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PREPARING AN ELDER TRAINING PLAN FOR THOSE  
ASPIRING TO THE OFFICE OF ELDER AT LIBERTY  
BAPTIST CHURCH OF DALHART, TEXAS

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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Doctor of Educational Ministry

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by  
Jeremy Scott McMorris, Sr.

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**APPROVAL SHEET**

PREPARING AN ELDER TRAINING PLAN FOR THOSE  
ASPIRING TO THE OFFICE OF ELDER AT LIBERTY  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES .....	v
PREFACE .....	vi
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Context .....	1
Rationale .....	4
Purpose .....	4
Goals .....	5
Research Methodology .....	5
Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations .....	6
Conclusion .....	7
2. THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR TRAINING AND TESTING ASPIRING ELDERS AT LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH .....	8
Introduction .....	8
Training and Testing: Components of the Command (2 Tim 2:2) .....	8
Training and Testing: Character, Competence, and Content (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) .....	13
Training and Testing: Shepherding and Stewardship (1 Pet 5:1-4) .....	23
Conclusion .....	27
3. A SYNTHESIS OF LITERATURE ON THE TOPIC OF TRAINING MEN FOR MINISTRY .....	29
Calling .....	30
Character .....	35

Chapter	Page
Competency .....	40
Conviction .....	47
Conclusion .....	50
4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MINISTRY PROJECT .....	51
Goal 1 Results .....	51
Goal 2 Results .....	60
Goal 3 Results .....	63
Conclusion .....	63
5. MINISTRY PROJECT EVALUATION .....	65
Evaluation of the Project’s Purpose .....	65
Evaluation of the Project’s Goals .....	66
Strengths of the Project .....	68
Weaknesses of the Project .....	69
What I Would Do Differently .....	70
Theological Reflections .....	71
Personal Reflections .....	72
Conclusion .....	73
 Appendix	
1. PRE-CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PASTORAL SURVEY for EXPERT PANEL .....	74
2. ELDER TRAINING PLAN EVALUATION RUBRIC .....	77
3. SURVEY RESULTS .....	78
4. ETP TRAINING PLAN .....	79
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	106

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table	Page
A1. Survey information .....	78

Figure	Page
1. Current role .....	53
2. Years in current ministry .....	55
3. Number of full-time pastors .....	55
4. Average church attendance .....	56
5. Church setting .....	56
6. Plan for training .....	57
7. Length of training plan .....	58

## PREFACE

On a sticky-note above my study desk are written the reasons I labored through this project. First, is written “for Christ.” I offer this work to my Lord and Savior and pray that he is well pleased. Second, is written “for His church.” I trust that Liberty Baptist Church of Dalhart, Texas is built up by this project. Lastly, is written, “for my soul.” I can truly say that my soul has been sanctified and strengthened by the work this project represents.

Those who know me are as surprised as I am that this work has come to completion. It is only accomplished through the love and input of so many others in my life. First, I want to give glory and thanks to Jesus. He is the reason I have done this work. His gospel changed me from living as His enemy to living as His child. His righteousness made me safe in the presence of God and others. His Spirit strengthened me for this task. His church is the bride I have labored to see grow. And His kindness blessed me with those that I list next.

I know what it is to safely trust in the love and faithfulness of a woman. I thank my wife, Angie. I have only ever known faithful love from her. She helped me know when to start this endeavor, and then helped see me through it. She never begrudged late nights or weeks away to study. While I was away in Louisville, studying, reading, drinking good coffee, and eating great food, she was holding down the fort. Her sacrifices were greater than mine.

Thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Joe Harrod, who patiently and skillfully helped me accomplish something that was out of my reach. Our desire to talk about hunting usually surpassed our desire to discuss my project.

Thanks to my parents, Glynn and Sharron McMorris, for setting the best example of a ministry home I have ever seen. Spiritually speaking, I am a pastor because God has called and equipped me. Humanly speaking, I am a pastor because of my parents. Not because they called me to do it, but because their lives made me want to do it.

Thanks to Liberty Baptist Church for being a church committed to the Word of God, and thereby making this project a joy to implement! You have been an easy church to pastor. Your love, humility, and commitment to unity are exemplary.

Thanks to Will Perkins and Matt Moore—the men who came along-side me as lay-elders in the middle of this project. Your friendship, encouragement, and direction were exactly what God knew I needed during this process.

Thanks to Brian Pate for many things, but mostly friendship.

My hope is that God will use this project to raise up many more men for many more years of faithful pastoral ministry at Liberty Baptist Church of Dalhart, Texas.

Jeremy McMorris

Dalhart, Texas

December 2021



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Good leadership needs wisdom to guide it. This idea is as true for the church as any institution. Thankfully, God has given His church instruction in His Word that provides the wisdom necessary to organize and lead a local church. Unfortunately, churches often resort to less-than-biblical ways to structure their leadership. Tradition, pragmatism, and fear often keep churches from being biblically faithful in their church government.

Liberty Baptist Church has a wonderful history of faithfulness to God's Word in many areas but has both the need and opportunity to develop a way to grow leaders to serve the church. Liberty Baptist Church is committed to conducting church life according to the Scripture. This commitment led the leadership to establish a plurality of elder leadership. That plurality needed a plan to train the next generation of men for ministry.

#### **Context**

Liberty Baptist Church (LBC) in Dalhart, Texas, was planted in 1963, as an independent Baptist church. In the years since its founding LBC has been led by twelve different senior pastors. The history of LBC is rooted in the conservative, independent, Baptist, fundamentalism of the mid-twentieth century. This *brand* of Christianity was marked by strengths such as a strong conviction of the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, zeal for evangelism, and a pursuit of holiness in personal life. Other issues, such as the exclusive use of the King James Bible, condemnation of contemporary music,

separation from so-called worldly practices,<sup>1</sup> and the unquestioned authority of the senior pastor, were also important components of the culture of LBC in those days.

Historically, LBC has been led by a senior pastor with limited input and advice from a board of trustees. These men functioned similarly to the deacons typical of most Baptist churches. The church had utilized trustees instead of deacons because there were not enough biblically qualified men to serve as deacons.

From 2004–2013, the lead pastor at LBC was a man marked by wisdom and humility. His godly wisdom brought about healthy changes that significantly helped the congregation grow spiritually. His leadership and ministry brought about positive spiritual and practical change.

Over the last decade LBC has shown a true devotion to the Word of God over tradition or culture. This biblical loyalty has served the church well in its growth in gospel-centered church life. If the Bible says it, then LBC has been willing to change in order to submit to the Word of God. Any growth in leadership structure at LBC over the last several years has been done with little difficulty because of the congregation's commitment to doing church life informed by the Scripture.

The commitment to doing church life by the Book led the leadership to move toward establishing the two offices outlined in Scripture—that of elder and deacon. In January of 2017, LBC made great strides toward a more biblical model of government by appointing its first group of men to serve as deacons. In the preceding months, the congregation had been clearly instructed in what the Scriptures teach regarding the office of deacon, and the men who were appointed understood clearly their role and responsibilities. They were not appointed to be an authoritative or deliberative body, but rather ministers who model their ministry after the men chosen to serve the church in

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<sup>1</sup> The following issues would have been considered worldly: attending a movie theater, women wearing pants, dancing, playing cards, and any use of alcohol or tobacco.

Acts 6. The deacons have since been exemplary in their service to Christ's church as ministers and servants of the church.

Those deacons were strong advocates for founding the church's government in the Scriptures. They did this more by their example than their exhortation. They consistently served the church in the office of deacon as it is defined and described in Scripture. Churches often have a tradition or culture that defines the office of deacon, but the deacons at LBC committed themselves right away to a biblical definition of their role. In doing so they helped lead the way toward establishing a biblical eldership at LBC.

In February of 2020, LBC appointed its first lay-elders to serve alongside the lead pastor. This change was preceded by years of teaching and instruction on the Bible's model of church governance. God had blessed the church with two men who were called and qualified to serve in this way.

Through all of these changes, God blessed the church with a wonderful spirit of unity and peace. The church was and is committed to the Word of God and desires to bring their personal and corporate lives into alignment with the Scripture. They have been submissive to the Word and supportive of the leadership at LBC. Their humility makes them a joy to serve and lead.

A great opportunity existed for training the next generation of men called to serve the church as elders. Thankfully it appeared that God was continuing to raise up men at LBC who have pastoral ministry in their future. Intentional discipleship was needed to both train and evaluate these men for ministry as elders. Their training in ministry would bless them, their families, and the congregation of LBC. No training or evaluation was available, and LBC had an opportunity to steward the lives of these men and their families by equipping them to serve as elders.

The congregation has much to gain from well-trained elders. Sheep need shepherds. The better equipped and trained the lay elders are, the more effective their ministry will be among the congregation. LBC has opportunity to strengthen itself

spiritually as a congregation by identifying, training and testing its next generation of elders.

### **Rationale**

While LBC is currently enjoying peace and unity as a congregation, it is necessary for LBC to develop future leaders for multiple reasons. First, it will bless the congregation. Ephesians 4:11-14 indicates that pastors are given to the church to prepare church members for ministry and maturity. The local congregation at LBC will profit from having men trained and equip to lead and minister as pastors.

Second, continuing to train elders will help ensure healthy leadership in the future of Liberty Baptist. Healthy church leadership cannot be taken for granted. One way to provide for the health of church leadership into the future is to continually identify and train men for ministry.

Third, training men for pastoral ministry will likely result in other churches being strengthened and blessed. As men grow in their ability and passion to serve the Lord, some will likely be called away by God to serve other churches. Whether in full-time or lay capacities, these men will bring with them a maturity and ability to serve the church that was developed while at LBC.

Finally, training men for ministry will help keep the current eldership healthy. By continually training other men for ministry, the current eldership will be reminded of the importance and responsibility of eldership. Too many elderships get in a rut and forget the significance of what they're doing. Continually looking to identify and train men will keep the importance of ministry before them.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to prepare an elder training plan for those aspiring to the office of elder at Liberty Baptist Church of Dalhart, Texas.

## **Goals**

This project was governed by three goals. These goals are as follows:

1. The first goal was to survey a committee of ministers to identify the necessary components of an elder training plan.
2. The second goal was to develop an elder training plan.
3. The third goal was to have current church officers adopt an elder training plan.

## **Research Methodology**

The three goals were used to accomplish this ministry project. Definitive research methodology measured when these goals had been accomplished.<sup>2</sup>

The first goal was to survey a committee to identify the necessary components of an elder training plan. This committee was made up of ten pastors who were committed to plurality of eldership and a similar philosophy of ministry to that of LBC. This group answered survey questions that helped build the content of the Elder Training Plan (ETP). This goal was completed upon the submission of each participant's survey answers. This goal was considered successfully met when all ten pastors completed the survey by March 2021, and the survey results were summarized.<sup>3</sup>

The second goal was to develop an elder training plan. This curriculum was known as the Elder Training Plan (ETP).<sup>4</sup> This plan was evaluated by a group consisting of the current elders, one pastor of a local church without elders, and one pastor of a local church with a plurality of elders.<sup>5</sup> This team utilized a rubric to determine whether the content of the curriculum was biblically faithful, comprehensive, and spiritually

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<sup>2</sup> All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

<sup>3</sup> See appendix 1.

<sup>4</sup> See appendix 2.

<sup>5</sup> This group did not include the individuals who worked on the training components list.

profitable to the potential candidate.<sup>6</sup> This goal was considered successfully met when the evaluation team scored the curriculum as “sufficient” according to the rubric. Any aspect of the manual that was not sufficient was revised and resubmitted for review until it was considered sufficient according to the rubric.

The third goal was to have the current church officers adopt the elder training plan. The men in this group participated in a training that overviewed the various elements of the plan. They had opportunity to ask questions and present concerns regarding the ETP. If any aspect of the manual was not sufficient, then it was revised and resubmitted for review until it gained approval. This goal was measured by a vote. This goal was considered successfully met when at least a two-thirds majority of the current leadership voted to implement the training curriculum.

### **Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations**

The following definition was used in the ministry project:

*Elder.* The terms elder (*presbuteros*), overseer (*episkopos*), and shepherd/pastor (*poimen*) are used interchangeably throughout Scripture to refer to the same office in the church (1 Pet 5:1-5).<sup>7</sup> The term used most frequently throughout Scripture is “elder.”<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, to many this term has taken on connotations that are neither biblical nor accurate. Alexander Strauch states, “Although the term elder is the predominate New Testament term used to describe local church leaders and is especially suited to the nature of the New Testament churches, it conveys to the overwhelming majority of Christians and non-Christians today ideas that are different from those found in the New Testament.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See appendix 3.

<sup>7</sup> All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>8</sup> The term *elder* is used 21 times in the New Testament when referring to the office of a leader in the church. The term *overseer* is used five times. The term *shepherd* (pastor in some versions) is used twice.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership* (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth, 1995), 31.

While few evangelical churches use the term “overseer” to refer to their leaders, many churches use the terms *elder* and *pastor*. Some churches use *pastor* to refer to leaders who are on staff, while *elder* is used to refer to leaders not on staff. The New Testament does not make such a distinction. The terms *elder* and *pastor* are used synonymously and interchangeably throughout this project.

One limitation was applied to this project. The accuracy of the evaluation rubric will be dependent upon the willingness of the evaluation committee to be honest about their knowledge and understanding of pastoral ministry and training.

