

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

These notes are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye, mistakes can possibly be found. Therefore, he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabible.org.

Date: December 10, 2017

Sermon Title: Taking Care of the Household of God - Elders

Sermon Series: First Timothy

Text: 1 Tim. 5:17-25

Author: Patrick J. Griffiths ©2017

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.

Date: December 10, 2017
Title: Taking Care of the Household of God – Elders
Text: 1 Tim. 5:17-25
Theme:

Introduction:

This text once again visits the idea of the church as a household and how those in leadership are to take care of the church and be cared for by the church. Here, the language employed is one of ruling well. What does this look like in our present context?

THE BIG PICTURE:

“It takes 6-7 years for pastors to get fully acquainted with a church and 10 years to make significant differences. Many pastors do not make it past five.”¹

“A recent research poll from Lifeway Research suggested the average pastor’s tenure in a local church is 3.6 years (See Dennis Cook, July 18, 2011). Other studies and informal polls suggest the average or typical tenure may be a bit longer, while studies of effective leaders suggest an average tenure of 11.2 to 21.6 years. Trevin Wax suggests that most studies of the average tenure in a local church show the number to be between 5 and 7 years.”²

- 85% of seminary graduates entering the ministry leave within 5 years
Duke University study
- 90% of all pastors will not stay to retirement
Kanipe, 2007 Wesleyan Christian Advocate
- 50% of ministers drop out of ministry within the first 5 years
*Alban Institute and Fuller Seminary study*³

“According to some recent surveys, [roughly] 1,500–1,700 pastors leave the ministry each month. That means on average 50–57 pastors leave the ministry every single day. These statistics are sobering, and quite frankly frightening. So the question for us as brothers and sisters in Christ to help these men that God has called to lead us? How should we treat our elders?”⁴

I believe this passage lays out six things we can do together to protect the purity and proclamation of the gospel in our local churches as it relates to her leadership. Just as we care for our widows, so must we care for our leadership.

Outline:

I. The Pastor’s Work

(v. 17 [rule well - take care of the church by preaching and teaching])

- ¹⁷ “The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, ‘YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING,’ and ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages’” (1 Tim. 5:17).

Rule has the idea of authoritarian. But the idea of rule is to take care of, to maintain. Much like one would a garden or a house. It speaks more of stewardship, than control. Listen to how this word occurs in the New Testament.

- “Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that **ruleth**, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness” (Rom. 12:8).
- “And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are **over you** in the Lord, and admonish you” (1 Thess. 5:12).
- ⁴“One that **ruleth** well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; ⁵ (For if a man know not how to **rule** his own house, how shall he [notice the parallel idea. This explain “rule”] **take care** of the church of God?)” (1 Tim. 3:4, 5).
- “Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, **ruling** their children and their own houses well” (1 Tim. 3:12).
- “Let the elders that **rule** well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine” (1 Tim. 5:17).
- “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to **maintain** good works. These things are good and profitable unto men” (Titus 3:8).
- “And let ours also learn to **maintain** good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful” (Titus 3:14).

It would appear there is a distinction between “taking care of” and that of teaching/preaching. I am of the opinion that these two ideas are actually one. Those who labor in the word are those who care for the church. In chapter 4:6-16, we noted how the pastor is to train himself in the gospel and what that looks like with the 11 imperatives/descriptives. All of those words, all that energy is encapsulated in the word “labor.” The word “labor” [**kopiaō**] means, “to feel fatigue; by implication, to work hard.”

Paul used this same word in 4:10. Pastor Giles mentioned how the one qualifier between Elders and Deacons was that of “teaching.” The deacon Steven “preached” in Acts 7. **The qualifier does not mean Deacons cannot teach, but that Elders must.** And although all Elders should be able to exposit the biblical text, they might not be gifted or skilled to do so in a public forum. Moreover, some excel at teaching and they are the ones the congregation empowers financially so that they can give themselves to it. It is in this way the church is maintained and cared for. Those Elders are worthy of honor and a double portion.

II. The Pastor’s Compensation (vv. 17, 18)

We have an interesting statement concerning inspiration in this text. Verse 18 quotes both Deuteronomy 25:4 **AND** Luke 10:7.

