

THE MEASURE OF A MAN

When Paul wrote to Timothy he talked about the “man of God” being “equipped for every good work” (Second Timothy 3:17).

"Man of God" is *not* the title of a minister or a missionary; it refers to any and all believers. Every believer is completely equipped for the work he or she has been called to perform in these Last Days. Your supply is in the Word, energized by the Spirit; it is a fountain that can never run dry.

We are men and want to be men of God. It sounds almost boastful – especially when we factor in our many faults and failings. Still we must not have a false sense of humility. We are supposed to be men of God.

What does the “man of God” look like?

It was a practical question for Timothy. Left in Ephesus to pastor the church, one of the things Paul charged him with was appointing elders and deacons. There were a lot of candidates. But how would Timothy recognize the “man of God?”

Titus also faced this same task over in Crete. If you read through the letter Paul penned to him you get the idea that it was even more difficult to identify faithful men in that Christian community.

Paul gave his young pastors the spiritual qualities to look for before appointing men as elders and deacons. While a man may not desire the office of an elder or the position of a deacon, it stands to reason that the characteristics and qualities of spiritual leaders are the same for all Christian men who desire to be men of God “equipped for every good work.” They are the characteristics and qualities consistent with spiritual maturity.

The passages are First Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. There are at least twenty things listed that form a sort of personality profile for the man of God.

1 Timothy 3:1 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.

1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be **blameless**, the **husband of one wife**, **temperate**, **sober-minded**, of **good behavior**, **hospitable**, **able to teach**;

1 Timothy 3:3 **not given to wine**, **not violent**, **not greedy for money**, but **gentle**, **not quarrelsome**, **not covetous**;

1 Timothy 3:4 one who **rules his own house well**, having his children in submission with all reverence

1 Timothy 3:5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);

1 Timothy 3:6 **not a novice**, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.

1 Timothy 3:7 Moreover he must have **a good testimony among those who are outside**, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Titus 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you -

Titus 1:6 if a man is **blameless**, the **husband of one wife**, **having faithful children** not accused of dissipation or insubordination.

Titus 1:7 For a bishop must be **blameless**, as a steward of God, **not self-willed**, **not quick-tempered**, **not given to wine**, **not violent**, **not greedy for money**,

Titus 1:8 but **hospitable**, **a lover of what is good**, **sober-minded**, **just**, **holy**, **self-controlled**,

Titus 1:9 **holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught**, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

Gene Getz, who I credit with first coining the title, *Measure of a Man*, wrote, "these qualities are goals for every Christian man. [Paul] compiled a marvelous profile for measuring our maturity levels in Christ."

When I was very young in the Lord, maybe only a year or so old, my good friend Mike Morris invited me and a few other guys to attend a Bible study on these characteristics. It was life-changing for me. I've never forgotten the impact. It helped me form the basis of an understanding that I was, indeed, called into the ministry.

As I said, not every man is called to be an elder or a deacon. But every man should be able to measure himself by these twenty or so spiritual standards.

I want to spend just a little time this morning setting-up the studies by putting them in their context.

Timothy was one of the best known of Paul's companions and fellow-laborers. He was evidently one of Paul's own converts, as the apostle describes him as his beloved and faithful son in the Lord (First Corinthians 4:17); and in First Timothy 1:2 he writes to "Timothy my true child in faith"; and in Second Timothy 1:2 he addresses him as "Timothy my beloved child."

Sometime after Paul's third missionary journey Paul assigned Timothy the task of putting the church at Ephesus in order. Beginning in chapter two, and continuing through to the end of the letter, Paul gives instructions about proper church conduct.

The church is not a building; it is the people whom God has called-out from the world. These instructions about conduct are therefore not so much about rules and regulations as they are about roles and relationships. He discusses the laity, the leadership, and then the relationships between the laity and the leadership.

Chapter two is a general statement about the laity of the church. "Lay people," or "laity," is a reference to all those in the church who are not recognized in a position of leadership. In chapter two we learned about the roles and relationships of men and women in general.

Chapters three and four look at the leadership of the church. Chapter three discusses elders and deacons, and chapter four discusses the pastor-teacher.

Chapters five and six put it all together, as Paul discusses the role and relationship of the pastor-teacher to various lay people and leaders in the church: older men, younger men, older women, younger women, widows, elders, slaves, false teachers, and the rich.

Paul, in chapter two, discussed the roles and responsibilities of men and women in the church. He had exhorted men to become involved in the house of God, then told women they could not be the leaders of the church. In chapter three he returns to the men and encourages them to aspire to positions of leadership.

1 Timothy 3:1 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.

The word "bishop" is *episkopi*, where we get our word Episcopalian. The word means "overseer" and describes the function of these leaders. Another word we use to describe these same men is "elder," from the Greek *presbuteros*, where we get our word Presbyterian. The word elder describes the spiritual maturity of these men. In Paul's letter to Titus he tells Titus to "appoint elders," spiritually mature men, then uses the word "bishop" to describe their function. For our purposes, we call them elders. They are spiritually mature men who oversee the affairs in the house of God.

You are told that eldership is a "position" in the church. Just being a spiritually mature man doesn't make you an elder. You need to be recognized as an elder by the existing leadership, and presented to the body of believers as holding the position of an elder.

The church isn't an organization, but it **is** organized! It's foundation is Jesus Christ, laid down for us once-for-all by the apostles and prophets in the first century. Others then build within it - building-up God's people. They are the pastor-teachers and evangelists. The pastor-teachers work together with elders and deacons for the good of the body.

That work, and the work of God in general, is greatly enhanced when mature spiritual men are involved with it.

Maturity is a process. You are being changed moment-by-moment and day-by-day. You should measure up more and more to the traits we'll discuss one at a time.