requires godly character.”

Alice, hugging Mr. Fluffernutter, asked, “So, church leaders need to be kind, honest, and teach us what’s right?”

“Exactly, Alice,” Yaya smiled. “Leaders in the church are there to guide us, and they do that by living out godly lives and sharing the truth of God’s Word.”

Key Teachings: Qualifications for Church Leaders, Godly Character, and Sound Doctrine

1. The Need for Blamelessness in Leadership

Titus 1:6-7

“If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre.”

- **Blamelessness in Character and Conduct:**

Ryan explained, “Paul begins by emphasizing that church leaders must be ‘blameless.’ This means that their lives should be above reproach, with no accusations or charges that would bring dishonor to the gospel. They are to live with integrity and honesty, ensuring that their actions reflect God’s character.”

Ariel asked, “Does blameless mean they’ve never made mistakes?”

“Not exactly,” Ryan said. “It means that they live in such a way that their conduct is beyond

reproach, and if they do make mistakes, they quickly repent and seek reconciliation. It's about living a life that is consistent with God's Word."

- **Faithful in Marriage and Family Life:**

Ryan continued, "Paul also says that a church leader must be the 'husband of one wife,' which means they must be faithful and committed in their marriage. Additionally, their children should be well-behaved and not involved in reckless or rebellious behavior. This shows that a leader's home life should reflect their commitment to God and their ability to lead and nurture others."

Yaya added, "A leader's home is often a reflection of their character. If they can lead their own family well, they are likely to be able to lead the church with wisdom and care."

2. Personal Qualities of a Leader

Titus 1:7-8

"For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate."

- **Selflessness and Patience in Leadership:**

Ryan explained, "Paul emphasizes that church leaders must not be 'selfwilled'—in other words, they should not be driven by selfish desires or personal agendas. Instead, they must be humble and willing to serve others. They should also not be 'soon angry,' meaning that they should be patient and slow to anger, handling conflicts with grace."

Ariel asked, "So, leaders should think of others first and not let their own wants or anger get in the way?"

"Exactly," Ryan said. "Leaders are called to put others before themselves, especially when things get difficult. Patience and humility are key qualities in any leader."

- **Discipline and Self-Control:**

Ryan continued, "Leaders should not be 'given to wine' or 'a striker,' meaning they should not be people who are easily led into excess or violence. They must be disciplined in their actions, ensuring that they don't fall into unhealthy habits or behavior."

Yaya added, "A leader must be someone who exercises self-control and doesn't let the temptations of the world control them. They should also be a lover of hospitality, opening their homes and hearts to others, showing kindness and generosity."

- **Loving What Is Good and Just:**

Ryan explained, "Paul also says that leaders should be 'a lover of good men,' meaning that they should surround themselves with people who live righteously and have a positive influence. They must be sober-minded, just, holy, and temperate—meaning they should live with integrity, fairness, and a commitment to holiness."

Ariel asked, "So, a leader should not just follow what's easy or popular, but always choose what's good and right?"

“Yes,” Ryan said. “A true leader follows God’s standard for what is good and just, no matter what the world says. They model these qualities for others and encourage others to do the same.”

3. The Importance of Holding Fast to Sound Doctrine

Titus 1:9

“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.”

- **Commitment to Sound Doctrine:**

Ryan explained, “Paul stresses that church leaders must hold firmly to the ‘faithful word’—the truth of God’s Word as it has been taught. Leaders must not deviate from sound doctrine, because it is the foundation of the church. They must know God’s Word thoroughly and be able to teach it with accuracy and authority.”

Ariel asked, “Does this mean leaders need to know the Bible really well?”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Leaders must be grounded in Scripture and committed to teaching the truth, because the health of the church depends on it. They need to know God’s Word inside and out.”

- **The Ability to Teach and Correct with Sound Doctrine:**

Ryan continued, “Paul also says that leaders should be able to ‘exhort and convince the gainsayers.’ This means that they should not only teach and encourage the congregation but also be able to correct those who oppose the truth. A leader’s role is to protect the church from false teachings and guide people toward godliness.”

Yaya added, “A good leader doesn’t just teach what’s easy—they also stand firm in the truth, even when it’s difficult or unpopular. They use God’s Word to correct and guide, always pointing people back to the gospel.”

4. The Key Teaching: Godly Character and Sound Doctrine Are Essential for Leadership

Key Teaching:

The key teaching of this passage is that church leaders must exemplify godly character and be committed to sound doctrine. Paul gives a list of specific qualifications for elders and bishops, emphasizing qualities such as blamelessness, faithfulness, self-control, and a love for good. Additionally, leaders must hold fast to the truth of God’s Word and be able to teach and defend it. Their lives should reflect the gospel, and their teaching should be rooted in Scripture, ensuring that the church remains faithful to the truth.

Ryan summarized, “Paul is teaching us that church leadership requires a combination of godly character and a commitment to God’s Word. Leaders should model Christlike behavior and teach the truth with integrity, ensuring that the church remains healthy and strong in the faith.”

Practical Applications: Cultivating Godly Leadership and Teaching the Truth

The family discussed how they could apply these teachings in their daily lives:

1. Exemplifying Godly Character:

Ariel suggested, “We can strive to live with integrity, humility, and patience, just like the leaders Paul describes. Even if we’re not leaders in the church, we can be examples of godliness in our homes and communities.”

Alice added, “I can be kind to others, listen carefully, and always try to do the right thing, just like how we learn in the Bible.”

2. Learning and Teaching Sound Doctrine:

Ryan encouraged them, “We can make sure we are grounded in God’s Word by reading the Bible regularly and learning more about it. Whether we’re leaders or not, we should always be growing in our understanding of God’s truth and be ready to share it with others.”

Yaya reminded them, “We also need to be careful who we listen to and make sure that the teachings we follow are rooted in the Bible.”

3. Encouraging Faithful Leadership:

Yaya added, “We can pray for the leaders in our church, asking God to give them wisdom, strength, and the ability to teach with truth and love. We should support them and encourage them in their ministry.”

Takeaway: The Importance of Godly Leadership and Sound Doctrine

As the family

reflected, Yaya shared a story about how a godly leader had impacted her life. “There was a time when I was struggling with a decision, but the pastor’s teaching from God’s Word gave me clarity and peace. He modeled godliness and always pointed me back to the truth.”

Ariel smiled, “So, leaders in the church are like guides who help us follow Jesus and stay on the right path?”

“Yes,” Ryan said, “and that’s why their character and teaching are so important. When leaders live out godly lives and teach the truth, they help all of us grow stronger in our faith.”

Key Points Summary

1. Godly Leadership Requires Integrity and Commitment:

- Church leaders must live blameless lives, be faithful in marriage, and show self-control, kindness, and patience. Their character should reflect Christ in every way.

2. Sound Doctrine Is the Foundation of Leadership:

- Leaders must hold fast to the truth of God’s Word and teach it faithfully, correcting error and guiding others with sound doctrine.

3. The Role of Leaders in the Church:

- Leaders are called to be examples of godliness and teachers of the truth, ensuring the church stays faithful and strong in the faith.
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Key Verse:

“For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God.” (Titus 1:7)

This passage teaches us that church leaders must exemplify godly character and be deeply committed to teaching sound doctrine. Leaders are entrusted with the responsibility to guide the church with integrity, truth, and love, ensuring that the faith is passed on faithfully to the next generation.