“Let be counted worthy (axiousthōsan). Present passive imperative of axioō, to deem worthy (2Th 1:11). With genitive case here. Of double honour (diplēs timēs). Old and common contract adjective (diploos, two-fold, in opposition to haploos, single fold). But why ‘of double honour’? See 1Ti 6:1 for ‘of all honour.’ White suggests ‘remuneration’ rather than ‘honour’ for timēs (a common use for price or pay). Liddon proposes ‘honorarium’ (both honour and pay and so ‘double’). Wetstein gives numerous examples of soldiers receiving double pay for unusual services. Some suggest twice the pay given the enrolled widows. Especially those who labour in word and teaching (malista hoi kopiōntes en logōi kai didaskaliāi). Either those who work hard or toil (usual meaning of kopiaō, 2Ti 2:6) in preaching and teaching (most probable meaning. See verse 1Ti 5:18) or those who teach and preach and not merely preside (a doubtful distinction in ‘elders’ at this time). See Tit 1:8. See both kopiaō and proistamai used for same men (elders) in 1Th 5:12 and the use of kopiaō in 1Co 15:10; 16:16.”⁵

The next statement in verse 19 points out a potential problem as it existed in the church of Ephesus. I have to believe Hymanaeus and Alexander were part of this problem (1:14-16). It appears some within the church accused Paul of being a liar (2:7). How do we handle such things?

III. The Pastor’s Reputation (5:19)

- ¹⁹“Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses” (1 Tim. 5:19).

The language is very specific as it relates to the two or three witnesses. The process appears plain. Do not believe everything that is said of the pastor. Seek to avoid both extremes.

The word **accused** occurs 4 times in the New Testament.

- “And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an **accusation** against him” (Luke 6:7).
- “Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What **accusation** bring ye against this man?” (John 18:29).
- “Against an elder receive not an **accusation**, but before two or three witnesses” (1 Tim. 5:19). {before: or, under}
- “If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not **accused** of riot or unruly” (Titus 1:6).

A sibling word occurs seven times in the New Testament.

It occurs in John 8:10 with the woman caught in adultery, extensively in Acts for Paul’s accusers (Acts 23:30, 35; 24:8; 25:16, 18), and it describes the accusations brought by Satan against God’s people (Rev. 12:10).

- “When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?” (John 8:10).

- “And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell” (Acts 23:30).
- “I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall” (Acts 23:35).
- “Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him” (Acts 24:8).
- “To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him” (Acts 25:16).
- “Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed” (Acts 25:18).
- “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night” (Rev. 12:10).

The accusation is almost criminal.

IV. The Pastor's Position (5:20-21)

- ²⁰“Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning. ²¹I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality” (1 Tim. 5:20, 21).

Everyone sins as do pastors, but pastors appear to carry more public weight than others do. Such appears to be the case with Hymanaeus and Alexander. “The elders who continue to sin (present active participle).”⁶ There is a reason why sinning leadership is to be called out when they are persistent and non-repentant in their sin -- so that the rest will fear. This could be referring specifically to the leadership but also to the congregation as a whole. Paul uses a purpose clause [hina] to note why sinning elders are to be publically removed. It provides the reason.

Paul always seemed aware of the merging of our two worlds. He calls the elect angels as witnesses of this charge. Such actions taken toward leadership are to be without bias and without partiality. This is brutal, but necessary.

Without bias and partiality are both single use words. It is stunning to hear of the silent smugness of our public figures in the news recently regarding their sexual abuse of those under them. We have allowed “leadership” to go unchecked. We have not held our “leaders” accountable. This is true of Hollywood actors, Washington politicians, TV personalities, music icons, and professional athletes. This immorality has unintended consequences and we are bearing the cultural children of this collapsed morality.

As it relates to the pastorate and elders, we must rule our own house well. How might we protect/prevent such things?

V. The Pastor's Health (5:22-23)

- ²² "Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin. ²³No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments" (1 Tim. 5:22, 23).

"In context 'laying hands on anyone' refers to ordination or official installation of someone as an elder."⁷

Verse 23 - "This verse gives parenthetical advice to Timothy, to clarify what it means to keep pure (5:22c). Verse 24 resumes the instructions about elders."⁸

A. Training future elders (v. 22 [2 Tim. 2:2])

I think this goes back to 3:1-7. Be careful who you put in the office, but make sure you are putting men into the office.

