

Fact Sheet for **“The Not’s”**  
**Titus 1:7**

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I’ve entitled this sermon “The Not’s”. I don’t mean by this the “have not’s” of our community during this Christmas season. I mean the character traits we are not to have. So, we will be looking at one verse this morning, Titus 1:7.

Last week we looked at three qualities of an elder Paul listed in Titus 1:6. He then continued to flush out what he meant by “above reproach” in the next verses by listing a series of negative traits they should not have, and a series of positive traits they should. And notice, although speaking of the same men he changed their title from “elders” in verse 5 to “overseer”.

**<sup>7</sup> For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain,**

This pattern of negatives and positives is seen a couple of places in the Bible. Character qualities and actions that God’s people should avoid are presented first. Then the character qualities and actions people should have are presented second. Consider all of Israel shouting the curses and blessings across the valley between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim (Deuteronomy 27; Joshua 8). Consider Paul’s listing the fruits of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5). So it is in Titus 1. Firstly Paul lists the character traits those who would be overseers should steer clear of, then secondly he lists the character traits that overseers should have.

And there is something else. In the original, instead of putting the word “not” before the whole list of negative traits, he puts the word “not” before each of those traits. And he does this for emphasis.

**Not Arrogant**

“self-pleasing, self-satisfied, self-serving, self-willed, stubborn, arbitrary”

These describe an egocentric attitude. And this word “arrogant” is used only twice in the NT, here and in 2 Peter 2:10 (“willful”). This trait makes for a bad elder.

Interestingly enough this is not one of the traits listed for deacons and deaconesses in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. This is one reason why we don’t call our elders by the term “deacons”.

**Not Quick-tempered**

“inclined to anger, hotheaded”

This kind of person has a short fuse. Now anger is not necessarily a sin (Mark 3:5; Ephesians 4:26). Being quick to anger is sin.

This is also not one of the traits listed for deacons and deaconesses in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

**Not a Drunkard**

“addicted to wine, habitually drinking too much”

Is alcohol sin? No. You can’t prove it is from scripture (see Proverbs 31:6-7; John 2:9-10). Is drunkenness sin? Yes (Proverbs 20:1; Ephesians 5:18). Do I drink alcohol? No. Why? Helen’s dad was an alcoholic. He caused many huge problems for her family because of it. And he died of cirrhosis

of the liver. But there is another reason, the principle of not causing a brother to stumble (Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8).

### **Not Violent**

“a quarrelsome person, a bully, one who is set on getting into a fight”

Look at a person’s history. Do they have trouble keeping a job very long because they keep quitting in anger? Do you have that relative who always seems to be upset at you no matter what you do? Do you focus so much on getting a task accomplished or a goal achieved that you bite people when they get in the way? Do you know someone who argues all the time that you, and others, would just as soon avoid? This is not a good quality for an overseer. He might have a track record of getting things accomplished, but he is not God’s choice for church leadership.

There are two ways to lead. You can either stand behind a person and push, or you can stand in front of a person and draw. Neither approach is right or wrong in itself. However those whose nature is to stand behind someone and push need to constantly remind themselves to also be people-oriented and not just task-oriented.

This is also not one of the traits listed for deacons and deaconesses in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

### **Not Greedy for Gain**

The translation “greedy for gain” is a translation of one word in the original. This one word has two parts. The first part has the meaning, “shameful, disgraceful, dishonest, or improper”. The second part is simply the word for “gain” which usually refers to money, but not always.

**ESV** **Philippians 1:21** For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Here it *does* refer to money, hence the meanings “covetous, greedy for money, money-grubbing, eager for shameful gain”.

In fact, this one compound word in the original is separated into two words (shameful gain”) four verses later in verse 11.

One commentator put it this way, “In that day the stipends associated with ministry were attractive, so that even the best men had to be warned against letting personal gain creep into their motivation.”<sup>1</sup>

This shows up in 1 Peter 5:1-2., a passage linking the terms elder, overseer, and shepherd (pastor).

I have two postscripts for this message.

Here’s one postscript. Paul did not list three of these five traits for deacons and deaconesses. That doesn’t mean deacons and deaconesses have implied permission to be arrogant, quick-tempered, and violent. It only means that those who are elders need to be held to a greater level of spiritual maturity.

Here’s the second postscript. These just aren’t qualities that only those who would be elders should aspire to. These are qualities God wishes to see in all of us.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem those many years ago to make this possible and to bring the guarantee eternal life to all who believe in Him.

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<sup>1</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 746.