

A Study About Elders (Part 4)

I. Introduction:

A. This lesson and our next lesson are necessarily joined together as they deal with the household of a man desiring the office of a bishop. We will be talking about his faithful children today, but understand two things before we proceed.

1. A household includes anyone under this man's care and/or oversight and is NOT just about his children (**I Timothy 5:4-8**).

2. As we proceed please keep in mind that the standard of faithful children applies to being qualified to be an elder. It DOES NOT mean a parent is lost if the children are not faithful (**Deuteronomy 24:16** and **Ezekiel 18:1-22**).

B. Raising believing children is a difficult task and a very high standard for various reasons (**Proverbs 3:11-13** and **II Timothy 3:1-5**). Consider...

1. Children have a God-given freewill to do right or wrong that a parent cannot prevent them from exercising (**Deuteronomy 5:28-29**, **Luke 15:11-32**, **Acts 2:40**, and **Philippians 2:12**).

2. Good parenting is not the all powerful solution to that FACT that few will be saved (**Matthew 7:13-14** and **Luke 13:23-24**).

3. The world was called wicked (**I John 5:19**) and has NOT gotten better over time (**II Timothy 3:13**).

4. The power of ungodly influences abound (**I Corinthians 15:33**).

5. Thus, a father who is a proper shepherd has mastered the very difficult task of properly teaching his children to keep them from evil (**Proverbs 6:20-23**).

6. Sadly, this qualification removes the discussion of a man being an elder if he has been converted later in life and has not been able to raise up his children as befits a faithful saint.

II. Body: Having Faithful Children... (**Titus 1:6**).

A. The word translated "faithful" in the KJV or "children that believe" (ASV 1901) means: "trustworthy; subjectively, trustful: — believe(-ing, -r), faithful(-ly), sure, true" (Strong's # 4103).

1. The word "faithful" is often a debated subject. Does it mean faithful to God? Does it mean faithful to the parent? That fact is, you cannot separate the two for a faithful father will teach his children to obey the Lord all of their lives (**Deuteronomy 6:20-24**, **Proverbs 22:6**, **Luke 2:41-52**, and **II Timothy 3:15**).

2. This debated word is translated in another context meaning those who have been converted and are faithful in Christ (**Ephesians 1:1**).

3. It also speaks, as translated in another context, of continued dependability as a brother (**I Corinthians 4:17** and **I Peter 5:12**).

4. It is life-long faithfulness (**Revelation 2:10**).

5. Some just qualify this as “faithful in attendance”, but being a believer, a faithful child of God, is about one’s whole life rather than a show up and be counted principle (**I Timothy 4:12**).

6. There is often a debate over whether “children” can mean one child, more than one, etc. More than one leaves no debate and thus is the route the faithful will always follow (**Romans 14:23**).

B. Having his children in subjection with all gravity [“venerableness, i.e. probity: — gravity, honesty. The characteristic of a thing or person which entitles to reverence and respect, dignity, majesty, sanctity, honour, purity” (Strong’s #4587)] (**I Timothy 3:4**).

1. Can a man lead his children to honestly submit to him without forcing them to do so (**Ephesians 6:1-4**)?

a. He must be able to lead without lording over others (**I Peter 5:1-3**).

b. Again, has he taught his children (**Proverbs 4:1-13** and **Titus 2:7-8**)?

c. Has he shepherded his children rather than forcing them to obedience? Think about our chief shepherd here (**I Peter 5:4**; cf. **Matthew 23:37**).

2. A qualified elder is a disciplinarian (**Proverbs 3:12**, **Proverbs 13:24**, and **Proverbs 19:18**) for he certainly will need that trait to guide the local congregation (**Titus 1:12-13**).

3. Yet, he is not just a disciplinarian (**Psalms 103:13**).

4. Do his children revere him (**Hebrews 12:9**)?

C. Children not accused of riot or unruly (**Titus 1:6**).

1. Not accused or charged in the sense of not bringing reproach upon an elder of the Lord’s body (**Proverbs 19:26**).

2. His children are not accused of riot [which is translated only in two other verses being tied to drinking alcohol and partying in such a state] (**Ephesians 5:18** and **I Peter 4:3-4**).

3. His children are not unruly [disobedient, that is not put under] (**Colossians 3:20**).

III. Conclusion: All Of Us Whom Are Parents Must Consider What Our Children’s Behavior Can Indicate About Us (**Proverbs 28:7** and **Proverbs 29:15**).