Three delimitations were placed on the project. First, the project addressed a training plan for aspiring pastors specifically but not Christian men in general. Most of the material in the training plan was beneficial for anyone, but it was tailored for those pursuing pastoral ministry. Second, the project was confined to a twenty-week timeframe. This timeframe gave adequate time to prepare, review, and approve the training manual. Finally, this project was limited to the preparation of the manual and not the actual training of the men since the exact amount of time necessary to train was unknown.

### **Conclusion**

God has given local church pastors not only the opportunity to train and evaluate aspiring pastors, but the command to do so. While busyness and distractions in ministry are abundant, the responsibility to train men for pastoral ministry cannot be ignored. The pastor of a small church with many ministry demands may feel he has no time to train men, but the reality is that there is hardly a better way for him to use his time than to multiply the ministry effectiveness of his church by training men for ministry.

CHAPTER 2  
THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR  
TRAINING AND TESTING ASPIRING ELDERS  
AT LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH

**Introduction**

Aspiring elders should be trained and tested by a local church and its elders. This chapter will examine four New Testament passages that highlight the necessity of training and testing men who aspire to pastoral ministry. The passages will be grouped under three main headings. The first will establish the components of the command for godly men to train and test aspiring elders (2 Tim 2:2). The second will define the character, content, and competency that is to be trained and tested (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). The third will explain that mature elders are to train and test aspiring elders in the areas of shepherding and stewarding God's flock (1 Pet 5:1-5).

**Training and Testing: Components of  
the Command (2 Tim 2:2)**

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul instructs Timothy to commit to long-range pastoral discipleship. This commitment is long-range in that it involves multiple cohorts of discipleship. One can actually distinguish four occasions on which the baton of pastoral discipleship was passed along when Paul writes to Timothy: "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2). Paul (first baton pass) taught Timothy (second baton pass), who was to teach faithful men (third baton pass), who were to teach others also (fourth baton pass). Paul articulates a long-range outlook on training and testing men for years to come.

The books of 1 and 2 Timothy, themselves, are an example of a more experienced man giving direction and instruction to a younger man. Paul is writing these



books to Timothy in order to entrust Timothy with the gospel. He then charges Timothy with the responsibility to “entrust” this message to others. The gospel message was entrusted to future generations for safekeeping. One Greek lexicon states that this entrusting was “for safekeeping or transmission to others.”<sup>1</sup> The gospel is to be entrusted from one generation to another and is passed on by men who have been trained and tested by others.

The method outlined in this single verse is of great value for men in ministry today because churches are still discipling aspiring pastors the same way Paul and Timothy did. Four distinct components to this verse need to be considered. First, one must understand what it means to *entrust* something to someone. Second, one must have clarity as to what *apostolic doctrine* is. Third, *faithful men* must be defined. Last, their *ability to teach* others must be well defined.

### **Entrusted**

The gospel must be safeguarded and passed along from experienced elders to aspiring elders, and this must be done over and over. Paul has already addressed the fact that Timothy has been entrusted with the gospel (1 Tim 1:14). Now he must take that same treasure and entrust it to others. I. Howard Marshall makes this point by stating, “The true teaching is preserved and spread by passing it to responsible people who will preserve it unchanged.”<sup>2</sup> Paul is concerned with making sure the gospel is passed on.

While human effort is necessary for this entrusting to take place, no man can bear the responsibility of this deposit in his own strength. In 1 Timothy 1:14, Paul says, “By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.” The

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<sup>1</sup> William F. Arndt, Walter Baur, and Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 772.

<sup>2</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 726.

power of the Holy Spirit is necessary to be a faithful deliverer of the gospel to others. In their excellent commentary, Thomas Lea and Hayne Griffin state, “The task of preserving the truth of the gospel is so demanding and difficult that human strength alone cannot assure it. Maintaining the purity of the gospel demands the might and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>3</sup> This task demands both human effort and the power of God.

Paul is looking for guardians—men who can be entrusted with the treasure of the gospel. Entrusting a man with the gospel could only happen after some period of training and testing. Philip Towner makes it clear that “‘entrusting’ the gospel was not simply a matter of a tap on the shoulder; it would require Timothy to teach and model the faith (1:11-12; 3:10-17).”<sup>4</sup> This training and testing work is time-consuming “life-on-life” discipleship. Therefore, the treasure of the gospel (further discussed in the next section) must be entrusted to men that will entrust it to other men. This long-range approach is God’s way of seeing future generations of pastors and churches grow in the gospel.

### **Apostolic Doctrine**

The message being entrusted was Christian doctrine, or what is commonly known as apostolic doctrine. Here Paul refers to it as “what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses” (v. 2a). Paul had spoken the gospel of Jesus Christ to Timothy in the presence of many witnesses. J. N. D. Kelly writes, “The verb (Gk. *paratithesthai*) is related to the noun (Gk. *paratheke*) used in 1:12 and 14 (also 1 Tim 4:20) of the orthodox Christian message which is committed to Paul and Timothy as a sacred trust.”<sup>5</sup> Paul wanted to make sure that the gospel would be faithfully entrusted to

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 169.

<sup>4</sup> Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 491.

<sup>5</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles: I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus*, Black's New Testament Commentaries, vol. 14 (London: A & C Black, 1963), 172.

men who would pass it on. He makes the primacy of the gospel message clear to the Corinthians when he writes, “I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2). His teaching on the Christian faith was clear and confirmed by many witnesses. Paul was exhorting Timothy to train men to know a very specific body of doctrine.

The task of training men to know well the apostolic doctrine would have been significant, especially considering the fact that a physical copy of the New Testament would not have been available to “pass on” at this point in history. It would have been critical that these men be thoroughly trained and tested in Christian doctrine. The early Christian leaders would have passed on the gospel message and Christian doctrine primarily orally and would likely have had to commit to memory the apostolic doctrine. Therefore, Paul’s words to pass on “what you have heard,” were quite literally true.

### **Faithful Men**

Paul instructs Timothy to find a specific kind of man to whom he would entrust the gospel. He was to find *faithful* men. Paul and Timothy are concerned with passing on the truth of the gospel, and their first criteria is to make sure the men who will steward this good news are faithful.

These men must be faithful. They must be trustworthy. George Knight states, “*Pistoi* is not used in this setting to designate them as ‘believing’ (which is assumed) but as ‘trustworthy’ and ‘dependable,’ ones to whom one can ‘entrust’ such important truths.”<sup>6</sup> There should be no doubt in the mind of the mentor that these men believe the doctrine, will continue believing the doctrine, and will entrust to others the doctrine.

How can the church know if a man is faithful? He must be trained and tested. Training and testing are the responsibility of seasoned ministers. Only God can perfectly

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<sup>6</sup> George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 292.

know the faithfulness of a man, yet church leaders are called upon to make the assessment of a man's faithfulness. Godly, experienced men are needed to judge another man's life to determine if he is faithful.

### **Able to Teach**

Last, though faithfulness is critical, it is not the only trait Paul is commending in this passage. Aspiring elders must also have the ability to teach other men. Men who will carry the gospel message forward must be men who are able to take that gospel message and teach it to others. In an oral culture this would have been especially important. It would have been critical that a man could explain with his words the truth of Christianity. In Towner's words, "This ability is an important key to the success of the process envisioned."<sup>7</sup> This ability is no less important today. To determine the ability to teach, Timothy would have tested and evaluated the men to whom he was entrusting the gospel message. He would have listened to them teach and determined whether they had the ability to instruct others in gospel content.

In summary, 2 Timothy 2:2 makes clear that seasoned church leaders must disciple other men in ministry. Alexander Strauch argues that modern churches must continue the process of entrusting: "A good eldership will be praying and looking for capable men to join them and will be conscientiously training and preparing men for future leadership."<sup>8</sup> A church eldership will do this by entrusting doctrine to faithful men who will teach others the same thing.

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<sup>7</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 491.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership* (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth, 1995), 278.

## **Training and Testing: Character, Competence, and Content (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9)**

While 2 Timothy 2:2 makes clear the components of the command for seasoned elders to train and test aspiring elders, Paul more thoroughly describes in other passages the *kind* of man that a minister is supposed to be. In his first letter to Timothy and his letter to Titus, Paul specifies the qualifications a man must meet to be one of those entrusted with apostolic doctrine. Titus and 1 Timothy include two of the most well-known passages regarding the qualifications for pastoral ministry. Aspiring ministers must be trained and evaluated in three specific areas that are clearly seen in these passages. They must be men who possess exemplary character, ministerial competence, and knowledge of theological content.

### **Character**

An aspiring elder must be tested and trained in the area of character. Paul enumerates a lengthy list of necessary qualifications to both Timothy and Titus. William Mounce explains, “Paul is concerned that the right *type* of person be appointed to leadership, a person whose personal qualities set him apart.”<sup>9</sup> Paul’s apostolic list of moral qualifications in these passages requires testing and training for Christian character of pastoral candidates. The following discussion addresses each qualification.<sup>10</sup>

The call to be “above reproach” (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6) seems to serve as a summary statement for all that follows. Lea and Griffin state, “The etymology of the word suggests the meaning ‘not to be taken hold of.’ It describes a person of such character that no one can properly bring against him a charge of unfitness.”<sup>11</sup> An elder must not be

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<sup>9</sup> William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 159.

<sup>10</sup> The lists given in Timothy and Titus have a great deal of overlap, which one would expect, since Paul is the author of both letters and is detailing the qualifications for elders in both instances. Taken together, the passages list nineteen relatively distinct character qualifications.

<sup>11</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 109.

apprehended by moral character defects. He is not perfect, but no character flaws should exist that make it difficult for others to receive ministry from him. His life must confirm the message of the gospel rather than cloud or distract from it.

He must also be the “husband of one wife” (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6). This qualification is likely the most disputed. Scholars have suggested the following interpretations as options: (1) the man must be married, (2) he must not be polygamous, (3) he cannot ever have been divorced or remarried for any circumstance, or (4) he must be sexually faithful to his wife. Without room for a full treatment of this question here, it is my position that an elder must be faithful to his one wife, if he is married. Lea and Griffin confer, “It is better to see Paul having demanded that the church leader be faithful to his one wife. The Greek describes the overseer literally as a ‘one-woman kind of man.’”<sup>12</sup> Thus, Paul requires aspiring elders to be tested and trained for their marital commitment.

Pastoral ministry also calls for the clear-headed thinking called for in the term “sober minded” (1 Tim 3:2). Explaining this term, Mounce writes, “In the NT it describes a sobriety of judgment, clearmindedness, with the nuance of self-control.”<sup>13</sup> This phrase is not referring to his abstention from the intoxicating effects of alcohol, which will be addressed in point later in this section.

Paul turns next to the idea of being “self-controlled” (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8). The elder must not be a slave to compulsive or inordinate appetites. Towner explains, “The term covers a range of meaning (prudence, moderation, sobriety), but gives the general sense of control over one’s behavior and the impulses and emotions beneath it.”<sup>14</sup> He must not be lazy, gluttonous, addicted, or inappropriately obsessed. Self-control is vital

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<sup>12</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 109-10.

<sup>13</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 173.

<sup>14</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 252.

for a minister, as the temptations to binge, indulge, and engage in lazy behavior come in many forms.

Next, an elder must be “respectable” (1 Tim 3:2). It is nearly impossible for followers to listen to a leader who is not respectable. Again, Towner helpfully explains that the term “occurs frequently alongside ‘self-control’ in the literature, the two together completing a picture of honorable and dignified bearing.”<sup>15</sup> A pastor must live honorably. He should live in a way worthy of imitation.

Additionally, he must be “hospitable” (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8) An elder must be ready to welcome people into his home and to serve people by means of providing food, shelter, safety, and the gospel. When Paul wrote to Timothy, this qualification had a more necessary function than the reader realizes today. Hospitality then was not merely being skilled in hosting people in a well-decorated house. Towner writes, “Given the dangers of travel in the empire and the economic uncertainties faced by many believers, the early Christian mission and churches depended on those who would open their homes and share their goods.”<sup>16</sup> Today, the minister’s home may often serve as counseling office, late-night diner, hospital, or hotel.<sup>17</sup>

An elder also must “not [be] a drunkard” (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7). Luke Timothy Johnson states that the term “*paroinos* can only refer to a literal indulgence in wine to the point of addiction.”<sup>18</sup> One of the ways in which the pastor’s self-control is demonstrated, is in his relationship to intoxicating beverages. Many have used this phrase to prohibit all use of alcohol, but this passage does not make such a prohibition, though it does clearly

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<sup>15</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 252.

<sup>16</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 252.

<sup>17</sup> For an extensive treatment of biblical hospitality with modern day applications, see Rosaria Butterfield’s, *The Gospel Comes with a House Key* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).

<sup>18</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, The Anchor Bible Commentary, vol. 35 (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 215.

state that drunkenness is sinful. Mounce states, “The word is a compound of *παρὰ*, ‘alongside of,’ and *οἶνος* ‘wine.’ The picture is of a person who spends too much time sitting with their wine.”<sup>19</sup> An elder must be known for his exemplary behavior in relationship to all intoxicating and addictive substances.

Furthermore, an elder is “not violent” (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7). This trait is often linked to the one previous. Drunkenness often leads to fighting. Describing this word, Mounce writes, “Its cognates continue the imagery of one who strikes and beats.” An elder must not be a bully or fighter. His way is that of a shepherd. He must be gentle and kind toward the sheep.

