

GROW IN GRACE NEWSLETTER

PLEASE USE the Grow in Grace Newsletter for your own spiritual growth; and **AS A RESOURCE** to help equip you to MINISTER to others!

Volume 47, No. 1, January 4, 2022 / Southside Baptist Church / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **The Grow in Grace Newsletter is a WEEKLY Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church; and is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of***

our LORD JESUS CHRIST!

ELDERS and Deacons— MODELING A LIFETIME JOURNEY OF BECOMING LIKE CHRIST!

“God intends to display the glory of His beauty, perfection, and love through LOCAL CONGREGATIONS! **There is no better evangelistic tool, mission’s strategy, or counseling ministry than the image of God being displayed through His SAINTS IN CHRIST! JESUS CHRIST is building HIS church with men, women, youth, and children who are REDEEMED by the grace of God and who are on a LIFETIME JOURNEY of becoming like JESUS!**” (Author Unknown)

REALITY: The world’s church seeks to build by means of merging with culture and/or by political engagement— thus, they will only give lip-service to the New Testament call for godliness. **IN RADICAL CONTRAST, the Bride of Christ, (true churches, true Christians),** are on a lifetime journey of Christlikeness— thus, they will be attentive to and embrace the divine call to godliness.

A study of the New Testament Epistles, the Acts of the Apostles, and the letters of Jesus to His churches, (Revelation 2-3)— all reveal clearly **that which JESUS DESIRES in His church and from servants (Deacons) and servant leaders (Elders/Bishops/Pastors) in His local congregations. *MOREOVER, the qualifications set forth in Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; and Titus 1:5-9 are ALL - ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION - set forth in other places in the New Testament as God’s will for EVERY***

CHRISTIAN. Thus, this study is not only setting forth Biblical truth concerning Elders and Deacons; but it is also setting forth truth for every believer. **THEREFORE, LET US EACH AND EVERYONE carefully study the following:**

QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS... Elders: The Bible reveals an interchangeable use of “elders,” “overseers,” and “shepherds/pastors”. **Acts 20:17, 28:** “Paul sent to Ephesus for the *elders* of the church. . . . Keep watch over . . . the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you *overseers*. Be *shepherds* . . .” **Titus 1:5-7:** “appoint *elders* An *elder* must Since an *overseer* . . .” (qualifications are the same as those for overseers in 1 Tim 3:1-7). **1 Peter 5:1-2:** “To the *elders* Be *shepherds* . . . , serving as *overseers*”

(1) The term *elder*, stresses the ***dignity*** and ***position*** of this ministry in the church. **(2) On the other hand, Bishop/overseer** stresses the ***function*** and ***work*** of an elder. **(3) “Shepherd” (“pastor”) is a metaphor** for personal care given to members of the church (Eph 4:11-12).

1 TIMOTHY 3:1— The word "desire" means "to stretch one's self out after, to aspire," and thus the man is willing to study and serve and sacrifice in order to be equipped for this office.

REALITY: MANY A CHURCH HAS BEEN SPLIT BECAUSE OF SELFISH AMBITION! But there is a biblical and sanctified ambition— **(1) It is** an ambition that has been cleansed of self-seeking, one that seeks only the glory of God and the well-being of others. **(2) It is** an ambition that seeks not position, praise, power, prestige, or popularity, but service to God and ministry to men. **(3) It is** an ambition that has at its center the three important ‘Es’ which define the purpose of the church: The **Exaltation** of God, The **Edification** of the body of Christ, and The **Evangelization** of the lost.

1 TIMOTHY 3:2— **BLAMELESS**— not sinless; but above reproach, does not cast reproach upon God's Word or God's Son. **Think of a large iron frying pan!** People would like to pick up this frying pan and smash this man over the head, but if he is blameless he gives them *no handle!* They cannot pick it up if there is no handle on it (Daniel 6:4-5).

THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE— faithful to his wife and exemplifying what Christian marriage really ought to be. He is to be a "one-woman man." No background of divorce **so as to model** the love of Jesus which never fails (Eph. 5:25-33; 1 Cor. 13:1-7); **and so as to model** God's plan of one marriage till death do part: Genesis 2:23-24; Matt. 19:4-6; 1 Cor. 7:10-12, 39, Titus 1:6; **and so as to model** PROPER CARING FOR HIS OWN HOUSEHOLD: 1 Timothy 3:4-5.

