

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

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The Pastor of a Baptist Church

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I Timothy 3:1: "This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

1. A pastor must be **called of God**. Acts 20:28: *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers..."* This tells us that the Holy Spirit is the one that calls the pastor and places him over the flock. No man takes this position without the Lord's calling. I can say personally that it was the Lord who called me unto salvation and called me to pastor His people.

2. **The way to know you are called.** I Timothy 3:1: *"If a man desire the office of a bishop..."* When God calls a man to pastor, he puts a **desire within him to pastor one of his churches**. A man who is pastoring a Baptist Church should desire to pastor that church. I Timothy 3:1 says it is *"a good work."* There is not a greater work than pastoring a New Testament Baptist Church. The word "desire" in I Timothy 3:1 is used also in I Timothy 6:10, *"...some coveted after..."* The word "coveted" is the same word as desire in our text. This simply means that when you covet something, you desire it. I am showing the *"way you know you are called."* Hebrews 11:16 uses the same word. *"...Now they desire a better country..."* People who are saved **desire** a better country; that is a heavenly country. The word means to **want or desire**. The Bible teaches that the way to know you are called to pastor is to **desire** the office of a bishop. I know by experience that this is true. I have pastored the Bryan Station Baptist Church for 39 years and that desire

is to lead God's people in the way the Lord would have them to go. When I started pastoring in 1962 I was scared and trembling. Today, many times I am still scared and I tremble when I preach.

When God called me to preach and pastor, I made this statement in my heart to the Lord: "Lord if this is what you want me to do, I will do it your way." I will not preach to please people, but I am going to preach to please the Lord. I still have that same desire. The Lord has blessed in a mighty way. We don't have thousands in our membership but we do have about 200 of God's greatest people. We have organized about 40 Baptist churches and have reached multitudes with the gospel all over the world.

It is not a **desire for money**. There are many men who are pastoring Baptist churches who are in it for money and would leave their flock in order to increase their salary. I believe that the church I pastor knows that I do not pastor just to make money. The church has blessed me--a church should bless their pastor with a good living but that is not their purpose. It is not a **desire for prestige**. Many pastors seem to want the spotlight and like to be seen. But the very opposite should be the case. The Pastor should always exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and try to get out of the way as much as possible. Any pastor wants to be loved by his people, but the pastor wants his people to love the Lord and strives to lead them in that direction. John the apostle puts it this way in III John 4, *"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."*

The desire of the pastor is the same as the **shepherd has for his sheep**. The

sheep belong to the shepherd. They are his responsibility to take care of them, to guard them from enemies, to feed them so they can grow. He will give an account for how he performs his duties. See Hebrews 13:11. Acts 20:28: *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers..."*

3. I Peter 5:2-4 is talking to the elders or pastors. *"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly: not for filthy lucre, [money] but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."* What does all this mean to the pastor?

First of all, **feed the flock of God**. The pastor must not feed the flock with worldly things. This would be like the one that went out in the days of Elisha to gather herbs in the field to put them in the great pot that the sons of the prophets were to eat from. He gathered wild gourds from a wild vine and one cried out, there is death in the pot. See II Kings 4:38-41. So it is when the pastor starts preaching worldly things.

God's children must have good food and the Bible is plain that their food is the **word of God**. Matthew 4:4: *"...It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."* II Timothy 4:1-4: *"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant*

in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” This passage tells the pastor to take the oversight.

He is like the construction foreman on a building. He is responsible as to how the building is being built, and will be held accountable for it. It is almost certain, if the pastor does not take the oversight, Satan will find a way to have someone else take charge. The Shepherd has to do whatever is necessary to protect the sheep. He must not Lord over God's heritage but make sure that Jesus is Lord over his people. Christ is head of His church and not the pastor. But the pastor must preach to his people what the Lord would have him to do. This comes by preaching the **word**.

The pastor must also set the example before the flock. The pastor is the leader under God's command. The shepherd always leads his sheep and does not try to drive them. What the pastor does is telling his people that it is alright to do the same. Therefore, he has a great responsibility to set the example. If he goes contrary to the Word of God he gives the people an excuse to do the same. This becomes very serious; Matthew 5:19: *“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven...”*

Jesus Christ was the supreme example and the pastor should follow as closely as possible in His steps. He did not leave one thing that would cause us to sin. No wonder he is called the *“...chief shepherd...”* in I Peter 5:4. He set the perfect example. No pastor is perfect, but the Bible says to be examples to the flock. Paul tells Timothy in I Timothy 4:12-13: *“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation [behavior] in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”* If the pastor does his work correctly, he will be blessed and so will all those that hear him.

