

The Moral Character of a Godly Leader (Part 1)

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[0:00] 1 Timothy 3, verses 2 and 3.

! Temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

I've told you before that that word overseer is pastor, elder. I read this in preparation and I thought as soon as this is over I'm going down to Brother Don's office and resign as an elder.

Remember when I read all the qualifications? Leaders in the church of the Lord Jesus are required, underline that thought, to meet certain standards.

And tonight we're going to look at moral standards or moral qualities. And next week we're going to discuss other qualities of a church leader.

[1:28] And that will include how they conduct themselves in their homes, in public, and especially in church. Do they conduct themselves with spiritual maturity?

But tonight we're going to look at the requirements for a godly leader. And it starts out there. Paul starts out to young Timothy and says, An overseer or an elder then must be above reproach.

And we're going to keep coming back to those two words, above reproach. Those are the key that open the door of what we're doing. The overseers, the elders, are appointed by God to lead the church.

And again, you could probably even throw in bishops. That appears every now and then. Such men must have leadership qualities that are grounded in moral and spiritual maturity.

These men are to set an example to every member of the church, regardless of the age of that person or their level of spiritual maturity.

[2:49] That applies to the church member. It doesn't matter how old they are, where they're at in their walk with Christ, in the sanctification process. And these requirements, when you read this in the original language, which I've never done, indicate that these are absolutes.

These are absolutes. They must absolutely meet these qualifications. Let me read to you from Richard Baxter.

No easy read. I've got some of his books. Take heed to yourselves, lest your example contradict your doctrine, and lest you lay such stumbling blocks before the blind as may be the occasion of your ruin.

Lest you unsay with your lives what you say with your tongues, and be the greatest hinderers of the success of your own labors.

One proud, surly, lordly word. Now this was written 300 years ago. One needless contention, one covetous action, may cut the throat of many a sermon, and blast the fruit of all that you've been trying to do.

[4:22] Take heed to yourselves, lest you live in those sins which you preach against in others, and lest you be guilty of that which daily you condemn. Will you make it your work to magnify God, and when you have done, dishonor Him as much as others?

Will you proclaim Christ's governing power, and yet condemn it and rebel yourselves? Will you preach His laws and willfully break them?

If sin be evil, why do you live in it? If it is not evil, then why do you dissuade men from living in it? If sin is dangerous, how dare you venture on it?

If it is not dangerous, why do you tell men so? If God's threatenings be true, why do you not fear them? If they be false, why do you needlessly trouble men with them and put them into such frights without cause?

Do you know the judgment of God, and they who commit such things are worthy of death, and yet you will do them? Thou that teaches another, teaches thou not thyself?

[5:37] Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, or be drunk, or covetous, art thou such thyself? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through the law dishonoring God, what?

Shall the same tongue speak evil that speaks against evil? Shall those lips censure and slander and backbite your neighbor, that cry down these and the like things in others?

Take heed to yourselves, lest you cry down sin and yet do not overcome it, lest while you seek to bring it down in others, you bow to it and become its slaves yourselves.

For of whom a man is overcome, of the same he is brought into bondage. To whom you yield yourself servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom you obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness.

O brethren, it is easier to chide its sin than to overcome it. Baxter was an amazing person, and I've got, like I say, a number of his books.

[6:44] He was a Puritan? Yeah. Above reproach is an interesting concept, and in the original language, it literally means not able to be held.

One explanation I heard was this. If you're above reproach, you cannot be arrested and held for any wrongdoing. I can kind of identify that as a police officer.

It's hard to unarrest somebody. It's very embarrassing. I've had to unarrest people. You get the wrong guy, and you have to unarrest them. It's really, you cannot be held if you're above reproach.

There is nothing with which to accuse you. This does not mean that the minister that is above reproach is sinless, but it does mean that such a man is not trapped in habitual, unconfessed sin.

The overseer must be an example to his flock, and at the same time, does not give the enemies of the church, and there are plenty, ammunition by which to accuse him.

[7:58] Those in leadership roles in the church must strive to be above reproach, and there's a bunch of reasons for this. Leaders are a special and inviting target of Satan.

He loves to bring down leaders, and he's brought a bunch of them down in our lifetime in this room. The fall of a church leader can cause great harm for a church.

Satan knows that when a shepherd falls, there is a devastating impact on the sheep. Leaders have a greater accountability because they possess significant truth.