NOTE: Some say that 1 Timothy 3:6 and Titus 1:6 'SAY NOTHING' about marriage or divorce... that the issue is not the elder or deacon's marriage status. **REALLY?** "The husband of one wife" says nothing about marriage, divorce, or marriage status?? In reality, **"the husband of ONE WIFE"** speaks clearly and precisely about marriage— agreeing with God's clearly stated design for marriage, which is ONE man and one woman, FOR LIFE: Gen 2:23-24; Matt. 19:4-6.

VIGILANT— temperate, sober, mentally alert. Having a well-disciplined mind, in possession of the full use of all his faculties.

SOBER— sound mind, sensible, serious, "in his right mind" (Mark 5:15), having a serious attitude. There is a need for balance here. He is not to have the reputation of always cracking jokes and being a clown (Eph. 5:4), nor is he to be one who casts a cloud of gloom everywhere he goes. A serious attitude SHOULD be blended with a healthy and Holy Spirit given JOY!

OF GOOD BEHAVIOUR— orderly, organized, a well-arranged, and well-ordered life (opposite of "chaos"). A man who is disciplined and faithful in his stewardship of time. His life should exhibit good planning and purpose.

GIVEN TO HOSPITALITY— a lover of strangers. A real love and concern for people. One who manifests a genuine love for the brethren. His door and his heart are always open when it comes to rightly ministering to the needs of others.

APT TO TEACH— able, skilled, and willing to teach and communicate God's truth. According to Titus 1:9 he must be able to exhort and bring conviction by sound doctrine, "holding fast the faithful word." It is the ability, (by

giftedness, labor, and prayer), to rightly use and communicate God's Word in helping, and confronting, and admonishing others (see 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 5:17).

1 TIMOTHY 3:3— NOT GIVEN TO WINE— literally, "not beside or alongside wine." No affinity for wine. In a society infatuated with alcoholic beverages and defiled by the unwholesome things associated with drinking, at Southside we call for total abstinence from alcoholic drinks. MOREOVER, total abstinence is the only truly safe choice for the elder; or any Christian based on Proverbs 31:4-5.

NOT A STRIKER— not quick tempered to fight. The man must not be a fighter (ready with his fists). Comes from a verb meaning "to strike."— You rub this kind of violent person the wrong way and he will really let you have it.

NOT GREEDY OF FILTHY LUCRE— not someone who is out for personal gain and profit. The man's financial dealings must be blameless and not in the least bit questionable. Free from greed.

PATIENT— gentle, forbearing (Phil. 4:5), sweet-reasonableness, considerate of the feelings of others, a man who is able to yield and who does not always insist on having things his own way, willing to concede, and yet not compromise when it comes to God's truth.

NOT A BRAWLER— not a fighter (literally "without war"), not one who is always arguing and getting involved in carnal disputes and quarrels. A man who is peaceable (Rom. 12:18).

NOT COVETOUS— literally, "not a lover of money" (Heb. 13:5). The ruling motive in his life is not money or possessions, but the glory of God.

1 TIMOTHY 3:4-5— RULES WELL HIS OWN HOUSE— Without question, this has to first be in operation with his wife— he must model godly managing and guiding his house hold by first of all loving his wife as Christ loves the church. (Ephesians 5:21, 25-32); overflowing into having children who are obedient and respectful and well-disciplined (kept in line).

1 TIMOTHY 3:6— **NOT A NOVICE**-- not one who has newly come to the faith, not a new convert, not one who has recently become a Christian, not a new believer, but rather one who has had TIME FOR growth and development in the faith. (Well tested by time!)

1 TIMOTHY 3:7— **A GOOD REPORT**-- an excellent testimony before the unsaved, a good reputation among the community.

NOTE: The other passage which list the qualifications of bishops (elders) is found in Titus 1:5-9 and is similar in many respects to the 1 Timothy 3:1-7 passage.

QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS

The seven men chosen to serve in Acts 6:1-6 were likely the first deacons ever to be appointed in the church— although the word *diakonos* or any form of it is *NOT USED IN Acts 6*.

The word "DEACON" means "servant" and refers to one who humbly serves the local assembly, caring especially for the MANY and varied physical needs of the assembly. This allows those with shepherding responsibilities to give themselves more fully to prayer and the Word of God (Acts 6:1-7).

That the early "deacons" were spiritual men is clearly seen by the fact that both Stephen and Philip were 'deacons' (Acts 6:5). Philip served as a 'deacon' (Acts 6:5) but was also gifted as an evangelist (Acts 21:8; compare Eph. 4:12).

ACTS 6:3— **AMONG YOU**--a deacon must be a believer, a saved person.

OF HONEST REPORT—must have a good reputation and an excellent testimony.

FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—a spiritual man, controlled by God the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22-6:1; Eph. 5:18).

