

“HOLDING FAST THE FAITHFUL WORD”

TITUS 1:5-9

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INTRODUCTION

Paul had been with Titus on the island of Crete shortly after his release from his first Roman imprisonment. They had begun the work of strengthening the believers on that island and of organizing the churches. Christianity may have been established on Crete by some of those who were saved on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:11). But, Paul had many places to go and could not remain there long, so he temporarily left behind one of his most trustworthy young workers to continue the work and set things in order. There were issues that needed resolution and qualified leadership was desperately needed.

As Paul lists the qualifications for such leaders, we may gain an informed understanding of what it takes to be a man of God who can capably lead the local church to the glory of God. Paul had already given a fairly thorough list of qualifications for bishops/elders/pastors in I Tim. 3:1-7; the list here partly repeats, partly omits, and adds some additional qualities suitable for the leaders needed in Crete.

One quality stands out from the rest—especially when we compare it with the words that follow in vv. 10-16 concerning teachers of false doctrine and false lifestyle: an extended elaboration of the **apt to teach** qualification found in I Tim. 3:2. The pastor must “hold fast the faithful word. The same must be true for each church member and each church.

YOU MUST HOLD FAST THE FAITHFUL WORD.

- I. SET IN ORDER WHAT REMAINS (5)
 - A. Straighten out messy situations—believers need to grow, character be developed
 - B. Correct and put a stop false teaching and teachers

- II. APPOINT THE PROPER LEADERSHIP (5b-9)
 - A. Position:
 1. Elders (v. 5)
 2. Bishops (v. 7)
 3. God’s Stewards (v. 7)
 - B. Qualifications (6-9)
 1. General qualification: “above reproach”—repeated in v. 7
 2. Family qualifications
 - a. *One-wife-kind of man
 - b. Believing children
 - c. Children not living dissolute lives and not rebellious
 3. Negative qualities that must be absent (7)
 - a. Not self-willed
 - b. Not quick-tempered
 - c. *Not given to wine
 - d. *Not pugnacious

- e. Not fond of sordid gain (true of deacon in 3:8)
- 4. Positive qualities (8-9)
 - a. *Hospitable
 - b. Loving what is good—people and things
 - c. *Having a sound mind and sensible
 - d. Just—esp. in relationships with people
 - e. Devout—holy and godly
 - f. Self-controlled—fleshly desires under control
- 5. Preeminent Positive Quality (9)
 - a. Holding fast—against any opposition, persevering—the “faithful word”
 - b. Maintaining the apostolic teaching
 - c. Exhorting believers in sound/healthy doctrine
 - d. Rebuking those in opposition to solid biblical truth

CONCLUSION

So what can we learn from this passage in Titus about a healthy church?

- 1) It must have leaders of godly character.
- 2) It must place a powerful emphasis upon sound and healthy Biblical teaching and preaching.

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