“Gentleness” (1 Tim 1:3) is the positive trait of the preceding forbidden trait. One Greek lexicon describes this term as “not insisting on every right of letter of law or custom, yielding, gentle, kind, courteous, tolerant.”<sup>20</sup> He must not be violent, but rather must be gentle with the flock of God.

Moreover, an elder must “not [be] quarrelsome” (1 Tim 3:3). Many people (elders included) seem to be constantly involved in debates, arguments, and fights. The elder of God’s flock must not be engaged in constant arguments with others. He is to stand for the truth, but he must do so without consistently being argumentative. An elder must be able to “make a point without making an enemy.”<sup>21</sup>

An elder also must “not [be] a lover of money” (1 Tim 3:3) or “greedy for gain” (Titus 1:7). The pastor is a servant of God, and “no man can serve to masters” (Matt 6:24). This does not mean that a pastor must be poor, but he cannot “labor to be rich” (Prov 23:4). He must be content in his relationship with God (Heb 13:5).

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<sup>19</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 175.

<sup>20</sup> Arndt, Bauer, and Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 371.

<sup>21</sup> This quotation is attributed to Isaac Newton.



He must also “not [be] a recent convert” (1 Tim 3:6). Growth in Christ takes place over the course of time, and a minister must spend time growing. Waiting for some period of time after a man’s conversion to appoint him to pastoral ministry gives that man time to grow into greater Christlikeness and humility.<sup>22</sup> According to Lea and Griffin, “The danger of appointing a recent convert to a place of leadership is that he may become a victim of conceit that comes with his important new position.”<sup>23</sup> Good pastors need time to grow and mature. This time component cannot be rushed.

An elder must also be “well thought of by outsiders” (1 Tim 3:7). Not only must an overseer have a good reputation inside the church, but he must also have a good reputation outside the church. The unbelieving world is watching, and they will judge him based on what they observe in his life (Matt 5:16; John 13:35). Therefore, it is important that a man in ministry do no harm to the cause of Christ and fall into “disgrace, into a snare of the devil” (1 Tim 3:7). Again, Lea and Griffin point out, “When church leaders live in such a way that unsaved outsiders refuse to listen to their message, the devil has clearly lured believers into a trap.”<sup>24</sup>

Arguably one of the most important qualifications is that an elder “not [be] arrogant” (Titus 1:7). Stated positively, he must be humble. Pride is named first in a list of seven things God hates (Prov 6:16). Pastors often possess theological education and understanding that leads to pride and arrogance. The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* explains, “In the two passages in which ἀθάδης occurs in the NT; the reference is to human impulse violating obedience to the divine command. In both cases it is religious leaders who are exposed to this danger or succumb to it.”<sup>25</sup> Pastors can be so

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<sup>22</sup> This period of time is subjective and dependent on any number of variables.

<sup>23</sup> Lea and Griffin, *I, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 113.

<sup>24</sup> Lea and Griffin, *I, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 114.

<sup>25</sup> Gerhard Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:509.

arrogant as to disobey God, thinking they know better or are an exception. An elder must model the humility of the Chief Shepherd.

An elder must also not be “quick-tempered” (Titus 1:7). Lea and Griffin highlight the importance of this characteristic:

“Not quick-tempered” is a necessary prerequisite for leading people. One who cannot control his own emotions cannot exercise proper judgment over church matters, especially those issues that inevitably evoke strong feelings. This qualification may not preclude an elder’s strong personal feelings concerning any given issue. It does prohibit an impulsive or divisive reaction that would do more to complicate the problem than to solve it.<sup>26</sup>

Ministry is hard, and ministers will be sinned against, lied about, dishonored, disrespected, opposed, and gossiped about; yet, the pastor must not be quick-tempered.

Furthermore, he must be a “lover of good” (Titus 1:8). The man in ministry must have a heart that pursues good things. He must not be entertained by things that are corrupt, false, or ethically questionable. The pursuit of good is commended for all Christians (Phil 4:8) and required for elders.

Likewise, he must be “upright” (Titus 1:8). An elder must be a man who does right in the sight of God. The *Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* defines this term as “conforming to the standard, will, or character of God; upright, righteous, good; just, right; proper; in a right relationship with God; fair, honest; innocent.”<sup>27</sup> The man of God must know and conform to the character of God.

He must similarly be “holy” (Titus 1:8). An elder must be devoted to doing right. Knight writes, “‘Holy’ is used here of one who is ‘devout, pious, pleasing to God’”<sup>28</sup> He is devout and singular in his devotion to the work of God.

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<sup>26</sup> Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 283.

<sup>27</sup> Barclay Newman, *A Concise Greek English Dictionary of the New Testament* (Rochester, NY: National Braille Association, Braille Book Bank, 1971), 46.

<sup>28</sup> Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 292.

Finally, he must be “disciplined” (Titus 1:8). While this term overlaps in meaning with the term “self-controlled” listed previously, it is not perfectly synonymous. Towner clarifies the distinction by stating, “The term overlaps with ‘self-control’ but emphasizes more the control of the body and appetites, whereas ‘self-control’ has more to do with the thought life and subsequent behavior.”<sup>29</sup> The undershepherd of God’s sheep must be a man whose life is marked by discipline in his passions and practices.

It is clear, God is concerned with the *kind* of man an elder is. He must be a man who faithfully lives out the basics of the Christian life. While these qualifications are in many ways exhaustive, they are not traits that are exhausting. The man of God is called to be holy. He is called upon to be conspicuously holy. In reference to an aspiring elder’s character, Dave Harvey writes, “In 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 we see extraordinary evidences of God’s activity.”<sup>30</sup> All men are called to be holy, but the man aspiring for eldership is held to this standard in order to serve as a shepherd of the flock of God. He is not extraordinary in his character, but he must be exemplary (1 Cor 11:1; 1 Thess 1:6). An elder is not called to a higher standard than any other of God’s people. D. A. Carson writes, “The most remarkable feature of this list is that it is unremarkable. It contains nothing about intelligence, decisiveness, drive, wealth, power. Almost everything on the list is elsewhere in the New Testament required of all believers.”<sup>31</sup> Every Christian man should strive to meet the character qualifications of an elder, but elders must meet them in order to serve God’s church.

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<sup>29</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 690.

<sup>30</sup> Dave Harvey, *Am I Called?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 74.

<sup>31</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Cross and Christian Leadership: Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 95.

## Competence

Second, an aspiring elder must be trained and tested in his ability to do the work of ministry. Character is not the only area of qualification that a minister must possess. He must also have the competency necessary to accomplish the work God has given him. Like any tradesman, the elder must have the ability to do the work to which God has called him.

His ability to lead God's church is seen first in his ability to lead his own family in the things of the Lord. The parallel between managing one's household and managing the church of God is stated directly: "If someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church" (1 Tim 3:5). The skill in managing both is similar. "The argument moves from the 'lesser' to the 'greater,'"<sup>32</sup> says, Knight. The ability to lead one's family is similar to the skill needed to lead the body of Christ. Towner states, "Management in the household becomes something of a template for management in the church."<sup>33</sup> While maintaining that it is not necessary that an elder be married, Marshall explains, "There is an analogy between caring for an ordinary household and caring for the household of God, which makes a working knowledge of the former a condition for success at the latter, and implies that the same qualities are required in both spheres."<sup>34</sup> If one cannot lead his home, he cannot lead Christ's church.

Second, the most directly stated ability an elder must possess is the ability to teach God's Word to others (1 Tim 3:2). A pastor must be able to study, understand, and clearly explain God's Word. In his role as minister, there is no more important competency. Teaching is one of the defining duties of an elder. Mounce writes, "This is one of the more

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<sup>32</sup> Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 162.

<sup>33</sup> Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 256.

<sup>34</sup> Marshall, *Pastoral Epistles*, 481.

significant requirements of an overseer and sets him apart from deacons. The elders are the teachers.”<sup>35</sup> The ability to teach is not an optional competency in pastoral ministry.

The purpose for the ability to teach is spelled out even more clearly in Titus 1:9, where Paul gives two reasons a man must be able to teach. Paul explains that an elder must have the ability “so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.” An elder’s ability to teach Scripture is not to earn compliments from listeners. He must have the ability to teach in order to instruct and rebuke.

He must have the ability to teach, first of all, to instruct others. He is called to disciple the flock using the Word of God. His ability to instruct is the means God uses to grow the church. The pastor is the voice of God inasmuch as he speaks God’s Word to God’s people. The more capably he does this, the more Word-formed the church will be.

The second reason the elder must hold firm to the Word is so that he may refute error. Already, in the church at Crete, there were those who had forsaken the truth of the gospel and needed correction. Paul knew this, and he also knew the remedy: the trustworthy Word. An elder’s authority does not reside in his position, knowledge, or even character. His authority resides in the “trustworthy word as taught” (Titus 1:9). Much of pastoral ministry is standing up in opposition to the “winds of doctrine” and “deceitful schemes” (Eph 4:14).

Aspiring elders must be able to manage the household of God and teach the Word of God. These skills do not come naturally to most men, and therefore must be learned. Pastoral competencies must be trained and taught to men who will serve the church faithfully.

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<sup>35</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 174.

## Content

Finally, an aspiring elder must know the content of Scripture. Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus contain a great deal of similarity, yet Titus 1:9 provides some unique content worthy of consideration. Paul tells Titus that the man seeking eldership must "hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it." One phrase in particular is worthy of its own heading in the qualifications of a pastor. "To hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught" is an important phrase to which aspiring elders must commit themselves. In this way, Titus 1:9 emphasizes the need for doctrinal knowledge and commitment from aspiring elders.

Men in pursuit of eldership must be trained to *hold* something. Jerome Quinn, in his commentary, says an elder must be "completely attached to God's message, that is, to the logos of [Titus] 1:3."<sup>36</sup> He must hold to the trustworthy Word.

Elders must know the apostolic doctrine. Mounce states, "This requirement of church leaders adds a theological dimension to a predominantly moral list of virtues, and this devotion provides the basis for exhortation and rebuke (v9b)."<sup>37</sup> Elders must know doctrine, and they must hold firm to it. While a man may have noteworthy character, the ability to manage his house, and the ability to teach, if he doesn't know doctrine, he cannot be an elder. He must know the content of the Christian faith.

The passages in 1 Timothy and Titus, which list the qualifications for elders, are clear in their expectations. An elder must be a man with proven character, pastoral competencies, and knowledge of the content of the Word of God. He will not be a perfect man, but he must be a man who meets these qualifications. The church must continue to train and test future elders in these areas.

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<sup>36</sup> Jerome D. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus*, The Anchor Yale Bible Commentary, vol. 35 (New York: Doubleday, 2005), 92.

<sup>37</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 391.

### **Training and Testing: Shepherding and Stewardship (1 Pet 5:1-4)**

Paul was not the only apostle who gave instructions on preparing the next generation of pastors. In 1 Peter 5:1-4 Peter adds his voice to Paul's on the topic of qualifications for ministry. This passage models the truth that seasoned elders must exhort other leaders to be faithful shepherds and stewards of God's flock. Peter's words to the elders were full of hard-earned wisdom and love for the Chief Shepherd. In his exhortation to the other elders in this passage Peter employs the shepherd metaphor found throughout the Bible. John Elliot writes, "The terms employed here involve a single pastoral image of the community as the 'flock (*poimnion*) of God,' with Christ as 'chief shepherd' (*archipoimen*), (v 4a) and the elders as 'shepherding' (*poimainein*) the flock and exercising oversight (*episkopountes*)."<sup>38</sup>

Surely Peter remembers the words of his Lord on the shore of the sea of Galilee, "feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17). Peter knew the words of Ezekiel to the shepherds of Israel. Ezekiel spoke words of rebuke and correction to the shepherds because of their selfishness and sinfulness (Ezek 34:1-10). Peter knew he had been an unfaithful shepherd but had been graciously forgiven by the Chief Shepherd. The shepherding metaphor was clear in Peter's mind. Now Peter exhorts other elders using that same metaphor.

It is important to notice the nature of Peter's exhortation. Elliot states that the word *exhort* is "ranging in tone between a request and a command."<sup>39</sup> Peter's instruction here is more than a recommendation. The authority of Peter's apostolic position would have been sufficient to cause these men to listen closely, but Peter is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. His authority is divine. He is going to teach, with authority, that these shepherds must give their attention to the flock of God. They will be held

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<sup>38</sup> John H. Elliot, *1 Peter*, The Anchor Yale Bible Commentary, vol. 37b (New York: Random House, 2000), 822.

<sup>39</sup> Elliot, *1 Peter*, 816.

accountable by the Chief Shepherd. This exhortation is clearly meant to be instructive and obeyed.

His exhortation seems to divide into two primary emphasis. First, he calls upon elders to shepherd the flock of God. Second, he reminds elders that they are stewards of the flock who will give an account to the Chief Shepherd upon His return.