When they fail, there is a greater chastening from the Lord. You know, James warned, don't seek, everybody seek to be a teacher because there's a higher accounting.

It is easy to accuse an elder with hypocrisy if they commit the very sins they are preaching against. Because of their responsibilities, leaders need an abundance of grace.

[9:07] We all need grace, and leaders need an outpouring of grace. Leaders must immerse themselves in the Word of God. He must be a man of deep prayer as he intercedes with the Lord for his flock.

The leader must also be accountable to others in the fellowship of the church. The bar by which a church measures a pastor is labeled above reproach.

That's the bar. That's the standard. And we live in a day when many high-profile pastors have committed serious and very public sins and been immediately restored to the pulpit.

We've seen this. It's some very high-profile national figures. And we need to be clear on this point. A church should never be reluctant to forgive a truly repentant person.

That is taught in the Scriptures. But restoration to the pulpit is in an entirely different category. And we probably won't develop that a lot tonight, or maybe probably not next week, but we're going to get even further into that.

[10:33] leaders represent Christ in the pulpit and serve as a blueprint for holiness to the flock.

So how should a church evaluate a man seeking a leadership role in a church based upon the standard of above reproach?

Well, Paul lists four areas of that man's life that should be considered, should be evaluated.

The first thing to look at, consider, is, we're talking about this potential leader, his moral character. His moral character. His home life, his spiritual maturity, and his public reputation.

[11:34] Those are the four areas that Paul's going to take us in. And Paul's not going to get it all done tonight. He's going to have to work on this a little bit. But, and tonight, we're only going to look at the moral character of a godly leader.

We'll get to the others later. Although, I think that home life is very interesting. I know one of the pastor's requirements, you know, for membership is we would prefer to have a home visit.

You would learn a whole lot about a person with a home visit. I mean, many of you have been to our house and not every door is unlocked. Diane won't let you in some of our rooms.

You know, Mike's been in all of them. He's our plumber. He was really shocked. He went to our bathroom last time and it was clean. Totally spotless, you know. Tonight, we're going to look at the moral character of a godly leader.

And I want to add something at some point and I guess I'll do it now. When we leave here tonight, probably all of you are going to, within your own heart, have to ask yourselves, where do I stand on all this?

[12:46] I'm not going to be dogmatic on some of this because it's tough. There are going to be some tough thoughts come into our minds and hearts in this lesson tonight.

And I'm struggling with it. To be completely honest with you, not the least of which is I ran out of time preparing so I really threw it together. I had the first half but the second half I didn't count on a snowstorm.

Tonight we'll cover moral character. The husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

The leader must be above reproach in his relationships with women. His relationships with women. And first of all, and I think foremost, he is a one-woman man. He is a one-woman man. And by the way, that is the literal, I'm told, that is the literal translation from the Greek language of the husband of one wife.

[14:03] That you are a one-woman man. MacArthur says something interesting here. And again, you're going to have to arrive with some conclusions or study.

Maybe that's a better way to put it. You're going to have to dig into the work. MacArthur's take is this is not necessarily a reference to marital status.

Now, I've been taught that forever. Forever. But he says this really touches on behavior, specifically sexual behavior, of the leaders.

Paul starts here because this is where leaders have faltered and failed. And we all know that and especially in our day with media which feeds on this stuff.

They love this stuff. And, you know, if the world and the devil want to destroy a minister, they do it through church secretaries and, you know, members and counseling women.

[15:16] Close your door and bring a woman in for counseling. Uh-uh. Not going to happen. Don's got a built-in protective device called Sherry. Yeah, you want me to counsel you?

Yeah, honey? Come here. We're going to counsel this lady. You know? I mean, I don't shut my door at the police department with a woman. I don't.

And I remember Billy Graham's secretary, I guess she was with him for a gazillion years. She said she had never been alone with Dr. Graham in his office with the door closed. Lifelong secretary. Sixty-plus years. Never was alone with him with the door shut. You don't even want an inkling of being able to be able for you to be down on that.

Yeah. So this term of husband of one wife has been subjected to various interpretations, and I would suggest even within the ranks of Southern Baptist life.

[16:13] I imagine that a lot of churches have different spins on that. Many have argued that it was Paul's argument against allowing polygamy in the church.

You know, some guy showed up and had two or more wives. I leaned that way for years. I made an assumption that it was that way.

But there's some problems with that. There's some serious problems with that. First, why would the church let an idiot into this membership?

