

# THE MEASURE OF A MAN

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We are attempting to measure ourselves according to the characteristics the apostle Paul listed for mature spiritual men.

We first saw that you were to be “blameless” and we compared it to getting a background check. It’s a summary characteristic that says there is no glaring problem or inconsistency in your life.

Then we looked at the phrase “husband of one wife.” It literally translates as *one woman man*. We saw that it has nothing to do with your marital status but is referring to sexual purity. Whether you are single or married you are to practice purity and “maintain your own vessel [physical body] with honor.”

The third characteristic we encountered was “temperate.” It described a person with discernment and balance in his thinking and judgment who is not given to unbiblical extremes.

Now we come to “sober-minded.”

1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, **sober-minded**...

The word in the Greek is *sophron* and can have a variety of translations, including self-controlled, discreet, sensible, or prudent.

It might help nail down what the apostle Paul may have had in mind to find this word in another verse. It’s there in Romans 12:3 where you read,

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think **soberly**, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

The word translated “soberly” is our same word (from the same root). If this is what Paul had in mind, then the idea is that **a sober-minded man has a proper view of himself in relationship to God and to other believers.**

This phrase, “not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think,” is really very profound. Often when I feel offended or slighted or mistreated or overlooked it is because I think more highly of myself than I ought to. The person hasn’t really offended me; they’ve just made a decision I don’t agree with. Maybe I have been overlooked; but it’s not my call and I should be content to serve the Lord right where I’m at.

A huge percentage of our disgruntled-ness in life is because of thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to. Instead we should thank God that by His grace we are able to live through another day!

You see this same use of the word in Titus 2:2-6 when Paul was addressing lay members of the body of Christ:

Titus 2:2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, **sound in faith**, in love, in patience;

Titus 2:3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things -

Titus 2:4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,

Titus 2:5 to be **discreet**, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Titus 2:6 Likewise, exhort the young men to be **sober-minded**,

Sophron is variously translated “sound in faith,” “discreet,” and “sober-minded.” Paul saw this trait, this characteristic of not thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought, as critical in maintaining proper biblical relationships within the fellowship of believers.

It is describing a person who doesn’t forget that they are but one member of the larger body of Jesus Christ. They are unique and important but not indispensable. They understand roles and responsibilities and are willing to be subordinate to the whole body. Even though gifted, they recognize that their gift is from God and is to serve the body and not to be served by the body.

The analogy of the church as a body and each Christian as a 'member' of the body cannot be overstated. God gifts me as He sees fit. Based on His gifting and His calling He places me in His body where I can do the most good.

Trouble is, **people don't always agree with the part of the body God has made them.** Paul put it somewhat comically in First Corinthians twelve:

1 Corinthians 12:14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.

1 Corinthians 12:15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?

1 Corinthians 12:16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body?

1 Corinthians 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?

1 Corinthians 12:18 But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

1 Corinthians 12:19 And if they were all one member, where would the body be?

1 Corinthians 12:20 But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.

1 Corinthians 12:21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

Imagine if, when you got up to leave this morning, your foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body." You'd have a hard time getting to work with three hands and only one foot.

You need all the parts working in harmony without any of them thinking more highly of themselves.

I often tell the story of a fellow I knew who was a gifted worship leader. He wanted to be a gifted pastor... *But he didn't have the gift of teaching.* We begged him to continue leading worship! He refused... And for years has knocked-around trying to establish churches with no success.

On the other hand I remember an assistant pastor at CC Lake Arrowhead. He could lead worship and he had the gift of teaching. He had been at a church in the East serving as a teacher. He remarked that there were lots of worship leaders where he had been, so he taught. Coming to California, there were lots of teachers, so he led worship. In each 'body' he found the place God had placed him, giving no thought to his own preferences.

All of us have been overlooked either at work or at school or in the church. Sometimes the 'overlooker' is wrong. Sometimes not. But either way we are to exhibit sober-mindedness and continue to serve the Lord where we are assigned.

One of the unspoken principles of Calvary Chapel is to watch to see if a person will serve or if they simply want to lead. You'd be surprised how many individuals refuse to serve in ways they do not see themselves 'called.'

You see, in the long run God will reward us on the basis of our faithfulness, not our greatness. If you want to be King David, you've got to tend sheep out in the wilderness. You've got to fight off cougars and bears to save your flock. You might have to be mistreated by a Saul for a period of time.

God needs men after His own heart. He makes them through the circumstances of our lives. We will never be the men God wants us to be unless we become sober-minded. We must humble ourselves before God and around others and not think more highly of ourselves than we ought.

Let me give you an encouragement to be sober-minded. It's found in First Peter 4:7.

1 Peter 4:7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.

"Serious" is our word sober-minded. The International Standard Version (and other versions) emphasize the words in that verse like this:

The end of everything is near; so be sensible [sober-minded] and clear-headed **for the sake of your prayers.**

Our prayers are helped or hindered by our degree of sober-mindedness. Makes sense. If I am thinking too highly of myself then I'm going to pray to get my will done rather than the Lord's.

Know who you are in Christ. Serve Him wherever and whenever you're asked. Don't hold-out thinking you must lead rather than follow.