### **Shepherding**

Peter exhorts the men to utilize specific skills in their ministry to the church. He uses the metaphor of shepherding throughout this passage to highlight the nature of pastoral ministry. The imagery of the shepherding metaphor is very directly connected to the skills necessary in ministry. Peter is commanding these elders to skillfully shepherd the church of God. This would not have produced a vague notion to the men he was addressing. Shepherding was an occupation with which they were familiar and understood clearly. They knew the hard work and skill necessary to do the work of shepherding. Elliot helpfully explains, “Shepherding included such activities as leading, guiding, gathering, feeding, and defending a flock.”<sup>40</sup> The term *shepherding* assumes the idea of giving attention to all the needs and concerns of the sheep. Peter is calling upon men in ministry to consider their responsibility for God’s people as similar to responsibilities of a shepherd. This work of shepherding is further clarified in 1 Peter 5:2-3.

The image of a shepherd on a hillside looking over his flock is helpful for envisioning how pastors oversee their churches. This oversight is further defined by three sets of *not . . . but* phrases. Peter writes that the shepherds of a church must serve as overseers, “not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock” (vv. 2-3).

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<sup>40</sup> Elliot, *1 Peter*, 822.



First, shepherds must not lead under compulsion, but willingly. Elliot explains, “Elders should not feel compelled or constrained to take up the task of shepherding but do it willingly.”<sup>41</sup> It is possible that in some church contexts a man may feel pressured to serve in the capacity of elder, but this pressure is not a reason to serve as a pastor. A man must serve because he willingly desires to do so. Paul Achtemeier explains it as “a willingness to carry out their duties in accordance with what God wants, rather than simply to be enthusiastic about what they do.”<sup>42</sup>

Second, it was “not for shameful gain, but eagerly” (1 Pet 5:2). There is a temptation in ministry for a man to acquire wealth by illegitimate means. Tom Schreiner says, “The danger exists that they will resort to dishonest gain and embezzle funds in some fashion. The same term is used in Titus 1:7 (*aischrokerdōs*), where Paul instructed Titus not to appoint elders who desire dishonest gain (cf. also 1 Tim 3:3).”<sup>43</sup> The first part of the word, *aischros*, means “shameful or dishonest,” and the second part of the word, *kerdos*, means “gain.” This compound Greek word emphasizes that this is financial profit gotten by illegitimate means.

Pastors should not pastor simply to make money. Though it is clear in Scripture that a pastor can be compensated for his work (Matt 10:10; 1 Cor 9:3-14; 1 Tim 5:17-18), the point emphasized here is that elders should not be in ministry for the money. Ministry is not a business through which men should make plans to become rich. Ministry is to be done “eagerly.” Peter Davids helps writes, “This term indicates zeal, energy, and enthusiasm for the job, and such enthusiasm is the opposite of the calculating spirit that is concerned mainly with how to make money.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Elliot, *1 Peter*, 827.

<sup>42</sup> Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 326.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude*, The New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 234-35.

<sup>44</sup> Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New

Last, Peter told them to shepherd “not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock” (1 Pet 5:3). Here, Peter is echoing what Paul wrote to Timothy and Titus regarding the need for exemplary character in the life of an elder. Christ himself instructed his disciples to be servants and slaves rather than “lording it [leadership] over them” (Mark 10:42). Shepherds should not manage sheep in a domineering and dictatorial way. Instead, their influence as shepherds should come in large part through their exemplary lives.

### **Stewarding**

A second emphasis in the 1 Peter passage provides motivation and perspective for the work of God’s shepherd. The idea of stewardship is emphasized in this passage as a thought that must be central in the mind of the elder that would shepherd God’s flock well.

The undershepherd is not the one ultimately in charge of the local church. There is a Shepherd who out-ranks him, the Chief-Shepherd. He is the One who is over all of the flock. This truth has already been stated in this passage when Peter calls the church “the flock of God” (v. 2). The church belongs to God. Schreiner states,

Jesus here is called “the Chief Shepherd” (*archipoimenos*), a rare term that occurs nowhere else in the New Testament or in the Septuagint. The designation of Jesus as the Chief Shepherd reminds the leaders that they are fundamentally servants, not autocrats. Their positions of leadership are a responsibility, not a privilege by which they advance their own status.<sup>45</sup>

Acts 20:28 makes this point powerfully and clearly when Luke writes, “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.”

God is the *owner* of the church. The sheep are His possession, and He is coming back. When a steward knows that the owner is going to return, he works with an awareness

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Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 180.

<sup>45</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 236.

that he is under accountability. The undershepherds of God's flock must live with the awareness that the church does not belong to them, but to Christ, who will reappear. The way in which the pastor stewards the flock matters. The author of Hebrews makes this point clear when he writes that church leaders "will have to give an account" (13:17).

Peter concludes his reminder, that shepherds are accountable stewards, with the promise of reward. The undershepherd will "receive the unfading crown of glory" (v. 4). Schreiner writes, "Peter contrasted the crown elders will receive with the leafy crowns bestowed in the Greco-Roman world. Such crowns were given after athletic victories or military conquests. Such crowns faded as time elapsed, but the crown given by God (cf. 1 Pet 5:10) will never fade."<sup>46</sup> There is debate as to the exact nature of this crown, but it certainly represents an eternal reward of some sort. Schreiner continues,

It is difficult to know if the crown is equivalent to eternal life itself or if it is a special reward for elders. In the other "crown" (*stephanos*) texts the reward is entrance into heaven itself (cf. 1 Cor 9:25; 2 Tim 4:8; Jas 1:12; Rev 2:10; 3:11). The usage in the rest of the New Testament slightly favors the latter notion. Elders can be confident that they will receive the greatest reward conceivable when the *eschaton* arrives.<sup>47</sup>

The Chief shepherd wants His undershepherds to be aware that a reward is promised. The motive of reward for faithful pastoral ministry is legitimate and good.

These exhortations to shepherd and steward were necessary for the men preparing for ministry in Paul's day and are no less necessary today. Men preparing for ministry must continue to be instructed and motivated in these same critical areas. They must shepherd and steward the flock of God for the glory of God, and they must be trained and tested to do so.

### **Conclusion**

The Scriptures make it clear that those aspiring to pastoral ministry must be trained and tested by existing local church elders. The passages in this chapter provide

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<sup>46</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 236.

<sup>47</sup> Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 236.

the command and components of training and testing; the character, competence, and content of training and testing; and an explanation of the shepherding and stewardship that must be trained and tested. These passages give clear instruction and motivation for current elders to provide training and testing for aspiring elders.

### CHAPTER 3

#### A SYNTHESIS OF LITERATURE ON THE TOPIC OF TRAINING MEN FOR MINISTRY

An African folk proverb claims, “It takes a village to raise a child.” A derivation of this statement applies to raising up the next generation of pastors: “It takes a church to raise an elder.” God has ordained that those aspiring to pastoral ministry need to be trained and tested by faithful men within the local church (2 Tim 2:2).<sup>1</sup> Brian Croft writes, “It is the local church that God has appointed to be the agent to test, train, affirm, and send those who are called.”<sup>2</sup> The church, and more specifically the current pastoral leadership in a church, is responsible to provide training and testing to aspiring elders. This happens when pastors are intentional with the God-given process of discipleship.

Churches must commit time and resources and have a plan for how they will develop men for ministry. This chapter will seek to address many of the practical issues that must be considered as pastors and churches train men for ministry. Throughout the history of the church many faithful pastors and ministries have established methods for training men for ministry. Therefore, this chapter will review relevant evangelical resources and synthesize pastoral training methods used in both contemporary settings and throughout history.<sup>3</sup> Current church leaders must be aware of the need to disciple aspiring elders in the areas of calling, character, competency, and conviction.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this chapter I refer to those aspiring to pastoral ministry as candidates, young men, future elders, disciples and aspiring elders/pastors/ministers. I refer to those who are doing the training as mentors, disciplers, pastors, current pastors/leadership/ministers, and occasionally the church.

<sup>2</sup> Brian Croft, *Test, Train, Affirm and Send into Ministry: Recovering the Local Church's Responsibility in the External Call*, Ministering the Master's Way (Leominster, England: DayOne, 2010), 33.

<sup>3</sup> The majority of books and articles used for this chapter are written by contemporary conservative evangelicals, though several resources were either written by historical figures or deal with

## Calling

Ministers commonly mention receiving a “call to ministry.”<sup>4</sup> Eighteenth century pastor Charles Bridges defines internal calling as “the voice and power of the Holy Ghost, directing the will and the judgment, and conveying personal qualifications.”<sup>5</sup> Many pastors include their call to ministry as part of their testimony. Some describe a specific moment when they believe they were called to ministry. Others recount a growing certainty that they were to pursue ministry. Often well-meaning and spiritually-sensitive young men make emotionally-charged decisions in a church service or at a camp meeting to surrender to the call of ministry. Unfortunately, this emotional decision can confuse a willingness to obey God with a call to ministry.

Discussion and evaluation of a man’s call is a necessary part of preparing him for ministry. The local church can help clarify a man’s call to ministry in several ways to strengthen his confidence in his call and clarify any potential confusion. Calling is generally considered in two senses—internal calling and external calling—and a church can help a man evaluate both.

### Evaluating Internal Calling

How might a church help an aspiring elder evaluate the internal call of God on his life? This can be surprisingly challenging to determine. The internal call is subjective and known ultimately only by the man himself; therefore, objective evaluation of internal calling is difficult. Yet there are ways a congregation can help a man understand his internal call. The phrase “called to ministry” can be helpful when it identifies a man’s

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how historical figures went about training men for ministry.

<sup>4</sup> For a thorough overview of the concept of calling, see Albert N. Martin, *The Man of God: His Calling and Godly Life* (Montville, NJ: Trinity Pulpit Press, 2018), 21-68.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry: With an Inquiry into the Causes of Its Inefficiency* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), 91.

desire to serve the Lord, but it can also be unhelpful when referring to a subjective notion of inner feelings or undefinable callings from God.

**Definition.** The first thing current leadership can do to help aspiring elders understand the call to ministry is to teach clearly the biblical definition of a *call to ministry*. Pastoral theologians have written about internal calling throughout the years. Pastors Derek Prime and Alistair Begg describe *calling* as “the unmistakable conviction an individual possesses that God wants him to do a specific task.”<sup>6</sup> While a definition like this is helpful, many men still find it difficult to discern a personal inward call. Are authors advocating listening for an audible voice, similar to many Old Testament calls to ministry? Are they advocating a subjective inward call in the “inner being”? Professor Gerald P. Cowen’s phrase, “a profound conviction that God has chosen one to serve,”<sup>7</sup> sounds compelling, and yet describing how that conviction comes from God to an individual proves much more challenging. Churches should begin by teaching that the internal call is most basically the desire for the work of ministry (1 Tim 3:1). Some men may have a more intense desire than others, and some may have a more subjective personal experience, yet the most basic understanding of calling is the *desire* to serve as an elder. Aspiring elders must first of all aspire to eldership.

Some have argued that desire alone is not enough to constitute an inward call.<sup>8</sup> Though, to argue that an inward call is more than desire leads quickly into the realm of subjectivity. Eighteenth century Southern Baptist Basil Manly, Jr. writes, “To make the

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<sup>6</sup> Derek J. Prime and Alistair Begg, *On Being a Pastor: Understanding Our Calling and Work* (Chicago: Moody, 2004), 18.

<sup>7</sup> Gerald P. Cowen, *Who Rules The Church? Examining Congregational Leadership and Church Government* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 29.

<sup>8</sup> Cowen uses examples from Old and New Testament to teach that God calls a man into specific ministry capacities with a calling that is more obvious than a desire for ministry. His primary argument is that a call must be more than a desire to be a pastor. Cowen’s position is that a man must have a special call beyond a desire—this constitutes an inner call. It is my opinion that Cowen then struggles to provide any definition or description of what that special call might look like. Cowen, *Who Rules the Church?*, 17-28.

call to the ministry consist in some supposed indubitable, irresistible, divine afflatus, of which no evidence is found except the confident impressions and assertions of the candidate, is clearly to open the door to all kinds of extravagance, imposture, and fanatical abuses.”<sup>9</sup> While a man may have an inward desire for ministry, certainty of calling is established when there is also an external call of a church. Therefore, candidates can be assured that an inner calling can be understood as a holy desire or aspiration for ministry. Presbyterian writer Alexander Strauch connects calling by the Holy Spirit and desire when he writes, “The Spirit planted the pastoral desire in their hearts.”<sup>10</sup>

Church leaders should be aware of two things as they evaluate the internal call of men desiring ministry. First, the internal call alone is an insufficient basis to appoint a man to ministry. Second, a man who demonstrates the other qualifications and gifts for ministry yet lacks the internal call should not be appointed to ministry. Therefore, the internal calling is necessary but alone is insufficient to determine a man’s call to ministry.

**Discussion.** Second, current leadership must be in discussion with men as they process their call to ministry. Navigating the internal desire to shepherd is, understandably, difficult for some men. Urban pastor Thabiti Anyabwile explains, “Some men may ‘want the office,’ but their wanting is really lust for power, and so they are not fit. Conversely, some men who are fit for the office think that wanting it shows pride, ungodly ambition or impoliteness.”<sup>11</sup> There should be an ongoing conversation between church leadership and men who believe they may be called to ministry. Phil Taylor, Executive Pastor of

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<sup>9</sup> Basil Manly, Jr., “A Call To the Ministry,” 9Marks, accessed September 28, 2020, <https://www.9marks.org/article/call-ministry/>.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership* (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth, 1995), 83.

<sup>11</sup> Thabiti M. Anyabwile, *Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons*, IX Marks Series (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 51.



