

The sermon describes blamelessness not as perfection but as consistency between what a person professes and how they live -- in what areas of your life is there the greatest gap between your stated beliefs and your daily behavior, and what would it take to close that gap?

Paul instructs Titus to evaluate a potential elder's fitness for leadership by first looking at his home and family relationships -- what does the way you treat those closest to you reveal about the true condition of your faith?

The pastor draws a distinction between a man governed by his appetites and a man governed by Christ -- which desires, impulses, or habits in your own life most frequently compete with the lordship of Jesus, and how are you actively addressing them?

The sermon presents this list of elder qualifications as a portrait of mature Christian discipleship meant for all believers, not just leaders -- which quality on Paul's list do you find most challenging to develop in your own life, and why?

Paul emphasizes that an elder must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, neither inventing nor reshaping truth -- in what ways might cultural pressure tempt Christians today to soften, reframe, or selectively apply the gospel?

The pastor describes church leadership as a stewardship rather than ownership, reminding us that the church belongs to God -- how does viewing your role in the church as a stewardship rather than a possession change the way you engage with and contribute to your church community?

The sermon highlights that a plurality of elders provides shared wisdom, shared responsibility, and shared accountability -- how does this model of shared leadership challenge individualistic or celebrity-driven ideas about leadership that are common in both culture and the church?

Titus 1 describes a leader who is both able to encourage others with sound doctrine and to refute those who oppose it -- how well-equipped do you feel to do either of these things, and what steps could you take to grow in your knowledge and application of Scripture?

The pastor notes that you can impress many people from a distance but that character becomes harder to hide the closer someone gets to you -- who in your life knows you well enough to hold you accountable, and are you genuinely open to that kind of relationship?

The sermon closes with an invitation to respond not by cleaning yourself up before coming to God, but by surrendering to Jesus as the starting point of transformation -- what area of your life are you most tempted to try to fix on your own rather than bringing it under the lordship of Christ?

Small Group Guide: A Leader Worth Following

Based on Titus 1:5-9

Overview

This week's sermon examined what godly leadership looks like in the local church, using Paul's instructions to Titus as a guide. While Paul's immediate purpose was to help Titus identify qualified elders for the churches in Crete, the portrait he paints applies to every follower of Jesus. As the sermon reminded us, godly leaders should make it easier, not harder, for people to see what Jesus looks like.

Key Takeaways

- The church belongs to God. Anyone entrusted to lead must remember they are stewards, not owners, of what belongs to him.
 - Biblical eldership is a shared leadership. The New Testament consistently presents a plurality of elders shepherding a local congregation together.
 - Blameless does not mean sinless or perfect. It means free from accusation, a consistent life where faith and conduct tell the same story.
 - The home is the first place to look when evaluating a man's character. Those who know us best reveal who we actually are.
 - A leader worth following is governed by Christ, not by his appetites, ego, anger, or money.
 - Character alone is not enough. A godly leader must also hold firmly to the truth of Scripture, using it to encourage others and to identify and correct error.
 - This portrait of a leader is also a mirror for every believer. Every follower of Jesus should be growing toward these qualities.
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Conversation Starter

Think about a leader in your life, inside or outside the church, who had a meaningful positive influence on you. What was it about that person that made you willing to follow them? Share with the group.

Discussion Questions

On the Church Belonging to God

1. The sermon emphasized that the church is God's household, not the preacher's, not the elders', not the longest-tenured members'. How does that truth change the way you think about your own role and responsibility within the church?
2. What does it look like practically for a leader to treat their role as a stewardship rather than ownership? Where do you think that line gets crossed?

On Living the Gospel Where You Are Known Best

3. The sermon pointed out that Paul does not tell Titus to look at a man's Sunday morning presence or his resume first. He tells him to look at the man's home. Why do you think Paul starts there? What does that reveal about the relationship between private character and public leadership?
4. The word blameless was described not as sinless but as consistent, no glaring contradiction between what a person professes and how they live. On a personal level, where do you find it hardest to maintain that consistency between your faith and your everyday life?
5. The sermon noted that parents cannot guarantee the spiritual decisions of their children. But Paul still tells Titus to look at a man's household. What is the difference between guaranteeing an outcome and faithfully fulfilling a responsibility? How does that distinction apply to your own family relationships?

On Being Governed by Christ, Not by Appetites

6. The sermon described the list of must-nots in verses 7 and 8 as sinful masters, things that take over and rule a person's life. Looking at that list, which of those tendencies do you think is most normalized or overlooked in our culture today? In the church?
7. The sermon said that before you can ask whether a man can lead other people, you have to ask what is leading him. Spend a moment reflecting honestly. What tends to lead you when life gets difficult or stressful? What does that reveal about what is actually on the throne of your life?
8. Self-controlled appeared as a key word in the list of positive qualities. The sermon described self-control as learning by the power of the Holy Spirit to bring desires, reactions, impulses, and appetites under the lordship of Jesus. Where in your life are you currently working on that kind of Spirit-led self-control?

On Holding Tightly to the Truth

9. The sermon said that an elder must know the gospel, believe the gospel, and hold firmly to the gospel, and that he receives the truth rather than creating it. Why is it important that church leaders see themselves as receivers and guardians of truth rather than creators of it? What happens when that posture is lost?

10. Paul says a godly leader must be able to both encourage others with sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it. Which of those two responsibilities do you think is harder? Which do you think the church tends to neglect more? Why?
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Reflection Questions for Personal Application

Take a few minutes individually before sharing with the group.