You know, I mean, I always remember the slave Jim in Huckleberry Finn. And he said, the Bible says Solomon was the wisest man. He had 300 wives and similar concubines. He couldn't be smart.

I mean, that was the slave Jim, you know, that Martin Twain and Samuel Clemens wrote about. Think about it, though, guys. Divorce yourself from the cults, particularly Mormonism.

[17:15] What man is in a New Testament church, a true church, that has two wives? There isn't any. We're not going to let a guy in here that's got two wives.

I mean, it's not even an issue. It wouldn't even be discussed. I mean, that wouldn't come to a vote in the church. You probably never hear about it. We don't read anywhere in the New Testament about

a member of the church, and especially a leader in a church, having more than one wife. It just didn't happen. Further, and this is kind of new territory for me, and I never really considered this before, polygamy, you know, having more than one wife, was not a problem within Jewish life in the first century.

You don't read biblical passages or even secular literature, Jewish literature, about Jewish men having multiple wives in the first century.

It just didn't. It would have been looked upon as sin and not allowed. And this was really startling. Polygamy was very rare in the Roman world, in the Roman Empire, a bunch of pagans, but extremely rare, but for reasons that are different from Judaism and from Christianity.

[18 : 49] Roman men and women led loose lifestyles, many of them, not everybody, but they were involved in adulterous lifestyles without fear of recrimination.

They had very open marriages. And in Rome, also practiced easy divorce. Pray you don't ever live in a country where there's easy divorce or abortion or homosexuality or we won't go there.

When I was a kid, before most of you were born, not everybody, sorry, sorry guys, but I am probably older than you, but not Oscar.

Oscar's got me for a couple years. You didn't get an easy divorce. You didn't just go down in 1950 and say, I'm divorcing my wife. You better come up with some reasons.

Now, it's the simplest thing in the world. I saw a deal last night in Springfield, \$250. It must have gone up because you see these signs along the highway, \$50.

[19 : 57] I'll sell you a kit for \$50 to get divorced. Rome practiced easy divorce. Polygamy was never a major issue in the Roman Empire.

I'm not going to get specific here, but trust me, that still goes on. Open marriage and all that stuff in Bartlesville, America.

In Bartlesville, America. Some maintain that Paul was forbidding remarriage after the death of a spouse, but again, we're referring to moral character, not necessarily marital status, and the scriptures permit and honor second marriages that fall within those acceptable circumstances. Paul wrote that young widows should remarry and raise children. So that pretty much hammers it right there. 1 Corinthians chapter 7 verse 39, a wife is bound as long as her husband lives, but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes only in the Lord.

A fellow believer. Marry another believer. Still others hold that this qualification excludes divorced men from spiritual leadership, and now we're going to get kind of on the thin ice.

[21 : 33] Can I say that our church does that? Yeah. We have prohibitions on divorce men from holding deacon, elder.

And so you get, you know, not all churches hold to what we do. And I have to point out that the Lord permitted remarriage when a divorce was caused by adultery.

he permitted remarriage. He also, Paul gave a second occasion for divorce when he talked about the unbelieving spouse initiating a divorce, saying, I want out of this thing.

And Paul there, and I think it was 1 Corinthians chapter 7 around verse 15, said, you know, that person would be permitted. They were unevenly yoked. They're trying to make the marriage work. Probably a guy, yeah, I started to say guy, could be a woman, I guess, but probably a guy, said, no, I want out. I want out. So we see there, but again, let's be reminded, the Old Testament verse, Malachi, guy, God hates divorce.

[22 : 59] I have officers come to me and say, I'm going to get a divorce. And they claim to be in relationship with Christ. And I'll start there. Then I'll speed dial down. God hates divorce.

He hates it. But I do believe God is always gracious to that innocent party in those situations. if divorce resulted from a man's inability to lead his family, then that would be cause for disqualification for church leadership.

And I think a lot of divorces are caused by that. A lot of them. I'm involved right now in a situation at work with two people who claim, who profess Christ, and there's been, a relationship outside of that marriage.

And so here we have two people claiming to be in fellowship, but one has strayed, and it's tough. And I would submit to you that it's a guy, and he should never be a church leader in the sense of a pastor, an elder.

not an issue of forgiveness if it's truly repentant, but it's really an issue. I mean, I went blank on his name.

[24:32] Swaggart. Do you still see Swaggart preaching every now and then? What do you see when he's behind the pulpit? I'll tell you what I see. I'll let you off the hook. A man caught in adultery, and he's holding the Bible.