Leadership and Development of Mosaic Church in Orlando, Florida, suggests that a pastor

ask him [the aspiring elder] about the journey to this place of desiring the role of Elder? How did the Spirit lead him in this? What does his wife think? You are just trying to see what is going on in his heart. You are looking for the motive. It doesn't need to be perfect, but it should not be glaringly evil. You want to hear answers like "I've always had this sense that I should be in church leadership, but I never knew what to do with that until the Pastor taught that sermon last month."<sup>12</sup>

Conversations like this will begin to help a man understand his sense of calling. This communication can be initiated by either party. Men in the church who think God might be leading them into ministry should humbly and submissively mention this desire to their current church leaders in order to process their inner call. Likewise, pastors should be on the lookout for men who show interest and aptitude in ministry. Simple conversations surrounding passion, desire, and one's future should be a normal part of pastoral discipleship with any church member, and especially those who are fruitful in ministry. This is basic discipleship and is a key factor in helping a man discern God's call on his life.

Current pastors can help a man discern his calling by encouraging him to work through questions that will evaluate his life and aspiration biblically. Dave Harvey provides six helpful diagnostic questions that emerge from 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 that can be used with great affect. These questions, from the chapters of his book are: "Are You Godly?" (chap. 4); "How's Your Home?" (chap. 5); "Can You Preach?" (chap. 6); "Can You Shepherd?" (chap. 7); "Do You Love the Lost?" (chap. 8); and "Who Agrees?" (chap. 9).<sup>13</sup> A wise elder can help aspiring elders tremendously simply by having the candidate work through these questions.

The local church is the very best place for this discussion to happen. Prime and

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<sup>12</sup> Phil Taylor, *Eldership Development: From Application to Affirmation* (Orlando: Floodlight Press, 2017), 13.

<sup>13</sup> Harvey, *Am I Called?*, 71-182.

Begg go so far as to say, “The best training a person can receive—sometimes almost unconsciously—is that within his own home church where he serves and proves himself.”<sup>14</sup> In this context a man can have a pressure-free way to explore his inner call carefully and under the care of his pastors.

**Biography.** Finally, current leadership can encourage men to read the biographies of men who have been called by God. Stories of men like John Bunyan, Charles Spurgeon, Martin Luther, and others serve as an example of how a man might grapple with a call to ministry. Matthew Haste and Shane Parker describe what can be learned about the call to ministry by reading of John Bunyan’s call to ministry.<sup>15</sup> Reading about how other men wrestled with their call to ministry and the process God brought them through is of great value for a young man considering his own call to ministry.

### **Evaluating External Calling**

God works through holy desires, but desire alone is insufficient to make a man a minister. A man who aspires to ministry must not only have the desire to serve the church, but the church must also have the desire for that man to serve. Bridges defines the external call as “a commission received from and recognized by the Church . . . not indeed qualifying the Minister, but accrediting him, whom God had internally and suitably qualified.”<sup>16</sup> Simply put, the external call is the actual call of a church to a minister.

Neither internal call nor external call is sufficient by itself. If a man has the call from a church but not the personal desire and aspiration for ministry, then he should not pursue ministry. Likewise, if a man does have the desire but a church does not recognize the call of God on his life, then he should not force himself into ministry. Thomas Oden

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<sup>14</sup> Prime and Begg, *On Being a Pastor*, 29.

<sup>15</sup> Matthew D. Haste and Shane W. Parker, *The Pastor’s Life: Practical Wisdom from the Puritans* (Glasgow, England: Christian Focus, 2019), 23-31.

<sup>16</sup> Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*, 91.

described well the interplay between the internal and external call:

The internal call is a result of the continued drawing or eliciting power of the Holy Spirit which in time brings an individual closer to the church's outward call to ministry. The external call is an act of the Christian community that by due process confirms that inward call. No one can fulfill the difficult role of Pastor adequately who has not been called and commissioned by Christ in the church. This is why the correspondence between inner and outer call is so crucial for both the candidate and the church to establish from the outset with reasonable clarity.<sup>17</sup>

Current church leadership should disciple an aspiring elder to understand the distinction between internal call and external call, as well as the interplay between the two.

Unfortunately, some men have viewed their subjective internal call as the only thing necessary to enter ministry. They assume that because they have an internal call, they should pursue ministry even when their church leadership may have hesitations. Some men have insisted that even if an ordination council were to deny them ordination, they would still press on with their pursuit of ministry because of their internal call.<sup>18</sup> The argument being that if a man is called by God then it does not matter what other men say. This understanding is not in keeping with Scripture.

Churches have the great opportunity and responsibility to instruct men, who are preparing for ministry, in their understanding of the call to ministry. They must be taught the difference between the internal call and external call. Internal desire is not enough—he must be evaluated, affirmed, and actually called to ministry by a local church. Otherwise, he is not called to ministry.

### **Character**

“An abundance of biblical knowledge or the dexterity of ministry skills is not the first test of the validity of one's desire for the pastoral ministry. Rather, Scripture

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<sup>17</sup> Thomas C. Oden, *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 25.

<sup>18</sup> Dayton Harmon describes how he wrongfully answered this very concern at his own ordination council. Dayton Harmon, “The Church Needs Fewer Men Who Feel ‘Called’ to Ministry,” 9Marks (blog), August 13, 2018, <https://www.9marks.org/article/the-church-needs-fewer-men-who-feel-called-to-ministry>.

makes the primary test that of godly character,” writes Irvin Busenitz.<sup>19</sup> While it is easy to see in Scripture what kind of character a man preparing for ministry must have (1 Tim 3; Titus 1), it can be difficult to determine objectively whether a man actually possesses that character. To their own harm, many churches choose to ignore or minimize the importance of biblical character simply because a man is outstanding in other areas of his life. For instance, a man might be a very successful businessman or a winsome speaker and yet not possess the character qualifications required by Scripture. Churches must not overlook these qualifications simply because a man is impressive in other areas.

A church will sometimes give more time and effort to evaluating a man’s competencies and convictions than to his character. Competence and conviction are of incredible importance and will be discussed at length later in this chapter, but biblical passages on the qualifications for elders give most of their attention to a man’s character. As pastors give attention to training and testing men for future ministry, it is of critical importance that those men be developed in their character. This means that current church leaders will need to take the responsibility to observe, evaluate, and strengthen aspiring ministers in their character. Contemporary Pastor Robert Thune states,

It’s the people around you—the people in community with you—who are the best judges of your character. For this reason, you must invite others into the process of character discernment. And you should expect that a healthy church will not move you toward leadership until you have been in gospel-saturated community for a long time, really allowing others into the nitty-gritty details of your life and soul.<sup>20</sup>

Basic Christian discipleship often includes this kind of one-on-one care, but when men are preparing for ministry it is critically important that evaluation in these areas be done deliberately and systematically. Croft helpfully states, “A practical definition of testing is the placing of an individual into different real-life circumstances to see how

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<sup>19</sup> Irvin A. Busenitz, “The Call to Pastoral Ministry,” in John MacArthur, *The Master’s Plan for the Church* (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 94.

<sup>20</sup> Robert H. Thune, *Gospel Eldership: Equipping a New Generation of Servant Leaders* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2016), 36.

he or she handles them. The best way to test men for the office of pastor, therefore, is to evaluate them in those life circumstances according to the qualifications for this office clearly mapped out for us in Scripture.”<sup>21</sup> The church and its leaders must be intentional about creating platforms and venues in which they can observe, assess, and strengthen the candidate’s character.

### **Observing Character**

Churches should establish intentional ways to observe the character of men aspiring for ministry. “It is helpful to have thorough processes that allow you to observe an individual’s character,” writes Juan Sanchez.<sup>22</sup> Sanchez then goes on to describe how, through formal and informal means, they evaluate men for ministry at High Pointe Baptist Church in Austin, Texas.

A man’s character is displayed in the way he deals with people. Many of the character qualifications listed in 1 Timothy and Titus are traits most clearly seen as one interacts with others.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, current elders will need to put themselves in situations where they can observe the aspiring elder interacting with others. This will take time and intentionality.

One of the most helpful relational venues in which to observe a man’s character is his family life. Dave Harvey writes, “The home offers the largest window on whether you meet the Scripture’s character qualifications for ministry.”<sup>24</sup> The current elder should work intentionally to orchestrate opportunities in which he can observe the aspiring elder interact with his wife and children. A wonderful way to do this is to schedule times to be

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<sup>21</sup> Croft, *Test, Train, Affirm and Send*, 62.

<sup>22</sup> Juan Sanchez, *The Leadership Formula* (Nashville: B & H, 2020), 66.

<sup>23</sup> For instance, above reproach, husband of one wife, respectable, hospitable, not violent, gentle, not quarrelsome, and well thought of by outsiders are all character traits that necessitate interaction with other people to determine if one is present or absent.

<sup>24</sup> Harvey, *Am I Called?*, 95.

in each other's homes. Another option is to schedule a weekend away together as families. The mentoring pastor should observe a man in real-life situations with his wife and (if applicable) children. Much will be seen in a man's character as he navigates the blessings and challenges of a weekend out of the normal routine. Thune states, "Character is best evaluated under pressure."<sup>25</sup> There will likely be moments of tension and difficulty. Moments like this provide valuable opportunity for evaluation.

Not only can a man's interaction with his family reveal character, but also the way he navigates the interaction with others in his daily life will put on display the kind of man he is. Those involved in the discipleship of a man aspiring to ministry should be intentional to observe the man in the routines of his daily life. For instance, if possible, a pastor should take time to observe a candidate in his work environment. Thune makes it clear that character evaluation does not happen best in a stress-free environment: "Rather, consider what you're like under pressure; an exhausting day at work, an emotionally draining ministry situation, a fight with your spouse."<sup>26</sup> A pastor can learn much about a man while observing his interactions with people who are in charge of him, people who are his peers, and people who work for him. Does he treat people differently based on their relationship to him? How does he interact with those who disagree with him? How does he interact with those who make work difficult for him? How does he interact with those who could potentially advance him in his work? Questions like these are important to consider because a man will pastor people in his church the same way he interacts with people at work.

Observing a man's character for ministry will take time and intentionality. Given the business of life, this kind of observation will not likely happen without the intentional scheduling of appointments for observation. Anyone can appear to be a man of virtue and

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<sup>25</sup> Thune, *Gospel Eldership*, 36.

<sup>26</sup> Thune, *Gospel Eldership*, 36.

integrity at a one-hour lunch meeting each week for a year, but to spend extended periods of time with a man in his home will likely provide a far more accurate understanding of his character.

While first-hand knowledge of a man and his character cannot be replaced, it is not always possible to spend time with a man in each area of his life. Therefore, credible references should be used where possible when determining a man's call to ministry. References that are willing to share both the strengths and weaknesses of a man are often helpful in confirming a man's call.

### **Assessing Character**

Along with character observation comes character assessment based on biblical truth. First, and of greatest importance, one must remember to assess character based on biblical criteria, not personal preference. When assessing character, it is ideal to have more than one person involved in the evaluation. Group observation allows for a more thorough assessment and will prevent the assessment from becoming a one-on-one, and potentially adversarial situation. If only one man is doing the assessing, it is easy for him to either miss something entirely or misunderstand the character of another man.

When assessing character, a current elder should help the aspiring elder by keeping before him the list of the biblical qualifications. An actual list of the qualifications listed in Timothy and Titus can be used by the candidate to self-assess. This list should be given to the candidate early on in his discipleship for ministry. Some pastors have prepared a "Qualifications Inventory."<sup>27</sup> Presenting this list early in a man's preparation will demonstrate the biblical priority of character. Any man preparing for ministry will possess weak areas in his character that need to be strengthened and developed.

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<sup>27</sup> See appendix 4 in Sanchez, *The Leadership Formula*, 199-204.

## **Strengthening Character**

After observation and assessment there must be coaching and recommendation for growth.<sup>28</sup> For any man, assessment of one's character can be a deeply humbling experience. The pastor must carefully and skillfully instruct the aspiring elder in the strengthening of his character. Several practical ideas should be considered.

First, the discipling pastor must clearly recognize and encourage the aspiring elder in areas in where grace is seen in his life. The man must be aware of God's work in moving him toward the goal of mature character.

Second, specific critique and related suggestions for how to grow will serve the aspiring elder more than vague generalities. Areas of weakness might remain because a man cannot see clearly how to change and grow. A mentor will help by offering detailed advice and instruction for how a man can strengthen areas of weakness in ministry.

Third, an aspiring elder will be motivated to grow as he observes his current pastoral leadership growing. In 1 Timothy 4:15, Paul encourages Timothy to give himself to the teaching he has received and to continue growing in order that Timothy's growth would be apparent to others. One of the most helpful ways to affect change in the lives of disciples is for disciplers to demonstrate continual growth themselves.

Fourth, men must understand that accountability will be the expectation in the future. As men who desire future ministry are being assessed and evaluated, they must be reminded that this kind of assessment is not performed only once. To be a man in ministry means to live a life of continued learning, growth, and greater self-awareness. He should be instructed that this sort of evaluation and assessment is valuable and helpful. As a minister of the gospel, he will need accountability and help throughout his life.