FULL OF WISDOM—the ability to judge rightly and follow a sound course of action by way of knowledge and experience; the ability to apply God's Word to life's situations and problems.

WHOM WE MAY APPOINT OVER THIS BUSINESS, or task of serving others— able to do the job, competent.

1 TIMOTHY 3:8— **GRAVE**--dignified, serious, respected, a man people look up to, a good example, a good testimony, a man of character.

NOT DOUBLETONGUED— not "say one thing and mean another" and not one who says one thing to one person and then something different to another person. He must say what he means and mean what he says. A man whose words can be trusted and whose motives will not be suspected. One who is honest, truthful, and sincere.

NOT GIVEN TO MUCH WINE— not addicted to wine. Because drinking is such a problem today, we insist that the deacon also be a man who does not drink any alcoholic beverages at all in light of the stumbling block principle of Romans 14:21. MOREOVER, total abstinence is the only truly safe choice for the deacon or any Christian based on Proverbs 31:4-5.

NOT GREEDY OF FILTHY LUCRE— literally "shameful gain." See above discussion under 1 Timothy 3:3. He must be a man you could fully trust to take care of your money.

1 TIMOTHY 3:9— **HOLDING THE MYSTERY OF THE FAITH IN A PURE CONSCIENCE**. The mystery of the faith refers to Christian truth. "The faith" is that whole body of truth that we believe (Jude 3). The "mystery of the faith" is more specific and involves those aspects of the faith that relate to church truth (compare 1 Timothy 3:14-16). THUS, a deacon must have the right concept of the local church. He must see the local assembly as God sees it— a living organism under the sovereign Headship and Lordship of Christ.

1 TIMOTHY 3:10— **PROVEN MEN**--to be put to the test for approval. Give the man time to show his faithfulness and prove himself worthy of the responsibility of modeling SERVETHOOD. The same should be true for the elder as indicated by the phrase "not a novice" (1 Timothy 3:6).

BLAMELESS— un-accused, "one who can't be called in." His life is so consistent and faithful that he will not need to be called in before the church to answer for some questionable action or behavior or deed.

1 TIMOTHY 3:12— THE HUSBANDS OF ONE WIFE-- see under 1 Timothy 3:2.

RULING THEIR CHILDREN/HOUSES WELL— see discussion under 1 Timothy 3:4-5.

BUT WHO CAN MEASURE UP TO SUCH STANDARDS?

One of the most fundamental principles of Scripture is **that we all fall short of God's glory and perfection.** While godly maturity and Christlikeness should be the goal of every believer and while one of the goals of every ministry and its leadership should be to bring its people into higher and higher stages of godly maturity (cf. Col. 1:28), still, no matter how mature or how godly one becomes, none of us even comes close to perfection.

Do you remember David's plea in Psalm 143:3? David, a man after God's own heart and a leader of God's people, when praying for God's help said: **"And do not enter into judgment with Thy servant, For in Thy sight no man living is righteous."**

Paul also brought out this truth in Philippians 3:10-16. The goal, indeed, the mark we are all **to pursue as did Paul** is spiritual maturity, being conformed to the character of the Lord Jesus, **but no matter how much we have attained that goal, there will always be plenty of room and need for more growth and change.**

So, what does this truth mean?

(1) It means that there will always be room for improvement and growth in the qualities mentioned in these passages. *Being "above reproach" is not a demand for perfection before selection.* If that were so, no man would ever be qualified.

(2) However, teaches us that being above reproach in relation to these qualities means that a man's life-style is such that, **generally speaking**, no one can legitimately accuse him of conduct which is unbecoming a mature believer; AND WHEN there was failure— NO ONE can rightly accuse him that HE DID NOT confess, repent, AND IF NEEDED, made restitution, and now walks in deliverance/victory.

(3) It means that these qualities should exist in a man's life to such a degree that they stand out as prominent and consistent characteristics. They are clearly distinguishable, but there will be room for growth and times when he will fall short.

(4) It ALSO means that, because none of us is perfect, we should not expect our leaders to walk on water. They/WE all have feet of clay.

(5) However, being above reproach does mean we should look for those men who are mature and examples of Christlikeness, and we should expect them to continue to grow.

REMEMBER: Almost without exception the same character qualities set forth for Elders and/or Deacons are elsewhere called for in the New Testament for every believer.