That's what I see. Jim Baker. Not a question of forgiveness. Not even a question of is there a role for me somewhere, but behind that pulpit is a whole different matter.

It's a whole different matter. And let me add this. Somewhere out there, there's some real hard-shelled Baptists that says, single men can't be deacons.

Can't preach. Can't be the husband of one wife. You know? And you know, Mike, I may be wrong, but it seemed like when we ordained Stan Walton, a couple people brought that up, because he was single.

He was single. And they said he's not the husband of one wife. man. And again, Paul is not excluding Paul.

[25:43] Yeah, it points out here in the stuff I stole for this lesson that Paul would have been disqualified 1 Corinthians 7, 8. He was single. He was single.

A one-woman man is a man devoted in his heart and mind to the woman that is his wife. He's devoted to her.

He loves her, desires only her, thinks about her. We are called upon to maintain purity in both conduct and thought.

Wow. And we live in what kind of culture? And does Madison Avenue know the hot buttons? You know, like I've said, you won't see, you know, turn on TV and Ace Hardware is selling hammers with girls in bikinis.

They don't know what that thing is used for. Because Madison Avenue understands that. And if a man has fallen into immorality after he assumes a leadership role, it was a disqualification in Paul's terminology.

[27:10] He's telling Timothy, disqualify those guys. And let me tell you, there was a bunch of them, particularly in Ephesus, which was really a bad area and a lot of impurity.

And Paul's telling Timothy, you've got to weed them out. They're disqualified. The same standards apply to men in positions of spiritual leadership today.

Paul didn't say this is for the first century. This is absolute truth. Absolute truth. And Scripture makes it clear that impure sexual sin is a reproach that never goes away.

It just, it does not. It also says that a leader in God's church must be temperate. Very interesting. He is wineless or unmixed with wine.

Now, that's interesting. In Psalm 104, it says, wine makes a man's heart glad. And I've seen a lot of glad guys down at the drunk tank.

[28:21] Boy, they're glad. But, let's face it, it has the potential for great harm. I'd have to say that Southern Baptists are so concerned with that, we serve grape juice.

And I've heard it said in many Southern Baptist congregations, what if the guy is an alcoholic? Have you ever heard the statement there's no such thing as a reformed alcoholic?

I worked with the guy who was chief prosecutor of Tarrant County, Texas, great man, and he told me one day, he said, I'm an alcoholic. I said, well, Tali, I've never seen you take a drink.

He said, I haven't taken a drink in 25 years. But I crave it every minute of the day. And I said, how did you discover you were an alcoholic?

He said, I'd go to bed at 10 o'clock and set my alarm for 6, and I would set a shot of whiskey next to the alarm clock. The alarm would go off, I'd turn it off, I'd swing my feet out on the floor, I'd take that and down it.

[29:26] And he said, that's when I figured out that I was an alcoholic. It cost him his first marriage, but he hadn't had a drink in a quarter of a century, but he considered himself to be an alcoholic.

wine in those days was diluted with water, and we know from reading the history of those days that water, there were some dangers with water.

We also know that there was some formula like eight parts water to one part wine, but again, the Bible speaks about wine, but it never speaks about drunkenness as being anything but gross immorality and sin.

Proverbs 21, wine is a mocker, strong drink, a brawler, and whoever is intoxicated by it is not wise. I mean, that's pretty much. and we need temperate men in the church today. Fellas, I was in a church in New Jersey.

[30:40] My dad got transferred up there in 1959, and we didn't know and we couldn't find anything. My parents were not strong church goers, but we got up there and we finally found one we thought, but they were struggling financially, and they decided to raise money for the church by having cocktail parties on Saturday night.

Anybody here part of the Boys and Girls Club? Good. They came to me last week, said, would you sign this? We're going to serve alcohol at a fundraiser.

And I said, what are you serving? She said, well, beer, wine, margaritas, for the Boys and Girls Club. My first day as police chief in 1990, my secretary came in and said, need to sign this.

This is for the community center. Pete Silas, the president of the Trump Company, is going to have a party over there and they want to serve mixed drinks. You have to sign permission because we own the property.

To which I said, well, I'm not going to sign that. I'm a deacon in the Baptist church. And she said, the next chief will. I said, give me your pen. Pete used to work for my dad.

[31:57] Pete used to work for my dad. He did Jarvis in there. He did what? Jarvis. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Third, a leader in the church must be prudent.

