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Bishops, Pastors & Elders

THE TITUS EXEMPLARY ELDER:

The Keys to having the witness of a good marriage and faithful children

Titus 1, “5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, 6 namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. 7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, 9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.”

Textual Background

According to the Biblical record, Titus was a Gentile companion of Paul (Gal. 2:3) and recipient of the NT letter bearing his name. It’s plausible that he was came to faith in Christ through Paul’s Ministry whereas he’s referred to as ‘my true son in the common faith’ (Titus 1:4). He travelled with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem (Gal. 2:1), and likely accompanied them on the famine relief visit (Acts 11:28-30).

Although the Book of Acts makes no mention of Titus, he was clearly involved in Paul’s missionary activities as shown in the Pauline letters. For example, he is mentioned in Galatians 2:1,3 as being a close companion who was with him in Paul’s first missionary journey to that region. Titus also seems to have been a very capable person, called by Paul “my partner and fellow worker” (2 Cor. 8:23). He was responsible for delivering Paul’s letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 2:1-4) and sent to help deal problems within the church there (2 Cor. 7:13-15). Titus’ possessed wisdom and skill in handling the Corinthians 2 Cor. 8:16-17; 12:18, and commonly reported to Paul the situation concerning the Church in Corinth (2 Cor. 2:13; 7:5-6,13-15).

Paul, after being released from imprisonment, made additional journeys, unrecorded in Acts. He also journeyed to Crete with Titus, where Titus remained behind to oversee and administrate the affairs of the church (Titus 1:5). Paul wrote his letter, asking Titus to join him in Nicopolis on the west coast of Greece (Titus 3:12). Following Paul's subsequent re-imprisonment, Titus was sent to Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10). According to Eusebius, Titus was the first bishop of Crete.

Practical Understanding

Titus's EXEMPLARY Eldership was born out of several key things:

1. Titus was unquestionably born of GOD and possessed an uncommon passion to serve Him
2. Titus showed fruit of the Holy Spirit and proved himself faithful to the doctrine, witness, and Church of Jesus Christ
3. Titus purposely availed Himself and intentionally strove to remain close to his leader (Paul), to learn and grow in the faith and work of the Ministry
4. Titus was always available and worked favorably, which is seen in the fact that Paul depended upon him for the most important such as accompanying him on travels, entrusting him to deliver letters, and giving him oversight to establish leaders and bring order to churches
5. Titus's lifestyle became the example for which Paul instructs him to select Elders—for the witness of Christ's sake

A good marriage and faithful children IS the witness of an Elder

- A good marriage is founded upon a faithful and loving fellowship with Christ, His Word, and a passion to glorify Him in all things
 - Titus 1:6 uses the phrase, "above reproach" which means that an Elder or Overseer must first be one in whom the love of GOD, His Word, and fruit of His Spirit are evidently glowing
 - The phrase (above reproach) is also translated as 'blameless' from the Greek *anekletos* which means "unable to be called into question" for violation of a set law, rule, or ethical principle.
 - An Elder must be found irreproachable as pertaining to the faith or doctrine of Christ, his commitment to the service of Christ, and to his character
- It is from this foundation that an Elder approaches His marriage and rears His children
 - An Elder's marriage reflects his walk with the LORD whereas his passion for Christ overflows into a passion to love, serve, care for, and fellowship with his wife
 - Elders must spend quality time praying for and with their wives, spending quality time to nurture, cherish, heal, refresh, and enrich their marriage
 - Thereafter, an Elder is charged to prayerfully, patiently, and consistently lead his household to know, love, and serve the LORD
- The Elder's exemplary walk with GOD and orderly domestic status is THE witness necessary to hold office in the Church
 - Titus 1 says, "...if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion."
 - The Elder's marriage must possess the witness of having 'one wife,' where the Greek text says *mia gune* meaning 'only one' wife. He must be loyal to his wife in fidelity.

- The Elder's good marriage exemplifies to the world what Christ desires to see in a marital union which is a witness to the world of what marriage is supposed to look like
- The Children of the Elder must also be believers and not out of control
 - Although it is the LORD who determines whether our children are saved or not, 'faithful children' are those who obey their parents and honor their father's instructions, discipline, and leadership.
 - The children of Elders must not be wild, rebellious, and unruly where they do not respond to the voice and discipline of their father.

THE KEYS TO AN EXEMPLARY WITNESS

1. Spend quality time with the LORD in prayer, study of Scripture, fasting, and in worship seeking to glorify Him in all you do
2. Love your wife intentionally, daily, thoughtfully, sacrificially, expressively, and wholeheartedly and strive daily to improve on it
3. Give daily and loving attention to your children in fun and intimate activities
4. Remember that all your works for the LORD should flow FROM having spent quality time with your wife and children