"When George Barna published his 1992 findings in *Today's Pastors*, the median age of Protestant clergy was 44 years old. One in three pastors was under the age of 40, and one in four was over 55. Just 6 percent were 65 or older. Twenty-five years later, the average age is 54. Only one in seven pastors is under 40, and half are over 55. The percentage of church leaders 65 and older has nearly tripled, meaning there are now more pastors in the oldest age bracket than there are leaders younger than 40. There are numerous reasons for this well-documented trend, and it may be impossible to know which are the biggest factors. At the most basic level, people are living longer: Average life expectancy for men in 1968 was 66 years old; today it's 76. More specific to church ministry, the percentage of "second-career clergy" has been increasing over the past two decades, particularly in non-mainline churches and historically Black congregations; more pastors are coming to ministry later in life, having first pursued a non-ministry career. Additionally, the economic crisis of 2008 impacted pension plans, 401(k)s and home values, and many "senior" senior pastors are not yet financially prepared to forego a regular paycheck. On the other end of the age spectrum, an insufficient number of young would-be pastors is likely a factor, too. A majority of current pastors say even finding future leaders—much less mentoring them—is a challenge. Two out of three current pastors believe identifying suitable candidates is becoming more difficult (69%), even though a majority believes their church is doing what it takes (69%)."⁹

B. Caring for current ones (v. 23)

Why Timothy wasn't taking wine medicinally might be related to the "rules and regulations" imposed by the strange teaching. Regardless, Paul tells him to drink up. Both this text and the qualifications for Elders and Deacons suggest the consumption of wine was not the issue; drunkenness or abstinence was the issue.

A problem with the pastorate is the need to take the long view. We must manage our own house well, but we must do it for the next generation. The church must be generational. We must think family. What is a pastor to do when the immediate appears dark? The next two verses provide the long view of the pastorate.

VI. The Pastor's Assurance (vv. 24, 25)

- ²⁴ "The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after. ²⁵ Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed" (1 Tim. 5:24, 25).

Choices have consequences. Whether it is good or bad, there are intrinsic consequences to every choice. Every one of us must realize that a future Day of Judgment is coming and in that day God will set everything right.

“'Openly plain,' 'plain before all.' Old word, in N.T. only here and Heb 7:24. Going before unto judgment (proagousai eis krisin). See 1Ti 1:18 for proagô. The sins are so plain that they receive instant condemnation. And some men also they follow after (tisin de kai epakolouthousin). Associative instrumental case tisin with epakolouthousin for which verb see verse 1Ti 5:10, 'dog their steps' (Parry) like 1Pe 2:21, not clearly manifest at first, but come out plainly at last. How true that is of secret sins.”¹⁰

I could tell you of pastors who lived a double life and how they were morally collapsed but continued in the pulpit until they were fully exposed, but such examples are too numerous and painful. Let us rather think about the positive we do and the potential outcome for those we serve.

The Starfish

“I read about an old man, walking the beach at dawn, who noticed a young man ahead of him picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Catching up with the youth, he asked what he was doing. The answer was that the stranded starfish would die if left in the morning sun. 'But the beach goes on for miles and miles, and there are millions of starfish,' countered the man. 'How can your effort make any difference?' The young man looked at the starfish in his hand and then threw it to safety in the waves. 'It makes a difference to this one,' he said.”¹¹

Friends, let us together pursue each act knowing there is a consequence to the choice and that consequence in doing right is far reaching.

Shepherding the Sheep: (What is the NEXT STEP?)

1. Continue doing what you are currently doing.
2. You have treated our church staff and I well; let us continue doing so to the next generation. Do not fail in this. The elders are working to put in play a process that assesses how we are cared for. This is important. Why? Because pastoral longevity does not guarantee health, but it sure makes health a more likely possibility.

3. You are to be commended. Stay the course and let us see Acts 6:7 come to pass.

⁷ “The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).

¹ <http://www.abc-usa.org/pastoral-attrition/>

² <http://www.gbjournal.org/8-82/>

³ <https://www.growahealthychurch.com/attrition/>

⁴ <https://matthewsharmon.com/2013/05/01/treat-your-elders-well-1-timothy-517-25/>

⁵ *Robertson's NT Word Pictures* on 1 Timothy 5:17.

⁶ *Robertson's NT Word Pictures* on 1 Timothy 5:20.

⁷ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/1+Timothy+5:11>

⁸ <https://net.bible.org/#!/bible/1+Timothy+5:11>

⁹ <https://www.barna.com/research/aging-americas-pastors/>

¹⁰ *Robertson's NT Word Pictures* on 1 Timothy 5:24.

¹¹ Hugh Duncan, *Leadership Journal* <https://bible.org/illustration/starfish>