

A Few Good Men

1 Tm 3:1-7

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. The Marines say that they want a few good men. We need a few good men to be elders.
- B. One day, I want to be an elder.
 - 1. Because there is no greater work on earth.
 - 2. Because established that office to lead his church.
- C. This morning we will examine what the Scriptures teach concerning the office of an elder.

II. GOOD WORK, v 1.

- A. We need men who desire to be elders.
 - 1. “Desire” means “to seek after with a strong desire; to set one’s heart upon.”
 - 2. This is an office that is to be desired.
 - a. We need men who say, “I want to be an elder.”
 - b. We need teens who say, “I want to be an elder.”
- B. He who wants to be an elder desires a good work.
 - 1. “Good” means “noble,” “honorable,” “excellent,” “beneficial,” or “productive.”
 - 2. So many have the idea that being an elder is not a good thing.
 - a. They say, “No one appreciates what the elders do. No one respects the elders. Elders have to spend many hours away from their families.”
 - b. All that may be true, God’s Word says that being a bishop is a good work.
 - 3. The work of an elder is good because:
 - a. Elders are God’s idea.
 - b. The Holy spirit sets men as elders (Acts 20:28).
 - c. Elders watch over God’s church (Acts 20:28); they have an important work.

III. GOOD LIFE, vv 2-3.

- A. Paul talks about the type of lives elders need to live.
- B. Elders are to be blameless, v 2.
 - 1. An elder is to be irreproachable, not open to attack.
 - 2. In a political campaign, candidates look for their opponents’ possible wrongdoings & then exploit those.
 - 3. Elders shouldn’t have “skeletons in the closet”—there shouldn’t be anything about an elder that can be attacked.
 - 4. This doesn’t mean that elders have to be perfect—it means that they are to be good men who live good lives.
- C. Husband of one wife, v 2.
 - 1. Elders are to be married only once.
 - a. This doesn’t mean that a man who has lost his life through death or a biblical divorce & remarried cannot be an elder.
 - b. Rather, this means that an elder needs to have one wife at a time.
 - 2. This means that elders need to be men who have kept their wedding vows.
 - 3. Divorce is too easy, and we need leadership in Christian marriage. Elders need to provide that leadership.

- D. Elders are to have good thinking, v 2.
 - 1. They are to be temperate.
 - a. This means to be self-controlled.
 - b. Elders need to control their appetites—they don't need to give into everything they want.
 - 2. They are to be sober-minded.
 - a. Elders need to be thoughtful, prudent.
 - b. They do not need to make quick decisions; they need to think things through so they can arrive at sound judgment.
- E. Elders are to be of good behavior, v 2.
 - 1. This term literally means to be respectable, honorable.
 - 2. Elders should live in such a way as to earn respect.
 - 3. Elders should be role models.
 - a. We don't have many good role models today—our political leaders are laden with moral failures, sports figures contract diseases through improper sexual contact, entertainers are often addicted to drugs & alcohol.
 - b. We need elders to fill this void, & to be solid role models.
- F. Elders are to be hospitable, v 2.
 - 1. In the first century, Christians avoided inns with their pagan atmosphere & food that had already been offered to idols.
 - 2. Missionaries would travel from city to city not knowing where they'd stay, and elders needed to be willing to keep someone like that.
 - 3. The point is that elders should be willing to help.
 - a. Elders should be willing to keep those who need a place to stay.
 - b. Elders should also be willing to help in other ways—to make sure those around them aren't going without, to help the elderly lady how needs help mowing her yard. Elders should be willing to help however they can.
- G. Elders are to be able to teach, v 2.
 - 1. Elders need to know Scripture so that they can refute error.
 - 2. Acts 20:28.
- H. Elders are not to be given to win, v 3.
 - 1. Elders need to have good judgment & alcohol takes that away.
 - 2. Nadab & Abihu were probably drunk when they offered profane fire (Lev 10:8-10).
 - 3. Drunkenness will keep one from sin (1 Cor 6:10).
 - 4. Illustration about Sandy McIntyre selling a mine for \$25 so he could buy some liquor, *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #148.
- I. Elders are to have a good temper, v 3.
 - 1. An elder is not to be violent, but gentle.
 - a. He is not to have a bad temper where he's ready to hit—so many are ready to hit at the slightest aggravation.
 - b. an elder is rather to be gentle & kind.
 - 2. An elder is not to be quarrelsome.
 - a. The idea is that an elder should not be ready to argue.
 - b. Some people just enjoy a good argument.
 - c. Elders should strive to get along with people.
- J. Elders are not to be covetous, v 3.
 - 1. An elder cannot be greedy for money.
 - 2. Remember that in the New Testament era elders were often paid (1 Tm 5:17-18).
 - 3. An elder should not become an elder just to be paid.
- K. These really are good standards for all of us.

IV. GOOD FAMILY, vv 4-5.

- A. An elder is to rule his family well.
 - 1. He is to teach his children to submit. He is to teach them to submit to him & to God.
 - 2. This is to be done with all reverence, respect.
 - a. An elder is to teach his children respect.
 - b. Respect is a lost art in today's culture, and elders' children should be an example of respect.
- B. If a man cannot rule his own household, he is unfit to care for God's church.
 - 1. The home is a "proving ground" for elders.
 - 2. It's in the home that elders learn how to lead.
 - 3. If men can't instill Christian values in their own families, how can they do so in the church?

V. GOOD EXPERIENCE, v 6.

- A. An elder must be a man with experience in the church—he cannot be a novice.
 - 1. A novice wouldn't know enough about the church to lead—he wouldn't know enough of what the church stands for to protect her.
 - 2. he wouldn't have the wisdom & insight necessary.
- B. If a novice becomes an elder,
 - 1. He might be puffed up.
 - a. He might really think he's something.
 - b. After all, he comes into a group & they make him their leader.
 - 2. he might fall into the same condemnation as the devil.
 - a. The devil's chief sin seems to be pride.
 - 1) Apparently, the devil is a fallen angel.
 - 2) Apparently, he wanted to supplant God's authority—he wanted God's power & glory.
 - b. These men would, therefore, fall into his condemnation.

VI. GOOD REPUTATION, v 7.

- A. He needs to have a good reputation among non-Christians.
 - 1. There's nothing like the Jimmy Swaggert's and Jim Bakker's to give the church a bad name.
 - 2. After all, if the leaders can't behave, why should anyone else?
 - 3. A Malay proverb says, "It is better to die with a good name, than to lie with a bad one."
- B. If he doesn't have a good reputation,
 - 1. he might fall into reproach—embarrassment.
 - 2. He might fall into the snare of the devil—the trap the devil set.

VII. CONCLUSION.

- A. Elders must be good men & we need good men to be elders.
- B. But, these qualifications for elders should be something we all work toward, because we'll be better people for it.
 - 1. Are you working toward meeting these qualifications?
 - 2. Are you a good person?