

Fact Sheet for **“The Be’s”**
Titus 1:8-9

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Two weeks ago we looked at one verse, Titus 1:7. This was actually the first part of a sentence that continues through verse 9. Paul listed some of the characteristics elders of a church should have. In verse 7 he began with the description ‘above reproach’, then listed 7 ‘not’s’.

⁷ 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,

These five “not’s” were the negative characteristics elders need to avoid. Verse 8 now lists 6 positive qualities to be sought. So today we are covering the six “be’s” (as opposed to the ‘not’s’) and a further characteristic elders should have described in verse 9. An elder should...

⁸ but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined.

hospitable

This can literally be translated ‘stranger-loving’, hence an elder should be hospitable or kind to strangers (1 Peter 4:9). Look at Job 31:32.

a lover of good

An elder should like what is good, love goodness, and care for what is good/beneficial. Consider David’s words in Psalm 15.

self-controlled

This literally means having a sound or healthy mind; as having ability to curb desires and impulses so as to produce a measured and orderly life. It can also be translated ‘self-controlled, sensible, temperate, prudent, thoughtful’. This should be a quality of both older men and women (Titus 2:2-5). It should also be a quality we all aspire to (Titus 2:12).

upright

This word can also be translated ‘righteous, just, honest, with integrity, and innocent’. Perhaps you can get a good sense of this word by looking at other words that are linguistically related to it (righteous, righteousness – just, justice, justly, justify, justified, justification, justifier – and even a little more distantly... judgment, judge; penalty, punishment; statutes, ordinances, regulations, precepts)

ESV Luke 1:6 And they (Zechariah and Elizabeth) were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.

ESV Romans 3:21-23 ¶ But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it-- ²² the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

ESV Romans 4:25 who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

ESV Romans 5:1 ¶ Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

holy

The normal NT word for “holy” is *hagios* (ἅγιος). This word is seen in 1 Peter 1:14-16. But here in Titus the word is *hosios* (ὁσιος). It is translated also by these words: devout, dedicated, and pious.

ESV 1 Timothy 2:8 ¶ I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling;

...thus symbolizing freedom from ungodly thought or action.

disciplined

‘Having a firm hold over one’s desires, disciplined, capable of self-restraint’

This word can also be translated ‘self-controlled’ (Galatians 5:22-23). Here’s a observation. 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.

Paul then adds to these six characteristics the following words...

⁹ He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

He must be a reliable man of the Word. Paul placed the words “as taught” before the word “trustworthy” to emphasize them. An elder must understand the Word and hold it fast. He must be able to give instruction (exhort, encourage) in correct, accurate, and sound doctrine, teaching, instruction. He must also be one who is able to ‘rebuke’ those who contradict it.

When we think of the word ‘rebuke’ we think of synonyms like these: scold, upbraid, reproach, admonish, reprimand, reprove, chide, lecture, berate. That’s English. But what about the Greek word Paul used? The word translated ‘rebuke’ has the following senses:

ESV John 3:20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

ESV Matthew 18:15 ¶ "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

ESV James 2:9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

ESV Hebrews 12:5 And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him.

And this one used in the NASB translation of Titus 1:9 – ‘refute’.

NAU Titus 1:9 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.

These are the qualities of a good elder. How are you doing in developing these characteristic in your own life?