

GOD'S DESIGN FOR MEN & WOMEN: IN THE HOME AND IN THE CHURCH

CLASS 6: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ROLES OF MEN IN THE CHURCH?

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- The goal of this series is to understand what the Bible has to say about men and women in general. Not necessarily a new controversy, but with the rise of transgenderism, homosexuality, and many other gender confusing ideologies, it is important for the Christian to know where the Bible stands.
- Before getting to the Scriptures, we are going to start with how the world views men and women. We are going to discuss the world's attack on gender and God's original design.
- Overall, we want to understand *what the world defines* as men's and women's differences, similarities, and then we are going to find out *what the Bible has to say*.
- After defining men and women from a biblical viewpoint, the rest of the classes are dedicated to viewing men and women within their respective roles.
- We are going to look at what a biblical family is, how a biblical family can influence the world around them and what some of the priorities of parents should be in their home.
- Then the final few classes we will look at what the Bible has to say specifically regarding men's and women's distinct roles, both within the church and home.
- **Here is the schedule for the upcoming lessons:**
 - January 5th: Introduction and what the World and Bible say about men and women.
 - January 12th: What is the biblical family? How can a biblical family influence society?
 - January 19th: What are the priorities of parents?
 - January 26th: What are some of the roles of women in the home?
 - February 2nd: What are some of the roles of women in the church?
 - **February 9th: What are some of the roles of men in the church?**
 - February 16th: What are some of the roles of men in the home?
 - February 23rd: What are some priorities of a husband with his wife?

INTRODUCTION

- As we have seen from the start of our study, men have played a significant role in leadership from the beginning.
 - From the creation order of man being created first to Adam being called to lead his wife, throughout the history of the Bible, God has placed men in leadership roles.
 - Men are called to be leaders in their home, overseeing the spiritual temperature of their family.
 - Knowing their wife and their children, leading and protecting them.
- ***But what about the church?***
- How are men to operate in the local church so that the Bible is honored, and God is glorified?
- This week, we are going to see what the Bible says about a man's character, how they are to serve in the church, and what other active roles they can have.

CONNECTING THE MAN'S HOME WITH HIS SERVICE IN THE CHURCH

- **Before getting in to specific ways men are to serve in the church, there is a connection between a man's home life and his church life.**
 - This will be looked at much closer next week.
- In fact, "there is thus a close relationship between church and family; and Christian maturity in the fulfillment of one's duties as husband and father becomes one of the most essential requirements for those aspiring to the office of pastor or elder."¹
- Paul says in **1 Timothy 3:4-5** "He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)"
- While this is specifically talking about a man who desires to be in church leadership, as we will come to quickly see, the Bible does not give different character requirements for men who are not in leadership.
 - The remarkable fact about the requirements for church leadership is how unremarkable they are.
- If a man desires to be in church leadership, meaning a pastor or elder, his home life is of the utmost importance because it is a microcosm of what the church life is going to be.
- If a man's wife and children do not respect him and have no cause to listen to his instructions, he is not going to be able to lead and oversee the body of Christ.

¹ Andreas J Köstenberger with David W. Jones, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* (2nd ed.; Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 239.

- Before a man ever comes to a place of leadership in the church, it is of the utmost importance to take time and find out how his household thinks of him.
- It is vital to know that the standard is not perfection, then no one would be able to serve in this capacity.

A brief note to single men.

- Since this passage from Paul (**1 Tim 3**) is aimed at married men, there are some who believe that single men are unable, biblically, to hold a pastoral position within the church.
- While it is certainly the normal practice within the church to have married men as their pastors and elders, it is not biblically forbidden.
- If Paul’s “intention had been to limit the holding of church offices to show who were married, he could have said so much more unequivocally.”²
- The pastoral qualification of managing and keeping one’s house was not to keep people out but to make sure they were qualified for the job they desired.
 - The qualifications are not there to make an exclusive club but rather to show what the mark is that those who desire the position should be aiming at.
- As with any position in the church, some men are going to be better suited than others. Perhaps the single men are not as able to shepherd those families with kids.
 - But perhaps he has a greater desire to see single men brought up and disciplined to greater communion with Christ.
- We as a church need to be careful that we are not putting extra-biblical requirements on men who desire to serve in the church.

MEN SERVING AS CHURCH LEADERS

- “The character and effectiveness of any church is directly related to the quality of its leadership. That’s why the Bible stresses the importance of qualified church leadership and delineates specific standards for evaluating those who would serve in that sacred position. Failure to adhere to those standards has caused many of the problems that churches throughout the world currently face.”³
- **The Bible is consistent in its calling to men for leadership both in the home and the spiritual arena.**
 - This would be either in the nation of Israel or in the local church.
 - The bible consistently calls on men to be leaders where they have been placed.

² Köstenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family*, 240.

³ John MacArthur, *Different by Design*, MacArthur Study Series (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 113.

- **While the Bible certainly gives tasks that leaders must do, the focus is more on their character.**
- When the church fails to have men of strong character as their leaders, the church is going to suffer as their own standards are going to wax and wane.
- This is why the Bible gives many qualifications for men who desire to serve in leadership, especially those who desire to be pastors or deacons.
- As we look at the biblical qualifications for men who desire to serve in the church, we should not think of these men as abnormal or super Christians.
- “Paul applies most of these character qualities to all believers in his other letters. So in that sense, whether you are male or female, these qualities ought to be the goals in your Christian life. But if you are a man seeking a position of leadership, you must meet the required qualifications.”⁴
- This is precisely why church leaders, while certainly not expected to be perfect, must be an example to the rest of the church. As the leadership of the church goes, the church will also follow.
- If the character of the church body is to be met, then the character of the church leadership should strive to set the pattern in their own lives.

Pastors and Elders

- For the purpose of our study, we are treating the title of pastor and elder as the same. This is not an exhaustive study but an overview of how a man can become an elder of a local church.
- The first aspect of becoming an elder is that the man must have a desire to do so.
- **1 Timothy 3:1** “It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.”
- While the man must have a sincere desire for the work, that desire is just a first step, not the final say.
- In **1 Timothy 3:2-7**, Paul lays out several qualifications that a man must possess in order to be qualified for the position of elder.
 - Once again, it is vital that we understand the goal is not perfection.
 - No man can obtain all these traits all of the time.
- We will now look at the qualifications for church elders and give a brief statement about them.
- **He must be above reproach** (also verse 7), a good reputation outside. (**Rom 12:18**)
 - “The Greek text indicates that being above reproach is the man’s present state—he has sustained a reputation for being irreproachable. There’s nothing to accuse him of. It doesn’t refer to sins he committed before he matured as a Christian—unless those sins remain a blight on his life.”⁵

⁴ MacArthur, *Different by Design*, 114.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 115.

- **Once again, this is not perfection but direction.** While there are sins which may preclude a man from becoming an elder, there can be nothing which is presently in his life that he is known for.
- If talking to his co-workers, they would recognize him as a godly man who desires and seeks to glorify God at work.
- **He must be the husband of one wife. (Eph 5:25, 28; Col 3:19)**
 - There have been many interpretations of this over the course of church history.
 - It is best to see this as “Paul is focusing on the moral character traits of church leaders. Faithfulness to one’s wife fits this list better than if Paul were excluding divorced or remarried men.”⁶
 - Since Paul is talking about the character of a man, he needs to be able to show the church that his heart is only for his wife, not another woman.
- **He must be temperate, prudent, and respectable. (2 Tim 1:7)**
 - All of these have to do with self-discipline.
 - An elder must be one who is known not as a man who is given over to excess but one who thinks about spiritual things.
 - Self-discipline also means he has a well-organized life. This does not mean there is an absence of confusion from time to time. But it means that the man is able to set and meet goals, give guidance to others on how to accomplish tasks, and put his own thoughts in order.
- **He must be hospitable. (1 Pet 4:9)**
 - He must be someone who is kind and shows love to those who are around them.
 - He must be welcoming to the people in the church and known as someone who is easily approachable. This does not mean that the man is a pushover, but someone who is known to want to be around those whom God has given him charge over.
- **He must be able to teach. (Deu 6:7; 11:19; Col 3:16)**
 - As we will come to see, this really is where an elder and a deacon are different.
 - While the elder must be able to teach, deacons have no such requirement.
 - The ability to teach is not predicated upon the man being able to stand at the pulpit Sunday mornings and exposit the word for the church.
 - The ability that is required is that he has a knowledge of God’s Word and works to understand it and put it in terms that the people can understand it.
 - This can be done one on one, in small groups, or at a corporate meeting.
- **He must be one who manages his own household well. (Col 3:21; 1 Pet 3:7)**

⁶ Andreas J. and Margaret E. Köstenberger, *God’s Design for Man and Woman: A Biblical-Theological Survey*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 223.

- As was discussed earlier, the home is the training ground for the church. If a man has a home which is out of control, his wife does not respect him, and his kids are consistently rebelling against him, he is not fit for pastoral ministry at that time.
- There should be reverence for the Lord, and he is actively leading his family towards godliness.
- His kids, while recognizing them as sinners, should respect and obey their dad.
- **He must not be a new convert. (2 Pet 1:4-8)**
 - The man who desires this position must have some experience and growth as a Christian.
 - He must have gone through life and experienced some of its ups and downs and *experientially* know the faithfulness of God towards him.
 - While there is no requirement for time nor age, his life should be able to be looked upon by others and they know he has experience in the faith.