Finally, and most importantly, the church will help men grow by constantly reminding them of the good news of the gospel. They must be reminded that only Jesus

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<sup>28</sup> Robert Thune's book on eldership contains a section called, "Changing Character," which is very helpful on this point. Thune, *Gospel Eldership*, 37-38.



had perfect character, and he did so in their place. They now stand before God in the perfect character of Christ, and from that spiritual reality they can now seek to grow. They now are motivated by gratitude for what Christ has accomplished for them. They should be reminded to grow and change through the power of the gospel because of love for their Savior, not primarily to earn a position of ministry.

### **Competency**

While character is of primary importance, competency in ministry is no less necessary. A man who desires to serve the church as an elder must have the ability to accomplish the work he has been called to. Beyond being a man of godly character, he must possess ability in two areas.<sup>29</sup> First, he must be able to lead his own family, and second, he must be able to teach the Word of God to others. Thune supports this idea by writing that competency in leading the home and applying the Bible are the two primary competencies of a minister.<sup>30</sup>

### **Ministry in the Home**

Scripture declares that one of the competencies a man in ministry must have is the ability to “manage his own house well” (1 Tim 3:4). This passage goes on to state that if a man cannot manage his own house, then he cannot be expected to manage God’s house. This line of reasoning is straightforward and understandable, but how does a man know how to manage his house well? Here, again, basic discipleship is the answer. Titus 2 instructs the older men and women to teach the younger men and women in things pertaining to life and godliness. Churches can help a candidate grow in his ability as a husband and father in two practical and specific ways.

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<sup>29</sup> Strauch articulates three necessary areas of aptitude: able to manage the family household well, able to provide a model for others to follow, and able to teach and defend the faith. See Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 77-79.

<sup>30</sup> Thune, *Gospel Eldership*, 45.

First, pastors should be available to provide mentoring to a man whose children are still young and at home.<sup>31</sup> Older husbands and wives in ministry should be eager to provide support, encouragement, and direction to younger families. This is especially true for families who desire ministry. A man's inability to manage his house well is a disqualification from ministry.

Almost nothing can compare in profitability to time spent in the home of a family that is rearing their children in a biblically faithful way. Leaders in a church should be intentional about encouraging candidates to visit in the homes of families presently rearing their children in the instruction of the Lord. The mentee should have opportunity to observe things such as mealtime, family worship, and bedtime. While verbal instruction in these practical matters is valuable, nothing can replace the in-home learning that comes from personally observing what it looks like to rear children in the Lord.

This in-home training should, when possible, work in two directions. First, the candidate should be brought into a discipler's home to see how he interacts with his children. And second, the discipler and his wife should step into the candidate's home to see how he and his wife are parenting. This observation may seem invasive and uncomfortably transparent but is necessary and helpful.

The candidate can also find great value in reading some of the many excellent books on parenting.<sup>32</sup> The church is blessed to have wonderful resources on the topic of biblically faithful parenting. Candidates for ministry should be familiar with the teachings in these resources to help themselves and other parents grow. Pastors can oversee a

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<sup>31</sup> Most men who aspire for eldership are young and newly married with no children or young children, and therefore training in parenting is necessary. Of course, not all aspiring elders will be married, and some will be old enough that their children are already out of the home.

<sup>32</sup> See e.g., Paul David Tripp, *Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016); Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd's Press, 1995); and Jay E. Adams, *Christian Living in the Home* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1972).

candidate's reading list and discuss with him the concepts he is reading and how they are influencing him and his family.

### **Ministry of the Word**

**Preaching.** Charles Spurgeon famously wrote, "A man must not consider that he is called to preach until he has proved that he can speak."<sup>33</sup> For many, the ability to preach is considered the pinnacle of pastoral ministry. While Scripture demonstrates that speaking ability is not at the *top* of God's list for a man in ministry, it is nevertheless *on* God's list for a man. In fact, the ability to speak is often the most prominent part of a pastor's ministry. Therefore, the ability to preach skillfully is critically important.

A man who intends to preach well will often need to be instructed by men who have learned to preach well. This can happen informally but generally happens best when done intentionally. A powerful example of this from church history comes from John Calvin and his "Company of Pastors." Historian Scott M. Manetsch describes how Calvin would encourage young students of preaching to read Calvin's published sermons to learn the art of preaching. They then "coached student preachers in the weekly meetings of the Congregation and sometimes gave ministerial candidates preaching assignments in the countryside parishes to develop their homiletical skills."<sup>34</sup> There is no better way to ensure that a man learns to preach well than to provide him instruction in doing so. Many of the methods used by Calvin's "Company of Pastors" can be used with great affect today.

A candidate learning to preach will be deeply helped as he listens to and evaluates the preaching of other men. After receiving instruction on preaching, a candidate can listen to or watch other preachers to learn from an evaluation of their preaching. A young man can use a preaching evaluation form to draw the candidate's attention to the

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<sup>33</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 1998), 31.

<sup>34</sup> Scott M. Manetsch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536-1609*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 164.

structure and delivery of a sermon.<sup>35</sup> Evaluating the preaching of several different preachers will highlight the fact that God uses a variety of styles and personalities in preaching. Learning from a variety of good preachers is a wonderful way for a young man to learn to preach.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, the most helpful way for a man to grow in his ability to preach is to actually preach while being evaluated. Sanchez writes, “We want to give these men public teaching opportunities in which we may observe their competence to teach.”<sup>37</sup> A church should provide venues for an aspiring elder to preach and teach while being observed by current leadership. Manetsch writes,

Students [those who took part in Calvin’s Academy] who sensed a calling to pastoral ministry were required to prepare and deliver sample sermons in the presence of some of the city ministers on Saturday afternoons . . . thus, Geneva’s program of ministerial formation . . . helped students acquire practical skills in interpreting biblical texts and delivering sermons.”<sup>38</sup>

There are many venues available for learning to preach. Many men begin their learning process by preaching in nursing homes, children’s church, student ministries, homeless shelters, Sunday evening services, or Wednesday evening Bible studies. These are all wonderful ways for a man to learn to preach. While a classroom will help a man learn how to preach, nothing will hone his skill like actually preaching to real people in a real ministry setting.

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<sup>35</sup> See survey included in the ETP of appendix 2.

<sup>36</sup> As a young man prepares for ministry he will often find a preacher whose sermons and style are particularly compelling to him. After having listened to many of his sermons, the young preacher will begin to emulate the popular preacher in his own sermons. He will begin to sound like the popular preacher and sometimes even adopt the mannerisms and gestures of the popular preacher. To some degree this is understandable and probably even desirable. The mentoring pastor will likely point this out to the young man to make him aware of his imitation. As a man is finding his voice in the pulpit, he may emulate several different preachers as he develops his own unique *voice*.

<sup>37</sup> Sanchez, *The Leadership Formula*, 114.

<sup>38</sup> Manetsch, *Calvin’s Company of Pastors*, 83.

**Disciple-making.** Ministers must also be competent to teach the Word of God in the discipleship setting.<sup>39</sup> For many men in ministry, this becomes the most rewarding part of ministry. Many pastors will find what author Regi Campbell says to be true: “More time with fewer people equals greater kingdom impact.”<sup>40</sup>

Being a disciple-maker demands wisdom and skill to bring the Word of God to bear in someone else’s life. One of the best ways for a man to learn the skill of disciple-making is to actually be disciplined by another Christian who is skilled in relational ministry. Discipleship is simply helping someone else follow God. Knowledge and application of the Word of God are essential to an effective discipleship ministry. Faithful discipleship of an aspiring elder will lead to faithful discipleship by an aspiring elder.

The church should also supervise the discipleship efforts of men aspiring to ministry. A pastor can simply keep track of the discipleship efforts of the candidate, or he can be more involved by being present for some of the discipleship efforts of the candidate. A man who desires pastoral ministry should have a track record of successful discipleship.

**Counseling.** Some of the most difficult work a pastor performs is in the area of counseling. Counseling can occupy an enormous amount of time in a pastor’s schedule, so it is necessary for men aspiring for ministry to possess a level of competency sufficient to use the Word of God to help individuals with the problems of life.

A pastor can help a young man grow in his ability as a counselor, first, by providing him with solid biblical instruction in counseling. Fortunately, many excellent sources teach biblical counseling. Books, seminars, and video series giving instruction in the theology and skill necessary to counsel from a distinctly biblical worldview abound.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> For a focused treatment of discipleship as part of pastoral ministry see Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Pastor* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007).

<sup>40</sup> Regi Campbell, *Mentor Like Jesus* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009), 5.

<sup>41</sup> For an excellent introduction to pastoral counseling see Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju, *The Pastor and Counseling* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015).

Second, a pastor can support a candidate's growth in his ability as a counselor by allowing him to observe the counseling process firsthand. This must be done with the prior consent of the pastor's counselee, but nothing will help the candidate learn how to counsel more effectively than watching someone else do it skillfully. Pastors who are serious about raising up men for ministry should seek to include men who are preparing for ministry in their counseling appointments.

Finally, the pastor can provide the aspiring elder opportunities to counsel under the supervision of the pastor or other competent counselors who can give feedback and instruction. As with preaching, real-world experience is the best way to encourage growth and progress in this area.

**Evangelism.** Another form of preaching or teaching the word is evangelism. The man aspiring to eldership should be trained and tested in this area of biblical teaching and instruction. Pastors in the local church must be active in the development of men regarding their ability and obedience to evangelize.

A pastor will help candidates to flourish in their ability to share the gospel by teaching them a predetermined gospel presentation plan. A plan for evangelism, when recited from rote memory, may appear wooden and stilted, but some type of framework from which to share the gospel is incredibly helpful. Though a man should be able to do more than simply recite the truths found in a plan for evangelism, he will be well served by having one or more committed to memory for the sake of sharing the gospel. A pastor can also help men grow in their ministry of evangelism by holding them accountable to some scheduled rhythm of sharing the gospel. Some type of weekly outreach venue is a wonderful way for a man to grow in evangelism.

These are some ways a church can help a man grow in his competencies as a minister. The ability to practice ministry in the context of the local church is absolutely necessary. Croft describes the competency training a man receives in a church: "This is where a brother begins to play a more active role in the leadership of the church by, for

example, regularly teaching a class, leading services, or preaching for a whole month of Sunday evenings.”<sup>42</sup>

### **Conviction**

A final area for training and testing is the evaluation and development of a man’s convictions. While this area is likely the most difficult to evaluate, it is a necessary area to provide instruction.

#### **Which Convictions?**

As a church prepares to examine a man’s convictions, it must first determine which convictions must be held in order to affirm ministry partnership. A man might believe in the virgin birth, the pre-tribulational rapture of the church, and that homeschooling is the best way to educate children. Each of these convictions can be legitimately held, but each of these “convictions” is not at the same level of importance. For the sake of determining which convictions must be held by an elder candidate, church leaders should consider convictions in hierarchical terms of primary, secondary, and tertiary importance.<sup>43</sup>

Primary level convictions are those represented by the church’s doctrinal statement. These should be the doctrines that identify the church with the orthodox theologically conservative evangelicals throughout history. Doctrines such as the deity of Christ, authority of Scripture, and salvation by grace through faith would be a few of the doctrines represented in this category. For a man to minister in a church or be considered for ordination by the church, he would need to be in agreement with the doctrinal convictions of his church in this category. While some churches may have slight

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<sup>42</sup> Croft, *Test, Train, Affirm and Send*, 63.

<sup>43</sup> Two excellent treatments of this subject are Albert Mohler, “A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity,” July 12, 2005, <https://albertmohler.com/2005/07/12/a-call-for-theological-triage-and-christian-maturity/>; and Gavin Ortlund, *Finding the Right Hills to Die On* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020).

distinctions from other churches, the basic truths in this category will be shared by most evangelical churches and must be held to, without question, by a pastoral candidate.

Secondary level convictions are those convictions that good Bible-believing Christians could disagree on, but which would be necessary to hold to in order to minister at the ordaining church. Convictions in this area might include the meaning and mode of baptism, the ways in which the Holy Spirit works today, and the specifics of church government. Convictions in this area do not determine orthodoxy but do typically determine ministry partnership. For a church to extend a call to a man to serve as an elder, there would need to be agreement in these areas.

Tertiary level convictions are those that men can disagree on and still maintain ministry partnership. Convictions in this area might include issues such as school choice for children, millennial positions, or Bible version preferences. Issues in this category, though held strongly, do not need to be held in uniformity among leaders in order for an aspiring elder to be ordained or called by a church.

A church and its pastors must come to agreement as to which issues fit into which categories. For illustration, some churches will categorize the age of the earth in the first category, while others may categorize it in the third. For this reason, the governing documents of the church are particularly helpful. A document outlining doctrines and issues and their corresponding categorization within the three hierarchical levels can promote discussion and determine unity among elders. As churches anticipate the appointment of elders, they must prioritize theological and philosophical agreement.

### **How to Examine Convictions**

Examining theological convictions can and should happen in several ways. An aspiring elder can be examined theologically based on his endorsement of a doctrinal statement. He should also be verbally examined theologically. A great deal of theological and philosophical discussion should constitute a man's discipleship and preparation for ministry.



A church's doctrinal statement is an effective document to ensure that everyone is on the same page theologically. Simple agreement to the doctrinal statement is a starting point to examine theological convictions. While many churches will expect a man to prepare a doctrinal statement in preparation for his ordination, it is still a wise practice to require a man to ascribe to the church's doctrinal statement. This ensures agreement and prevents current issues or fads from dominating or influencing a man's understanding.

