

For Christians who have fallen into sin, our goal, among others, is to see them restored to full fellowship with GOD and fellow Christians. The goal of church discipline is always for the glory of God, the good of the church, and the repentance and restoration of the Christian who has fallen into sin!

As A. T. Robertson states in commenting on Galatians 6:1-2, the spiritual are those who are led by the Spirit and are "the spiritual experts in mending souls." Thus, like a good doctor, our goal or desire is not to give bad news, but because we care and love others, where necessary we warn people so that they may have health and long life.

Like Paul and our LORD Himself, we should speak the truth in love.

"Love" divorced from Truth is the worst form of hate!

Galatians 4:16

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SERMON NOTES



JAN 28, 2024

Biblical Qualifications for Elders in God's Church

Hebrews 5: 1-14 and Revelation 2:1-7

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Overview: There are more characteristics or qualifications for being an elder in God's church than we have time to discuss, even in this three-part series. See for example, 1 Timothy 1:5-7; 4:1-6, 16; 6:3-5, 20-21; 2 Timothy 1:13-15; 2:23-26; 3:15-16; 4:1-5; and Titus 1:9-16. While there are many attributes that an elder should have, today we are going to concentrate on the attribute of maturity, particularly maturity in the area/s of discernment. This discernment at least includes (1) the ability to discern good from evil in a strict moral sense of what is right and what is wrong, ethically speaking, and (2) the ability to discern good from bad, right from wrong, and correct from incorrect doctrine or theology. Theology is minimally the study of our words about God, His person, and work.

Our sub-theme is the need for elders to have discernment. So, we will be talking a lot about discernment. Our two main texts are Hebrews 5:14 and Revelation 2:1-7.

But first, a simple point:

We are warned many, many times about false teaching and false teachers. See, for example, Matthew 7:15-16; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 10; 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-14; Galatians 1:6-9; Colossians 2:16-23; 1 Timothy 1:3-11; 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 4:1-15; Titus 1:5-16; 3:9-11; and the list goes on and on. ...

Why are we warned so many times?

Indeed, Ron Rhodes correctly states: "It is for good reason that every book in the New Testament except Philemon has something to say about false teachers, false prophets, false gospels, or heresies."

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Also, Irenaeus, bishop of modern-day Lyons, France, around 180 AD—a student of Papias and Polycarp—two students of the apostle John states:

“Error indeed is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest, being thus exposed, it should at once be detected. But it is craftily decked out in an attractive dress, so as, by its outward form, to make it appear to the inexperienced more true than truth itself.”

Hebrews 5: 1-14

Briefly, if all believers, all Christians, are supposed to be, or are called to be, mature, then an elder who is supposed to be a mature believer and a leader should be mature.

Definitions

Mature: teleios

To discern: diakrisis (from diakrino)

To discern, discernment, discerning

Revelation 2:1-7

Test: peirazo

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Further Points to Ponder/Application

Being good or nice is not good enough to be an elder. Elders need to know Scripture.

Being a good speaker is great, but it is nowhere listed as essential to being an elder.

Elders are called to discern and confront all false teaching and sin: both practices and beliefs.

Some Goals of Elders

“If someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:1-2 NIV

We are to both speak the truth and only speak it in love. See Ephesians 4:15.

Elders are to judge in a spirit of humility and biblical meekness.

The goals, among others, for us to judge doctrines, teachings, and/or practices are to protect fellow Christians and to promote a healthy Christian life for ourselves and others.

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