If you worked on a horse farm and were responsible for a fourteen million dollar horse, how would you treat that horse? I imagine you would give him a pillow to lie on, straw in the barn each

morning, and clean it up each night. You would give him the best exercise and do everything you could for him. You would have to give an account to the man who owns the horse. How would you like to pastor 200 of God's children and be responsible to the owner for them? Fourteen million dollars does not even touch the surface of what one of God's children cost. They are blood bought! Pastoring is serious business. Acts 20:28: *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”* He must feed, guard, make them comfortable, and keep them from kicking other horses. In other words, caring for a fourteen million dollar horse does not hold a candle to what a pastor has to do. So also must the pastor feed, guard and comfort the flock with the Word of God and keep them from hurting one another. The people of God are purchased with the blood of Jesus Christ; that makes them very valuable.

RESTRICTIONS OF A PASTOR

There are restrictions for being a pastor. I Timothy 3:2-13: *“A bishop then must be blameless....”* In I Timothy 5:7 the word blameless is translated as without spot, unrebukable. You should live in such a manner that no man can rebuke you. It is a job for the pastor to keep himself blameless.

I Timothy 3:2, the pastor must be *“.....the husband of one wife.....”* That is not one wife at a time. We can prove this in Mark 10:2-12 *“And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.”* You know what that means? That means that because they would not believe it, they were harsh and hard and would not accept it; that is why God let Moses write the bill of divorcement. Verse 6, *“But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And in the house*

his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.” I am talking about the qualifications of the pastor. I believe people who have been married and divorced can still serve the Lord, but not as a pastor or deacon.

In Luke 16:18, Jesus himself said, *“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.”* This is very plain.

Romans 7:1-4 has to do with our relationship with Jesus Christ. Paul uses this example: *“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?”* If you are under the law, you are lost. Somebody has to die; either the law has to die, or you have to die in Christ. *“For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law: So that she is no adulteress though she be married to another man.”* That is why the Bible teaches, *“...my brethren ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ...”* We were under the law and the only way to get out from under that law to be married to another in that we had to die. Jesus Christ died in our place and we died in him by faith. We are free from the law by the death of Christ Jesus.

I Corinthians 7:10-11: *“...Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.”* Verse 27: *“Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.”* Verse 39, *“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.”* In other words, it would be better, when your wife dies, if you would stay unmarried.

Matthew 5:31-32: *“It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.”* Mat-

thew is a book written to both Jew and Gentile. Incidentally, there is teaching going on that it is okay for a pastor to be remarried as long he has one wife at a time. No, this is not right; one man, one woman. *"But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."* The same teaching is in Matthew 19:3-9. *"The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore are they no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They said unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."*

The reason Moses suffered or permitted you to put away your wives was because of hardness of your heart or unbelief. In Mark 16:14, Jesus *"upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen."*

Deuteronomy 22:13-19: *"If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, And give occasions of speech against her, and bring an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate. And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. And the elders of that city shall take the man and chastise him; And they shall*

amerge him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days." Verses 28-29, *"If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days."*

In other words, there was an espousal period when a man becomes espoused to a woman, the time of about a year. If a woman became pregnant during that espousal period, and the man knew it, he had the perfect right to put her away. She had committed fornication, an act before marriage. Therefore he had a perfect right to put her away. We see the example of this in the birth of Jesus Christ, and what Joseph was about to do before the Holy Spirit came to him. Matthew 1:18-21: *"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."* Joseph thought Mary had been unfaithful and he had a perfect right to put her away. But after a marriage is consummated, no one has a right to divorce. This does not mean that divorced people cannot be used by the Lord, but not as a pastor or deacon because of the qualifications placed upon them. It does not forbid them from being members of the church. But the pastor must be the husband of one wife, not one wife at a time. This qualification does not forbid a single man from being a pastor.

OTHER RESTRICTIONS OR QUALIFICATIONS

As stated in I Timothy 3:1-7, in verse 2, He must be *"...vigilant, sober,..."* These two words are used in warning against our adversary the Devil; I Peter

5:8: *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking who he may devour"* The pastor had better be watchful and sober minded because there are many adversaries that are out to destroy the flock of God, which he pastors. See Acts 20:28-31.