Second, a robust written theological exam, administered to the candidate, may determine a man's in-depth understanding and conviction on different theological positions. An exam like this will assess understanding of the primary doctrines of the faith as well as the application of doctrine to a range of issues such as divorce and remarriage, human sexuality, discipline of children, and other practical matters.

Finally, nothing will be as helpful as time spent with the candidate in discussion of theological topics. A three-hour "grilling" at an ordination council may be insightful but still inadequate to determine fully a man's theological convictions. A pastor should understand a candidate's theological positions long before the ordination council assesses him.

### **Can They Be Taught?**

An important question to consider is, "Can convictions be taught?" One might argue that convictions cannot be taught because they seem to form without any conscious decision to adopt them. Yet few if any convictions are held which were not at one time taught. One's deepest held convictions are typically formed slowly over time.

Convictions can be legitimately taught or influenced when two factors work in unison. The candidate must see the truth clearly in Scripture, and the Holy Spirit must convince him of the validity of the truth.

First, convictions that are worth teaching can be found clearly in Scripture. If the conviction being taught by a pastor or church cannot be found in Scripture, then it is merely an opinion or preference and should not be taught as doctrine to the aspiring elder.

A man desiring ministry should be committed to the Word of God, so the starting point of changing or adjusting his convictions must be the Scriptures.

Second, the Holy Spirit must be at work in the forming of convictions. He is the one who opens one's eyes to see the truth in the Word of God. A man must see the truth of the Word of God and form his convictions as the Holy Spirit works inside his intellect, emotions, and will to convince him of the validity of them.

### **Conclusion**

God has graciously and wisely given pastors the privilege and responsibility to train and test the next generation of elders in the context of the local church. Harvey writes, "The Bible school or seminary can often bump up against limitations. I'm thinking specifically of identifying called men, evaluating their call, assessing their character, and positioning them to be fruitful in their call. That's the responsibility of the local church."<sup>44</sup> The context of a local church is the best place for a candidate to learn all of these things. This chapter was written to see how others have done pastoral training in order to know how to do it now. Taylor writes, "Sometimes, you just need to see how one church does something from start to finish in order to figure out how you want to do it at your church."<sup>45</sup> Thankfully, aspiring elders have the testimony and example of many faithful churches and pastors to guide their training and testing, both now and into the future.

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<sup>44</sup> Harvey, *Am I Called?*, 54.

<sup>45</sup> Taylor, *Eldership Development*, 2.

## CHAPTER 4

### IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MINISTRY PROJECT

This chapter contains information regarding the implementation of the ministry project as well as an evaluation of the three ministry goals outlined for the project. The purpose of this project was to prepare an elder training plan for those aspiring to the office of elder at Liberty Baptist Church of Dalhart, Texas. Three primary goals governed the intention, development, and implementation of this project. These goals provided a helpful and clear roadmap as each goal served as a logical next step in the implementation of the project. The first goal was to survey a committee to identify the necessary components of an elder training plan. This committee was made up of men in evangelical ministries, outside of LBC, with a commitment to plurality of pastoral leadership. This goal was considered successfully met when all ten pastors completed the survey. The second goal was to develop an elder training plan (ETP). This goal was considered successfully met when an evaluation team scored all areas of the curriculum as “sufficient” according to the rubric. This evaluation team was made up of the two current elders at LBC along with two pastors from outside of LBC. The third goal was to have the current church officers adopt the elder training plan. This goal was considered successfully met when at least a two-thirds majority of the current leadership voted to implement the training curriculum.

#### **Goal 1 Results**

The first goal was to survey a committee to identify the necessary components of an elder training plan (ETP). To create the ETP, the results from a survey of faithful pastors were utilized to bring biblical and practical wisdom to the process. Men with a

healthy biblical ecclesiology were chosen to take part in this survey. These ten men were chosen from across the United States and included one man ministering as a missionary in Brazil. They were predominantly from Baptist Churches, though two were from independent Christian churches. The number *ten* was chosen in order to gather enough information to be helpful, while not gathering so much as to be challenging to process. These men offered their wisdom and best practices for the formation of the ETP.

Development of the survey began in earnest in February of 2021. The survey questions were used to determine the necessary elements of the ETP. The survey queried pastors in areas such as which topics to train, how to train men, how to test men, and when to train them.

The survey was divided into four parts. The first part of the survey explained the purpose of the survey and assured participants that their answers would be kept confidential in the publication of the survey results. The second part of the survey asked for demographic information regarding the educational background and current ministerial context of those surveyed. The third part asked questions regarding the current elder training practices at the churches represented. The fourth and final part of the survey asked participants to provide short answers to questions regarding testing and training men for ministry.

The ten participants surveyed are all men in full-time vocational ministry. They were selected because they fit several criteria. First, they served in churches that either had a plurality of elders established or were committed to the philosophy of a plurality of elders. Second, they pastored in churches that were conservative and evangelical. Third, most of the men were pastoring in churches with under three hundred people in attendance on Sunday. While men serving in larger ministries with different theological traditions would have provided additional interesting results, the findings would not have been as immediately applicable and helpful for this project.

## The Survey's Findings

In mid-February I emailed the ten pastors asking if they would be willing to help in the completion of this project by participating in a survey. Each replied that they would be willing to help in this way. The survey was sent via Google Forms on February 25. The surveys were completed within one week. The surveys provided useful information which was used to build the ETP.

**Demographic information.** The survey included seven demographic questions.<sup>1</sup> As figure 1 shows, all but one of the men serve as a pastor in his church and most serve as the lead pastor. The one participant who is not a pastor serves as a missionary in a healthy local church in a foreign country. That church does not currently have a plurality of pastors but is committed to plurality and is actively training men toward that goal.

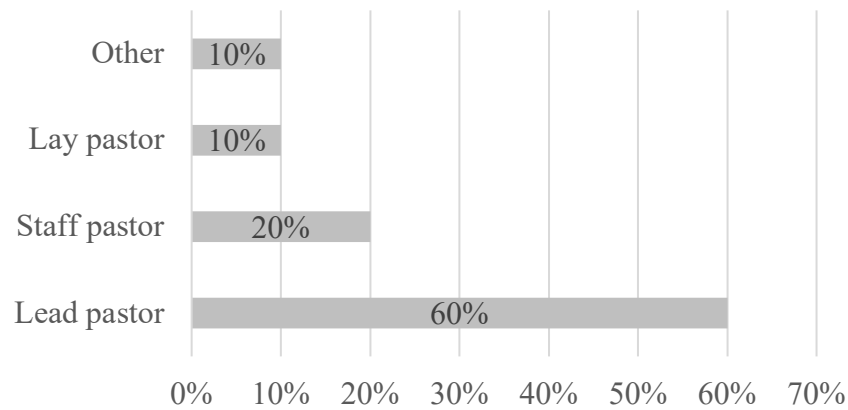


Figure 1. Current role

All respondents have received theological education. Nine out of 10 of them received a degree from a theological seminary. The one remaining participant has a degree from a Bible college. The survey also provided a picture of how long each participant has been at his current position. As figure 2 indicates, most respondents had

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 1.

been at their current position for less than five years. Only one pastor surveyed had been in his current position for more than fifteen years.

Participants also indicated how many paid staff positions were in their current ministry. The majority of the churches had one full-time staff member, and none of the churches surveyed had more than five. Figure 3 represents the number of staff in each ministry.

Since the primary purpose of the survey was to gain information regarding how to train elders, only churches committed to a plurality of eldership were selected. While only 80 percent of the churches surveyed currently have lay elders, the two churches without lay elders were actively looking to train and appoint men to serve in this position.

The churches chosen for this survey were purposefully limited to smaller-sized churches. While several of the churches were slightly larger, none would have regular worship attendance over 700 people. Most of the churches had fewer than three hundred in regular attendance. A complete breakdown is represented in figure 4.

Church setting (e.g., urban, suburban, rural) was also requested in the survey. Urban churches are those in large metropolitan cities. Suburban churches are churches that exist outside of, yet near large cities; or are churches in mid-sizes cities. Rural churches are either in small towns, or outside of a town altogether. It often seems that church setting affects the mindset and style of a church. Churches in larger and more urban settings often have more formalized and structured processes for all of their ministries. While no definitions were given to establish the difference between the three settings, each respondent indicated a setting of ministry for their church. Most of the churches were in suburban or rural settings, with only one of the churches located in an urban setting. The chart in figure 5 displays this division.

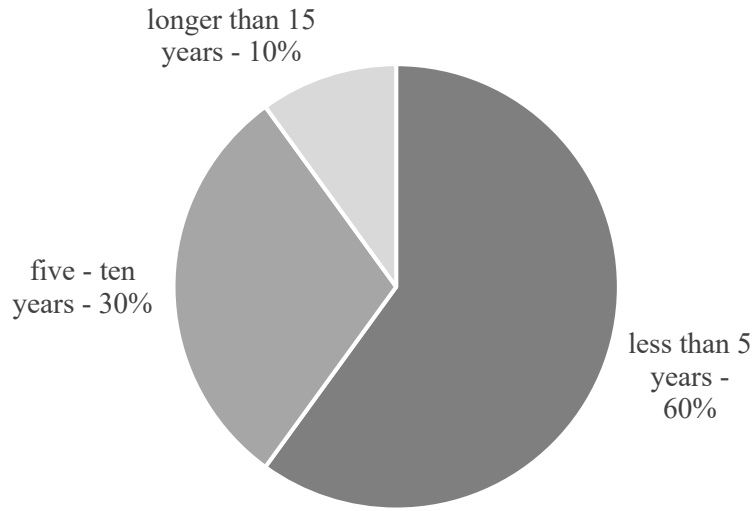


Figure 2. Years in current ministry

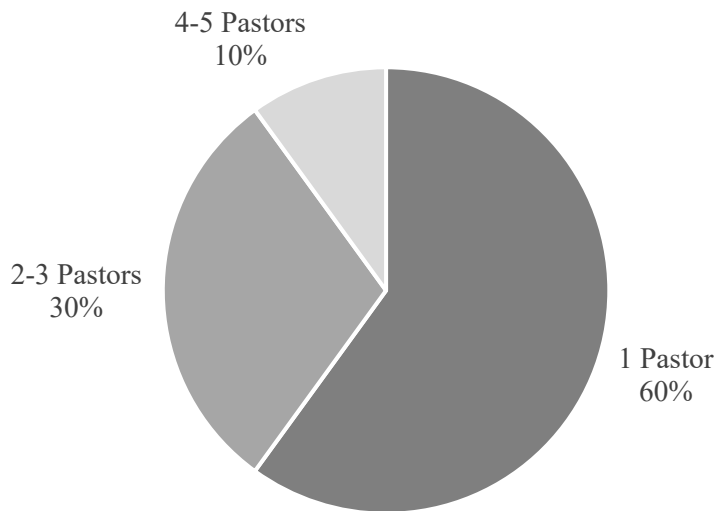


Figure 3. Number of full-time pastors

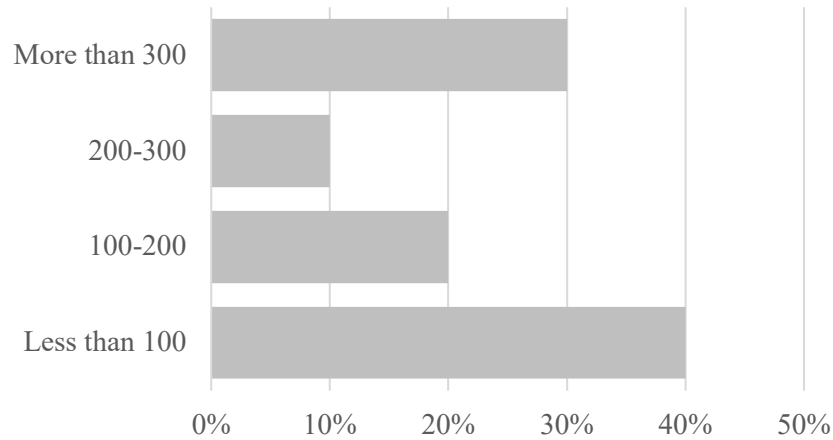


Figure 4. Average church attendance

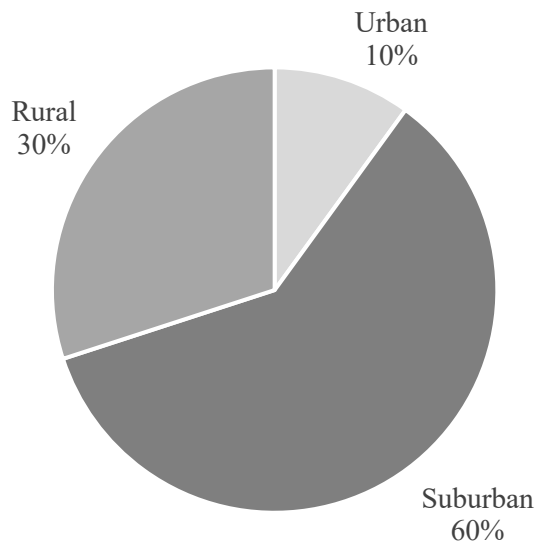


Figure 5. Church setting

**Training information.** The survey also included eight multiple choice questions regarding the participants' current practices of training men for ministry.<sup>2</sup> Most of the men surveyed indicated that they had a plan for training men who aspired for pastoral ministry, yet only half indicated that the plan was formalized. Two respondents indicated that their church did not have a plan for pastoral ministry. See figure 6 for a visual representation of the responses.