A prudent man, by the way, this quality is the result of being temperate. a guy that's not getting drunk is prudent.

Okay, can I put it for you that way? The prudent man is well-disciplined and knows how to correctly order his priorities. He is a person who is serious about things that are spiritual.

He wants to dig into the word of God. He wants to sit at the feet of a shepherd. He wants to take notes so he can refer back to them.

I won't mention who I sit behind every Sunday morning, but they're great note-takers, tremendous note-takers. Jonathan gets a page in, Chrisel at about eight or ten.

[33:04] They take notes. And he is a person who is very serious about spiritual things. It does not mean that he's cold or humorless.

It doesn't mean that, but that he views the world through God's eyes. He sees it through the lens of what God sees.

Philippians 4.8, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, and whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

Wow. His mind will be controlled by God's truth and not the whims of the flesh. Jesus Christ will reign supreme over every area of his life.

I've been teaching 32 years or more now, and I've discovered something. As a teacher, I've learned a lot, but I've missed a lot. You know, I wake up and the only thing I'm reading is what I'm going to be teaching on Sunday morning or Monday night.

[34:20] Since the first year, I've been going through 1 John, probably my favorite book of the Bible. Word by word, word by word, literally. When I was a new believer, even before I was a believer, FBI agent I worked with bought me that book by Tim LaHaye, of all people, you associate with left behind series called How to Study the Bible.

And the first chapter, he said, read 1 John every day for 30 days. And I didn't read the second chapter, I just opened up 1 John, and I did that, and I'm still doing it. Great, great book.

Let your mind be controlled by God's truth, not by the whims of the flesh. man and overseer must be respectable.

That carries with it an idea of orderly or orderliness. A man that's prudent in mind is going to be respected, wouldn't you say, by others?

A well disciplined mind leads to a well disciplined life. And if you've ever known pastors whose life is continual confusion, that is so disorganized.

[35:45] You know, it just is. And there's no place in ministry for that. He needs to be respected, and he needs to be prudent, and have orderliness about him.

And also he's be hospitable. Hospitable is an interesting word. It's, there's two Greek words there, and I'm not going to begin to pronounce them, because Don will start smiling.

But they're the Greek words to love, and the Greek word for stranger. When you put them together, it means love strangers. Love strangers.

And that's a Christian virtue. Yesterday we were at Skyline Baptist Church in Branson. We were snowbound, and someone ran into the church, said a car has run deep into a ravine, and there's a

passenger that's a total invalid.

And about six, I didn't hear it until afterwards, but about six church members and the pastor took off on foot, and went down there and pulled that person out and carried them a half mile to the church to get them warm and fed.

[36:57] And I thought, wow, that's hospitality, a graphic display of hospitality. It is a Christian virtue to love strangers.

Easy to love one another, right? But to love strangers. And, you know, 1 Peter, about entertaining, it doesn't say entertain your friends, it says show hospitality to strangers.

We had a guy walk into our mission team meeting a couple weeks ago, and we ended up putting him up in a hotel and giving him some food for money, buying him something so he could bathe, which he was in desperate need.

Luke 14, 12, when you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and repayment come to you, but when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed since they do not have the means to repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

And those people were the outcasts in that first century culture. I mean, there was an assumption that those people were under the anathema of God because they were all those things, poor, crippled, lame, blind.

[38:23] God made them that way to punish them for some deed they had done or their parents had done or their grandparents or whatever. Remember the prayer? Thank you God that I'm not like other men.

I mean, this was the whole mindset. And who did Jesus minister to? Those people. Poor, crippled, lame, blind. That's who he ministered to.

Persecution, poverty, orphans, widows, and traveling Christians in the first century made hospitality an essential. It was an essential.

Guys, there were no hotels or motels. Remember there's no room at the inn? There really weren't any hotels or motels. You know what they were basically? They were brothels. They were basically brothels.

They were very, very evil and they had horrible reputations. And so they sought help often from strangers.

[39:27] And this church, we've put up a lot of people in our time. Over here next door, we fed them. We've put up a lot of people and helped them.

And I think we ought to help people that will help themselves. We had a family show up here, a 20-year-old 20-21 with their parents and they wanted a handout and Ed Saucier went down to visit with them and they were all for sitting in a nice car smoking.

They didn't have any money and they needed a room and they needed this. Ed said, are you boys healthy? Oh, yeah, yeah. He said, well, look down there. Do you see all that?