Deacons and how they function with the elders of the church.

- Paul lays out similar character traits for deacons in **1 Timothy 3:8-13** so we are not going to go over them all again. **A deacon would be classified as a servant of the servants.** He does not hold a position of authority in the church but is rather known for his outstanding work for the church.
- Paul says in **1 Timothy 3:13** “For those *who have served well as deacons* obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”
- Now, what is the relationship between our deacons and elders?
- In our church, deacons do not function like elders. Elders are shepherds and care for the flock by their teaching, counseling, discipleship, and general oversight of the church.
- Deacons, on the other hand, are there to care for the physical needs of the body as well as taking care of the church itself.
- Since deacons are more *service* oriented, they take care of most things which fall outside of the spiritual considerations of church work.
 - For instance, the setting up of tables and chairs for events or the mowing of the grass or the shoveling of the snow. These tasks would be done and overseen by our deacons.
- “The deacons then serve the church by carrying out the vision of the elders.”⁷
- Each deacon has an elder that they report to for what needs to be done. As the information is given to them, they are then in charge of making sure the tasks get done.

⁷ “How do elders relate to deacons?” 9Marks, n.d., <https://www.9marks.org/answer/how-do-elders-relate-deacons/#:~:text=Elders%20are%20to%20shepherd%20the.of%20the%20pastors%20and%20elders.>

Discipleship

- There is so much more that men do in the church outside the scope of leadership.
- **2 Timothy 2:2** “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”
- Paul tells Timothy that *he* is to entrust what he has been taught to faithful men.
- But the process is not stopping there. The men in whom Timothy is to teach are also to be able to teach others. Therefore, the process of teaching and training can continue from Paul to Timothy, to the men that they are responsible to teach.
- This is the normal process of discipleship in the church.
- But this is the command from Paul is more specific than just normal church discipleship.
- Timothy was the pastor of the church at Ephesus (1 Tim 3:1) and Paul wanted him to look out for men who could continue the ministry of teaching others.
- This is a call to our pastors and elders in our own church to be on the lookout for men who can teach.
- These men may not have the desire to be pastors or elders, but that does not mean they should not be disciplined by the pastoral team.
 - This promotes a healthy body life ministry as those who are able to teach themselves are taught. They can then minister to the body in a normal, one another capacity.
 - Another aspect of this is even if some of these men do not desire, at that moment to become an elder, they may over the course of time change.
- This is a very important part of church ministry which should never be overlooked. This means that the elders are with the church body, they know what’s going on in the church and they themselves are staying sharp with God’s Word.
 - This is part of the normal oversight and care that elders should have for their church.
 - By reaching out to the men in the church, the elders are setting the church up for future success, both in the church body and in the homes of these men.
- **Titus 2:2** “Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.”
- *While much of the teaching is going to be done by the pastors and elders of the church, there is still a heavy responsibility of teaching and training which other men in the church must fulfill.*
- The older men, those who have been in the faith a while and are mature, are to be examples to the younger men in the church.
- *All the teaching in the church is not done only by the elders of the church nor is it done in formal settings and gatherings.*

- Specifically, older men in the church need to reach out to the younger men so that they can teach and train them. This is not just in doctrine, but how to live in this life as a Christian man.
- Under the heading of discipleship is the normal one another, body life ministry.
- **Romans 15:14** “And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.”
- Paul writes to the church in Rome that they themselves are *able to admonish one another*. This is also what men are called to do, admonish each other.
- One another ministry is not a special aspect of the church nor is it something which is for highly trained individuals. This is what normal life on life ministry looks like.
- Paul had confidence in the church in Rome that they were able to take care of their own people.⁸
- While this is an exhortation to both men and women, men cannot stand idly by and allow other men in the church to suffer.
- Men must look at how they can serve the church, through discipleship, teaching, practical service, or any other way that may edify the body and glorify God.

CONCLUSION

- Not only does the Bible see men as leaders of the church, but it also sets forth a pattern of training men for future ministry through the local church.
- Men leading in the church, as elders, as deacons, as those who disciple and care for the body is of the utmost importance for the church.
- This is not just for the church to thrive, but also for each man’s home to be a place where he is training his children and taking care of his wife.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- As you have read and learned about how men are to lead in the church, do you have a desire to lead God’s people?
- Are you currently either being discipled or discipling someone in our church?
- If you are not, what is the main issue or issues which are stopping you from doing so?

⁸ He said the same thing to the church members in Colossians 3:15 and in 1 Thessalonians 5:14. Both were encouragements to the local church, not to a specific group within the church.