

Qualities of the Biblical Elder

1. Blameless / Above Reproach

- Elders should live in a way that is morally upright, with no obvious faults that would disqualify them from leading (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6). This doesn't mean perfection, but that their character is such that accusations against them don't hold.

2. Faithful to His Spouse

- Elders must be “the husband of one wife,” meaning they should be devoted to their spouse, demonstrating faithfulness and moral purity in their marriage (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:5).

3. Temperate / Sober-Minded

- An elder should be self-controlled and balanced in judgment, not prone to extremes in thinking or behavior (1 Timothy 3:2).

4. Self-Controlled

- Elders are to show discipline in their personal lives, controlling their desires and impulses, and leading a life of moderation (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8).

5. Hospitable

- Elders should be willing to welcome others, showing generosity, kindness, and openness, particularly to strangers (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8).

6. Able to Teach

- Teaching is an essential role of elders. They must be knowledgeable in Scripture and able to instruct others in sound doctrine (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9).

7. Not Given to Drunkenness

- Elders must not be addicted to alcohol or controlled by any substance that would hinder their judgment or self-control (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7).

8. Not Violent, But Gentle

- Elders should not be quarrelsome, aggressive, or harsh, but should be gentle, patient, and peaceable, showing a spirit of meekness (1 Timothy 3:3).

9. Not Quarrelsome

- They should avoid unnecessary disputes and conflict, promoting unity and peace within the church (1 Timothy 3:3).

10. Not a Lover of Money

- Elders should not be greedy or driven by the pursuit of wealth. Their motivation must come from a love for God and His people, not financial gain (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7).

11. Manages His Household Well

- An elder should have a well-ordered family life. If they cannot lead their own household well, they are unlikely to manage the affairs of the church effectively (1 Timothy 3:4–5; Titus 1:6).

12. Not a Recent Convert

- Elders should have spiritual maturity and experience in the faith. A new believer might lack the stability and humility needed for the position (1 Timothy 3:6).

13. Good Reputation with Outsiders

- Elders must be respected not only within the church but also by those outside of the Christian community, avoiding behaviors that would bring disrepute to the faith (1 Timothy 3:7).

14. Upright and Holy

- Elders are to live holy lives that reflect God's righteousness, demonstrating ethical integrity, and moral uprightness (Titus 1:8).

15. Holding Firm to Sound Doctrine

- Elders must be committed to the teachings of Scripture and able to correct those who stray from the truth, defending the faith against false doctrines (Titus 1:9).

Qualities of Elders in the Pastoral Epistles

1 Tim 3:1-7	Titus 1:5-9
Above reproach (3:2)	Blameless (1:6-7)
the husband of one wife (3:2)	the husband of one wife (1:5)
Temperate (3:2)	Not quick-tempered (1:7)
Self-controlled (3:2)	Self-controlled (1:8)
Respectable (3:2)	
Hospitable (3:2)	Hospitable (1:8)
An apt teacher (3:2)	He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it (1:9); There are many rebellious people (1:10-11)
No drunkard (3:3)	No drunkard (1:7)
Not violent but gentle (3:3)	Not violent (1:7)
Not quarrelsome (3:3)	
No lover of money (3:3)	Not greedy for gain (1:7)
He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way; for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church? (3:4-5)	His children are believers and not open to the charge of being profligate or insubordinate (1:6)
He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil (3:6)	
He must be well thought of by outsiders, or he may fall into reproach and the snare of the devil (3:7)	
	Not arrogant (1:7)
	A lover of goodness (1:8)
	Upright and holy (1:8)

Group Discussion Questions:

1. Which one of these qualities grabs your attention first?
2. Why do you think these qualities and habits of character are important in the church, especially for its leaders?
3. Which of these do you think are most relevant today? Which ones do you think need more discussion or explanation?
4. Timothy was in Ephesus and Titus was in Crete when Paul sent the letters to them. As noted, the two lists of the qualities of the elders do not match exactly. What implications does this have?