No, no. Well, there's Walmart, there's Burger King. They all have a help wanted sign in the window. Go help your parents by getting a job. Well, they didn't like that idea. They didn't like that idea.

The door of a Christian home as well as the heart of a Christian family should be opened to those in need. elders are not at a status that we're unapproachable.

[40:40] We should be the most approachable people in the church. And quite honestly, I took care of that guy. I'm not bragging. I wanted to get him out of there because I was afraid Sherry was going to pass out from the stench.

It was bad. And he told me later, he said, I haven't bathed in about a month. I said, well, let's go get some soap and shampoo and we'll do that. And we did. And he did. He did.

Found out later he was wanted to Osage County for a felony, but we won't get into that. I thought he let him go. A pastor's life and his home are to be opened.

And then it becomes the measure of the true character. I spent the night in Jim Merritt's house. Knocked on his door at 1030 one night and there wasn't a motel for 50 miles.

He became president of the Southern Baptist Convention. He's on TV now out of Georgia. Put me up for the night. Great guy. An overseer, elder, must be able to teach.

[41:44] Must be able to teach. And it's interesting because this is about the only qualification that's not listed in the deacon thing.

Doesn't mean deacons can't teach. I hope. I did it for a long time. But it's not mission. An elder is to be a skilled teacher who works hard in his studies and at proclamation.

And he is set apart for that. The primary duty of an overseer is to preach and teach the word of God. And that is a crucial gift in the New Testament church.

to exposit the word of God. And some people wonder why Paul includes this qualification in the midst.

We're talking about moral qualities, right? And he throws in teacher. Why does he do that? An effective teacher or the ability to teach effectively is woven into the moral character of the teacher.

[42:51] It's woven into that. to preach and to teach God's word, and I would have to also include and pray for the flock, is the primary task of elders.

And what do we demand of our elder in chief nowadays? Well, you know, he's got to be involved in everything. You know, what color of carp are we going to buy? And, you know, what kind of paint are we going to, you know, we saddle him with everything.

But the primary task of the elder is to teach, preach, pray. It was for all that purpose that they were given to the church.

And let me add here, there are teachers in here and good ones that are not elders, perhaps not even deacons. teachers. Um, not everyone has the gift of preaching and teaching, but every believer is responsible to pass along the truths they've learned from God's word.

So in that sense, you are all teachers and, and probably the, your best students are your wife, children, and grandchildren. your friends, your neighbors, we teach what we learn from God's word.

[44:14] Uh, but, but if you're aspiring to pastoral duty, you should be a gifted teacher or preacher of the word. Um, a skilled teacher should have the gift of teaching.

I actually took a test one year and it said, you're a teacher. And I bought into it. I bought into it. A skilled teacher should have a deep understanding of doctrine.

Boy, that is so important. And you know, we live in a time when doctrine has been pushed aside in a lot of, a lot of venues. Had a former member here that, uh, left and started his own church and Dr. McBride ran into him. How's it going? Oh, it's going great. What's your particular doctrine? Oh, we don't have doctrine. It's divisive. We hate doctrine. That's a, that's a bad word in our church. We don't preach doctrine, teach doctrine.

We have no doctrine. Really, you're kind of like a club. I mean, Dr. McBride wasn't known for his PR sometimes. He said, you're just kind of a club. Yeah. A good servant of Christ Jesus is constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of sound doctrine.

[45:26] You have to know sound doctrine because you've got to teach it to others and refute those who, who get it wrong, who get it wrong. It's good.

If you want to be a good teacher, it's good to have a dose of humility. And my class will keep you humble. We've got the Villarreal table back there. And over here, you got Teresa, your mom.

And they will keep me humble when I get something wrong. They stop me. And then I have Diane at home that does that. And it helps to be humble.

To teach the truth with an arrogant attitude undermines the truth that you're teaching. It undermines it. Paul said this to Timothy, the Lord's bond servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, and gentleness correcting those who are in opposition if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth.

We'll get to that in a few years, 2 Timothy chapter 2, verses 24 and 25. And now I'm going to go to meddling. A skilled teacher's life should be marked with holiness.

[46:40] Paul says to Timothy, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.

He must be credible and live what he teaches. Paul says this in 1 Timothy chapter 4. He exhorted Timothy to in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity show yourself an example to those who believe.

He's preparing this young man for ministry to be a pastor. teacher. Basically, a teacher should be what he asks his people to be.