- When you look at this portrait of a godly leader, which quality do you see most clearly developing in your own life right now?
 - Which quality feels most distant or most challenging for you personally?
 - The sermon asked: Who is Jesus shaping me to become? How would you answer that question honestly today?
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Practical Applications

1. Identify one area from the portrait in Titus 1 where you sense the Holy Spirit calling you toward growth. Write it down and share it with one person in your group who can pray for you and check in with you.
 2. If you are married or have children, consider asking your spouse or a trusted family member this week how your faith shows up at home. Approach it with a willingness to listen and receive honest feedback.
 3. Identify a sinful appetite or tendency that tends to master you under pressure. Bring it before the Lord this week in prayer, confessing it and surrendering it to his lordship. If it is a persistent struggle, consider whether you need to invite a trusted brother or sister into accountability with you.
 4. Spend time this week in God's Word not just for personal encouragement but with the intentional goal of being able to share what you are learning with someone else. Practice being a person who passes on the truth rather than keeping it to yourself.
 5. If you have never taken a step to connect with the elders of your church for prayer or guidance, consider doing so. The sermon reminded us that the elders are there to walk with the congregation through whatever they are facing.
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Closing Prayer

Close your time together by praying specifically over the areas of growth each person identified. Ask the Holy Spirit to do the transforming work that none of you can accomplish on your own. Pray for your church's leaders by name, that they would be men who hold firmly to the truth, lead their homes well, and keep Jesus as the king of their lives.

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Built to Last: Leading, Following, and Living the Gospel

Day 1: Blessed Be the Name of the Lord

Reading: Psalm 103:1-5

Devotional: We often come to God with open hands, asking for blessings. But the sermon reminds us of something profound: we, the people of God, can also pronounce blessings back to him. Not because he needs them, but because we choose to give them. Worship is not a transaction. It is a response. When we lift our voices in praise, even in seasons of suffering and uncertainty, we are declaring that God is worthy regardless of our circumstances. Today, consider what it means to bless the Lord out of the overflow of a grateful heart, not just a needy one.

Personal Reflection: What blessings from God have you forgotten to acknowledge recently? Take time today to name them specifically and return thanks to him.

Practical Application: Write down three blessings God has given you this week that you have not yet thanked him for. Speak them aloud to him in prayer.

Day 2: Redeemed by Precious Blood

Reading: 1 Peter 1:17-21

Devotional: The sermon made clear that there is no currency we could ever bring to God to purchase our own salvation. We cannot try hard enough, be good enough, or give enough. The price of our redemption was one only Jesus could pay. Peter describes the blood of Christ as precious, and that word carries enormous weight. It was not ordinary. It was not common. It was the blood of the spotless Lamb, given freely so that we who were spiritually bankrupt could be brought into relationship with a holy God. You were not purchased cheaply. You were purchased at the highest possible cost.

Personal Reflection: How does understanding the cost of your redemption change the way you think about your daily walk with God?

Practical Application: The next time you participate in communion, approach it slowly and deliberately. Let the weight of what Christ paid settle into your heart before you receive the elements.

Day 3: Honey in the Rock

Reading: Deuteronomy 32:10-14

Devotional: The song sung during worship declared that there is honey in the rock and water in the stone, that God provides in the most unlikely and unexpected places. This is not merely a poetic idea. It is a biblical promise rooted in the character of a God who sustained his people through wilderness seasons they did not choose and could not escape on their own. When life feels barren and the way forward is unclear, God does not abandon his people. He meets them in the hard places. His provision does not always look the way we expect, but it is always enough.

Personal Reflection: Where in your life right now are you in a wilderness season? Have you looked for God's provision there, or have you assumed he is absent because the circumstances are difficult?

Practical Application: Ask God today to open your eyes to the ways he is providing for you in a current hard season, even if that provision looks different than what you expected or hoped for.

Day 4: A Life Worth Following

Reading: Titus 1:5-9

Devotional: The sermon offered a powerful reframe of the elder qualifications in Titus 1. Rather than treating this passage only as a checklist for evaluating church leaders, the pastor invited every believer to hold it up as a mirror. These qualities, blamelessness, self-control, hospitality, holding firmly to sound doctrine, are not reserved for a special class of Christians. They are the marks of a maturing disciple. The question is not only whether our leaders look like this. The question is whether we are becoming this. The gospel should become increasingly visible in our lives the longer we walk with Jesus.

Personal Reflection: Which quality from this passage is most noticeably absent from your life right now? What might be preventing its growth?

Practical Application: Choose one quality from Titus 1:6-9 and identify one specific, concrete step you can take this week to grow in that area. Share it with a trusted friend who can hold you accountable.

Day 5: Christ Be Magnified

Reading: Philippians 1:20-21

Devotional: The sermon closed with the truth that Jesus is the best leader worth following, and that the greatest goal of the church is for Christ to be magnified in and through it. Paul echoes this in Philippians when he declares that whether by life or by death, Christ will be exalted. That is the heartbeat of a life surrendered to the lordship of Jesus. Not comfort. Not recognition. Not influence. But Christ magnified. The sermon reminded us that healthy churches are built to last not because of impressive programs or gifted personalities, but because the people within them are increasingly becoming more like Jesus, at home, in their habits, and in their convictions.

Personal Reflection: If someone observed your life closely this past week, in your home, in your relationships, in your private moments, what would they conclude about who or what you are living for?

Practical Application: Pray the simple prayer offered at the close of the sermon: "Lord Jesus, lead me." Make it your daily prayer this week, and each morning ask him specifically where he is calling you to follow him that day.