He must be of *"good behavior..."* He must set the example before the people he pastors or leads. Titus 1:7: adds *"...not self-willed, not soon angry..."*

He must be *"...given to hospitality..."* There will be times when he is called upon to keep people in his home. He must be ready to do what he can to be a blessing to other people. That does not mean he is to be taken advantage of, but his heart is to help people in their need. Titus 1:8 adds *"A lover of hospitality, a lover of good men..."* Hebrews 13:2: *"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unaware."*

In verse 3: *"Not given to wine..."* Wine will cause a man's mind to think and do things that he would not ordinarily do. The pastor does not need anything that would cause him to not have a clear mind.

"...No striker..." The pastor must not revert to physical strength to accomplish the work God has given him to do. Jesus rebuked Peter when he used the sword in Matthew 26:51-52. II Timothy 2:24-26: *"...The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men..."*

"...Not greedy of filthy lucre..." Simply put, that money is not his objective in the ministry but to be a servant of the Lord.

The Lord has promised to supply his needs. I Timothy 6:8-11 warns the pastor about the love of money--that it will cause him to err from the faith and cause many sorrows.

The pastor must be *"...patient..."* To endure the problems he faces, and depend on the Lord to guide him, to teach the people the will of the Lord, and depend on the Holy Spirit to do His work in their hearts. All of God's children need patience, but the pastor must have a double portion to endure the things he must face in the ministry.

"...Not a brawler..." There is no reason for a pastor to fight or strive with others. He is to preach the Word and make sure he is right with the Lord, and the Lord will take care of the situation. Titus 3:2: *"To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men."*

“...*Not covetous...*” The pastor must learn to be content with what he has and not desire more and more. Colossians 3:5: “...*covetousness which is idolatry.*” To be covetous is to put something before the Lord. The pastor must desire the Lord’s will and presence more than anything else.

Verse 4 teaches the pastor must be “*One that ruleth well his own house...*” He is the head of his house; his wife and his children need to be in subjection to him. He must meet these qualifications in order to lead and set the example for the people he pastors. All men are to rule their own household. The man is the head of the woman as stated in I Corinthians 11:3. There is a great responsibility for the pastor to be the head of his house. His wife should be in submission to him. Ephesians 5:22: “*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husband...*” His children should show respect to their father as a man of God. Ephesians 6:1: “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.*” The wife and the pastor are to work together to raise their children. It is hard for any pastor to do his work effectively when the wife does not help him in the capacity the Lord has placed her.

Verse 5 gives the reason for this. “*For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?*” The ruling of his own house is compared to the pastoring of the Lord’s church. Start with your own house, then you are qualified to pastor the Lord’s house.

Verse 6: “*Not a novice...*” The word means a “beginner.” He must have been saved for some time and have grown as a Christian. He must meet the qualifications if he is to pastor. The man that does not meet these qualifications is not qualified to pastor a Baptist church. These are the Lord’s qualifications, not mine. It is very easy for the Devil to work on a man that is not grounded in the faith. He will be lifted up with pride. With a little success he will say in his heart, “Look what I have done.”

It reminds me of the story of the young woodpecker that had just learned to fly. He was pecking on a tree when lightning struck the tree, splitting it wide open. As he flew off, he looked back and said, “Man, look what I have done.” It is not the man, but the Lord who does all the work. We are just laborers together with God.

Verse 7: “...*He must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.*” They may criticize him for his

stand for the truth, but they cannot rebuke him for a sinful life, because he is dedicated to the Lord.

Conclusion: This is what I believe the Bible teaches about a pastor of a Baptist church. These teachings are what I have dedicated almost all my life to. If I fail to qualify as a pastor, even after almost 40 years, I should step down from being a Baptist church pastor. I must strive to keep myself fit for the office to which the Lord has called me. I believe pastoring is the greatest undertaking that the Lord could entrust to any man. There may be some man that the Lord has placed a **desire** to be the pastor of a Baptist church. Examine yourself first to see if you are qualified. Are you willing to surrender to do the Lord’s work? Are you willing to dedicate yourself wholly to the Lord, as a pastor of one of His churches, a church that is made up of the Lord’s people that He purchased with His own blood? The Lord calls men to preach and pastor. Maybe you are one of them.

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