Skilled teacher must be a diligent student of Scripture. Dig into the Word. 2 Timothy chapter 2, verse 15, Paul, be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of truth.

And a skilled teacher must avoid error. It is tragic when men want to go into ministry and they go to a school that does not honor God's Word.

[48:01] And dare I say this, most seminaries and most Bible schools do not honor God's Word in this day. I actually saw a list. I saw a list a few years ago of the seminaries and Bible colleges that believed in creation versus evolution.

And it was dismal. I mean, there was like eight out of 104 that rejected evolution and believed in creation.

It was an amazing statistic. Many attend a university that does not honor God's Word. There was a time when you could attend a certain seminary and one of our six and not honor God's Word.

And I think those times are pretty much over. I know Southern was bad and now it's probably the best in many respects, primarily because of Dr. Mohler and how God had used him.

Paul repeatedly warned Timothy against error and against false doctrine. And a skilled teacher must be strong, have courage, and be a man of conviction.

[49:11] He cannot abandon the truth. He cannot make his life, you know, shipwrecked on the rocks, the rock of and walk away from the faith.

Paul said at the end of his ministry, I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith. I told my wife I wouldn't mind on my headstone to have these words, if it is true.

And I told her, if it's not true, do not put it on there. He finished strong. And I said, if it's not true, don't you dare put that on there. But if it is true, I would be satisfied with that.

Or I told you I was sick, you know. I'll go with he finished strong. He finished strong. Paul then goes back to drinking, not addicted to wine.

An elder who is not addicted to wine is a man who does not have a reputation as a drinker. He doesn't frequent bars and involve himself in the scenes that are associated with that.

[50:21] So that's interesting how he goes back to that. An elder is not to be pugnacious. not a brawler, not a fighter, not a giver of blows, not a striker.

leader in the church is not one who reacts to difficulty with physical violence, unless he's the police chief.

You know, there may could something happen there someday and then I would be working for Caesar. I mean, all of a sudden. That guy that disrupted our service, if I'd known at the time, I would have gone back there.

It is actually a violation of Oklahoma law to disrupt a church service. They call it a religious service, but what do they know? But we're not to be pugnacious.

You don't keep a list of wrongs so you can get back at people. You don't hold a grudge. Leaders who are wronged, there's got to be one or two leaders that have been wronged in this country.

[51:29] They have no thought of retaliation. Doesn't even enter into it. Finally, Paul throws this in. Be free from the love of money.

And I must not love money because it's not around long enough, you know, to really be in love with it. It is corruption of ministry to be in it for the money.

Love of money is what is at the heart of all motivation for false teachers. And guys, should we start listing them up here? Or just television is filled with them.

And every now and then I'll flip to a channel and watch them for like three seconds or five seconds and then I just turn. But miracle water and prayer claws and claws with hands embroidered on there.

And if you don't send me nine gazillion, hundred gazillion dollars, Jesus is going to take me home. I remember those bumper stickers. That was Oral Roberts. The bumper stickers came up and it said, let's send Oral home.

[52:31] You know? I mean, it... Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I would... A good friend of mine, detective in Fort Worth, Hispanic, his aunt, I think it was a great aunt, spoke only Spanish.

And she called him one day and says, I'm in Spanish. I'm in trouble. I'm in trouble. I know I'm in trouble. I can't read this letter, but I'm in trouble. And she was a contributor to Oral Roberts Ministries.

And she went... He went over there and read it and it said, your tithe is now four months late. If it is not forthcoming, we will turn this matter over to Dr.

Roberts. And on department stationery, he wrote Dr. Roberts and he said, if I... My aunt gets another letter like that, I will get a warrant for your arrest and I will come up and serve in Oklahoma. I'll bring you back to Texas. I mean, that's just, you know, there's all kinds of stories out there. Love of money is at the root of all evil.

[53:37] Money is not at the root of all evil. Love of money is at the root of all evil. Paul was free from the love of money. And he said, you know, there were times when he had plenty. There were times when he was broke.

And he just kept going. Okay. A leader must not be greedy, stingy, or financially ambitious. Those aspiring to be leaders, overseers, elders, pastors, in the church are to be measured with those moral qualities before they're ordained to serve.

before they're ordained to serve. And our prayer should be, God, you know, give the church in the 21st century morally qualified men to lead the church to the times that we find ourselves in.

Dark times. Darkening times. Darkening times. Darkening times.