REMEMBER: "God intends to display the glory of His beauty, perfection, and love through LOCAL CONGREGATIONS! **There is no better evangelistic tool, mission's strategy, or counseling ministry than the image of God being displayed through His SAINTS IN CHRIST! ELDERS and Deacons are to MODEL CHRISTLIKENESS!**

JESUS CHRIST is building HIS church with men, women, youth, and children [AND ESPECIALLY ELDERS and Deacons!] who are REDEEMED by the grace of God and who are on a LIFETIME JOURNEY of becoming like JESUS!" (Edited from Unknown source)

Grace to one and all in Christ! James Bell

NEWS NOTES:

EVERY SATURDAY* 8:00 AM, — Men's Bible Study: *THE BOOK OF JOB, CHAPTER 19*** (Doors open by 7:30am... coffee, juice, donuts, and Hardee's Biscuits are available!)

***** Ladies Bible Study RESUMES, January 11, 2022 @ 11:00 AM**
SUNDAY SERVICES, JANUARY 9, 16, 23, 30... / 2022

1. * Sunday School at 9:30am:** Nursery, Children's classes, Youth, and Adult classes. **2. *** WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:45am!**

ADDITIONAL SUNDAY SERVICES:

**** JANUARY 9 @ 5:00 PM, FAITHFUL MEN, 1689 Confession of Faith**

***** JANUARY 16 ... LORD'S SUPPER at the end of the Morning Worship service! // HOME GROUPS!**

****** JANUARY 23, 5:00pm- SPECIAL Church Wide SERVICE in the auditorium!** The Southside Elders **HAVE MET WITH EACH OF THESE COUPLES:** Adam and Bethany Troutt; Devin and Jasmine Purdue; and James and Laurel Poteete

— THE ELDERS are recommending Adam Troutt, Devin Purdue, and James Poteete to serve as Deacons.

On 2/23/22 at 5:00pm we call our ENTIRE CHURCH FAMILY 1) To Hear the recommendation of the Elders; 2) To hear the testimonies of these three men and their wives; and 3) To give your own testimonies of HAVING WITNESSED EVIDENCE of servanthood from these men and their wives.

TUESDAYS: WEEKLY Youth Group Meeting, ages 12 and up ... Tuesdays a 7:15pm... at Jaden and Rhi's home...

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS @ SOUTHSIDE:

6:30pm— come in back 'double doors' under the Drive Thru awning!

**** Adult Prayer Service ** Young FAMILIES Prayer Service**

***** LOVE OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD BY MAIL or by ONLINE GIVING:**

SUCH funds, (if checks), make out to Southside Baptist) — MAIL TO: Southside Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1594, Gallatin, TN 37066/ OR YOU MAY CHOOSE TO GIVE via ONLINE GIVING:

<https://southsidebaptist.breezechms.com/give/online>

HEALTH REMINDERS as to CHURCH SERVICES AND as to Responding with WISDOM and NOT fear IN SEEKING TO KEEP AS HEALTHY AS WE CAN— SO AS TO BE ACTIVE IN THE KINGDOM BUSINESS OF THE LORD!

1. IF YOU ARE SICK... [OR if you are in a state of high immune deficiency or if (at home or work) you are caring for one who is sick; or if you have • Fever; • Coughing; • Chills; • Headache; • Sore throat; etc.], Please stay home!]

2. IF YOU ARE HEALTHY and well... you may or may not choose to wear a mask... WE do not require it. WE CONTINUE to encourage FREEDOM as to 'social distancing'... masks ... vaccine choices, etc. — PLEASE HONOR THE LORD, by continuing to give sensitivity and respect one to another.

3. In addition to carefulness, good hydration, good nutrition, and sleep— ALSO: SEEK TO BUILD UP A STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEM! I PERSONALLY TAKE ELDERBERRY, VITAMIN C, ZINC, GINGER, VITAMIN D, Quercetin, and a good multi-vitamin that includes fiber... And I have a PRESCRIPTION of Ivermectin... TO TAKE, if needed.

DO YOUR OWN RESEARCH! BE PROACTIVE! BE PREVENTIVE!

4. LET each of us DO OUR PART IN personal hygiene. [IF you use the restrooms— please wash your hands with SOAP; and use nearby SANITIZER.]

5. HERE IS AN EDUCATIONAL resource from The Association of American Physicians and Surgeons... FROM Doctors who successfully treat covid-19 patients! => <https://breggin.com/covid-19-home-treatment/>

Peter McCullough, MD testifies to Texas Senate HHS Committee. BRIEF. EXCELLENT: → <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QAHi3lX3oGM>

The PDF booklet: A Guide to Home-Based COVID Treatment can be downloaded ... **focus is on PREVENTION and early treatment:** [COVID Treatment - Truth for Health Foundation](https://www.truthforhealth.org/patientguide/patient-treatment-guide/)<https://www.truthforhealth.org/patientguide/patient-treatment-guide/>