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<sup>2</sup> See appendix 1.



Several questions were focused on the areas of calling, character, competence, and conviction. Nine out of the ten participants indicated that they focus on training a man's character, competence, and conviction, but only seven of the ten indicated testing a man's call to ministry. One participant had no focus on training men in any of these areas. This church did have a plurality of elders, but not a plan for how to train up and develop new elders.

The standard amount of time that churches spent in training men for ministry was twelve months. Two of the churches take two years to train elders. One respondent indicated that his church spends more than two years training its elders and three of the men indicated that the question was not applicable to them. Figure 7 shows this information.

Finally, 60 percent of the churches train men in the same material and in the same way, while 40 percent of the churches indicated that either they do not train men, or they have a more flexible manner by which they train men.

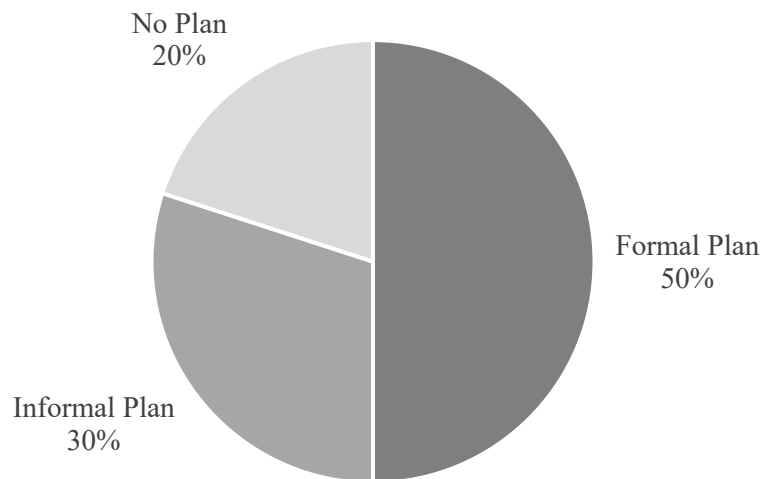


Figure 6. Plan for training

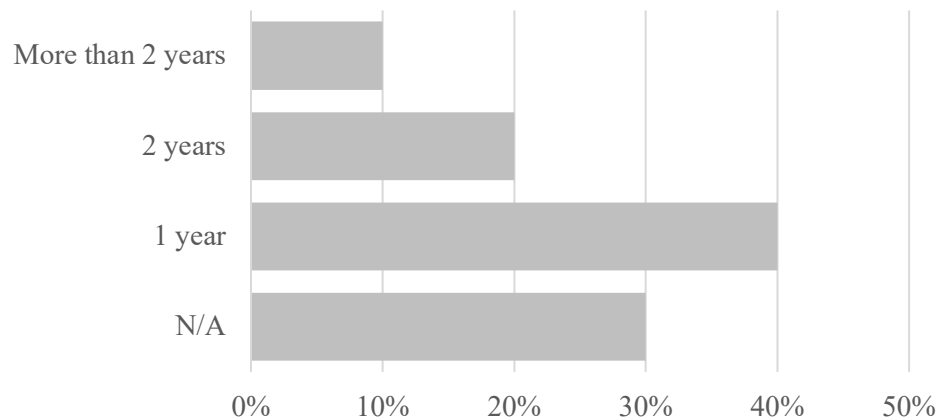


Figure 7. Length of training plan

**Long-answer information.** The final ten questions were long-answer questions. Here, participants could write out helpful responses related to how their churches were accomplishing the work of training men for ministry.

Question 16 of the survey asked, “How does your current leadership choose men to train for ministry?” Many helpful points were made in answer to this question. Some churches had laid-back and informal ways of identifying men for ministry, and one church had a highly developed plan for identifying men for ministry. Either way, it was obvious that these churches were actively looking for men to train.

Question 17 inquired whether the training was primarily structured or unstructured. Only one church identified as “very unstructured.” The other churches indicated that there was some structure involved. This makes sense given the intentionality of these churches to train elders.

Question 18 asked, “What traits are you seeking to train and test for pastoral ministry?” Most of the answers in this section were short. The grid for this project was to view training for ministry in light of the areas of calling, character, competence, and conviction. All the traits listed in response to this question fit neatly into one of these four categories. Some answers directly referenced these categories.

When to schedule training for ministry has been a challenging question to answer in LBC's context. Question 19 sought to find out what time of day and day of the week would work best for training men for ministry. Interestingly, every day of the week, except Sunday, was given as an answer. There was no specific time of day or day of the week that was an obvious and agreed upon answer. The result of this question is that there is no one specific day of the week that works best. Each ministry must determine what works best in their context for training.

Questions 20-23 dealt with how these churches were training and testing men in the areas of calling, character, competence, and conviction. There was a great deal of overlap in how these areas worked together in each church. While each participant had unique contributions, several points of observation were helpful. These churches gave men opportunity, observed them in their ministry endeavors, and had ongoing and frequent conversations with them.

First, these churches gave men opportunity. It is apparent that ministry was not protected for a few, but rather, was shared generously with others. These opportunities allowed for gifting to be used and tested. The trainees were given opportunity to minister in a variety of contexts in order to help determine gifting and fruitfulness.

Second, men in these ministries knew they were being observed. Not only were the pastors watching and providing oversight, but the rest of the congregation was watching as well. This allowed for ministry to be genuine and allowed for people in the church to give their input of approval or concern to the aspiring elders as they ministered.

Finally, the pastors indicated that continual conversations were happening in the areas of calling, character, competence, and conviction. These intentional conversations provided the pastors with insight into the gifting and growth of the men they were observing. Pastors indicated that regular interaction with prospective elders allowed the pastors to watch for and perceive the growth of the men in training.

Question 24 asked for recommended resources for training men for ministry. Several participants suggested a resources from 9Marks Ministries. This is likely due to the *type* of pastors I reached out to for this survey. Many of the men also referenced Alexander Strauch’s *Biblical Eldership*, which has long been considered necessary reading.

Finally, question 25 asked about any further recommendations. Notably, two churches mentioned the need to move slowly. One participant stated, “It is better to take too long to get the right man than to move quickly and it be the wrong man/not a good fit for the team.”

### **Goal 2 Results**

The second goal was to develop an Elder Training Plan (ETP).<sup>3</sup> This material was developed using the information collected from the survey, along with other information and resources gathered through the years. It would be impossible to know how much the last fifteen years of ministry shaped this goal in particular. My personal preparation for ministry, experience training others for ministry, and reading for chapters 2 and 3 of this project significantly influenced the development of the ETP.

Second Timothy 2:2 grounded this plan’s philosophy: “What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.” Building on this passage, I was aware that the ETP must have an intentional way to entrust a body of knowledge to other men while also assessing these men. Aspiring elders at LBC needed to be faithful and able to teach. The ETP was designed to train and test for this. Other passages were used in the development of the ETP, but this passage was primary in motivating the development.

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<sup>3</sup> See appendix 2.

## **ETP Design**

The ETP was written over the course of several weeks. The plan included training in Christian character (heart), theological knowledge (head), and pastoral competence (hands) in ministry. These three broad divisions make up the three primary *tracks* of the ETP. One track is the pastoral competence (hands) track. In this track, the trainees will be taught the practical aptitudes of sermon preparation, visitation, teaching, preaching, etc. At each of the bi-monthly meetings, the trainees' current ministry efforts will be evaluated.

The second track deals with the practical and character-oriented (heart) areas of ministry. Topics such as "What is a healthy church?," "Marriage and Family," and "Character Qualifications for Ministry" are covered in this section. These topics will be covered on the 2nd Sunday of the month. Pre-session reading and writing will be done for each of these sessions.

The third track is theological training (head). This track covers nine general areas of systematic theology. The participant will read and write a one-page paper, answering a specific theological question in preparation for the class. The class will discuss these topics when it meets once each month on the 4th Sunday of the month.

This plan is designed to take approximately one year, with meetings on the 2nd and 4th Sunday evenings of the month. Though there are 24 second and fourth Sunday evenings in a year, there are only 19 lessons. The additional Sunday evenings will allow for an occasional break, such as a holiday or seasonal break, or will allow an opportunity to extend a discussion if necessary.

The resources for the assignment were intentionally chosen based upon their accessibility to someone without seminary training. The assignments were limited to shorter lengths, given the busy schedule of most of the men that will work through this training plan. Many of the resources included are podcasts or videos. The podcasts were included initially as a way for men to receive teaching as they drive to work, operate tractors, or ride horseback. An additional benefit is that the men will hear other men talk

about the things of God. Not only is a podcast a helpful way for men to process theological information, but it also gives the opportunity to hear other men talk about theology. There is much to be learned by listening to other men and by becoming familiar with the voices of Mark Dever, John Piper, etc.

### **Review Committee**

After having developed the ETP, four men were selected to evaluate it. Two men were current lay elders at LBC; the other two were pastors committed to a plurality of eldership. None of the men had taken part in the survey completed in goal 1. These men evaluated the ETP using a rubric for evaluation.<sup>4</sup> The rubric allowed the men to mark areas as (1) insufficient, (2) requires attention, (3) sufficient, (4) exemplary.

Upon the first review, the men marked the ETP insufficient in several areas. First, they marked that the ETP did not actually evaluate the character of the trainee sufficiently. Second, they marked that there was an insufficient plan to test competence. Third, they indicated that there were not enough biblical references included to support the teaching curriculum. And finally, they marked that there should be an area addressing biblical counseling as part of the training.

In response to these concerns, I first added two evaluation forms to the training that would help assess the trainee's personal life and marriage. Second, I added monthly evaluations of the trainee's teaching and preaching ministry. Third, I added Scripture references to the teaching curriculum. Finally, I added a section on biblical counseling to the training plan.

After these changes, the men reevaluated the plan with the same rubric. They each received the revised ETP. The email summarized for them the corrections that had been made. The men reevaluated and changed the areas marked as *requires attention* to

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<sup>4</sup> See appendix 3.

*sufficient*. This goal was considered successfully met since all areas were marked as sufficient or exemplary.

### **Goal 3 Results**

Once the ETP was complete, the final goal was to have the current elders and deacons of LBC participate in a training overview of the curriculum and then vote to adopt and utilize the curriculum. On Sunday evening, June 18, 2021, a special meeting of the elders and deacons of LBC was called in order to have the ETP's purpose and plan explained. The meeting began with prayer followed by a twenty-minute exposition and application of 2 Timothy 2:2. The church leadership listened to the biblical mandate for training the next generation of men for ministry. They all agreed with the plan's purpose and the need for LBC to be active and intentional about investing in the future of the church by training men for ministry.

After the opening explanation of theology and philosophy, time was spent studying the ETP in detail, and walking the men through the plan's components and assignments. This took an additional forty-five minutes.

Afterward, the men were asked if they had any thoughts or concerns. During this time, several features of the ETP were discussed and evaluated. One elder suggested including reading through the Bible as an additional assignment to the ETP. Discussion ensued as to the best way to include this in the ETP, and it was finally decided that this assignment would be added. Another concern was the amount of work included in the plan, but the men agreed that the level of difficulty should be maintained for now. Finally, a vote was taken, and the men were unanimous in their desire to adopt the ETP as a tool in the development of men for ministry here at LBC.

### **Conclusion**

Each of the goals was successfully met prior to beginning the next goal. While the ETP was custom-designed for LBC, slight adaptation should make it useful for any

ministry context. The fact that churches of various sizes were consulted in the preparation of the plan ensure its usefulness in various ministry settings. My hope and prayer is that God would use this tool to train and test men who will “pay careful attention to [them]selves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made [them] overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood” (Acts 20:28).



## CHAPTER 5

### MINISTRY PROJECT EVALUATION

This chapter will serve as a review and evaluation of the entire project. The purpose of this project was to prepare an elder training plan for those aspiring to the office of elder at Liberty Baptist Church of Dalhart, Texas. This chapter includes an evaluation of the project's purpose, goals, and strengths and weaknesses, as well as a consideration of aspects of the project that might have been handled differently. It concludes with theological and personal reflections.

#### **Evaluation of the Project's Purpose**

The purpose of this project was successful, in that an elder training plan was developed and adopted for use by the leadership of Liberty Baptist Church in Dalhart, Texas. This project was birthed out of a desire to more intentionally train men preparing for ministry. During the development of this project, LBC appointed its first lay elders. These godly and gifted men were ready to begin serving LBC as pastors before the completion of this project, yet they agree that this resource would be beneficial for them and subsequent generations of men. This project was immediately practical for our ministry's immediate need, and biblically necessary for our ministry's long-term health.

This project was not the original project idea for this professional doctoral program. The original focus of study was intended to be biblical counseling, and the original project idea was to develop a biblical counseling training program at LBC. This idea changed as the reality that the most pressing need of the moment was in relation to eldership. The greatest need was to prepare pastors for ministry, not to prepare the

congregation to counsel. Both of these were important goals, yet one of them was the most pressing issue at the moment.

This desire to train men flowed from a desire to obey the biblical mandate that leaders need to train other leaders (2 Tim 2:2). God’s Word is clear that His ministers are to be looking for men to train to be the next generation of disciple-making pastors. The ETP is a formalized way for LBC to be obedient to Christ’s command. The ETP is not the *only* way to prepare men for ministry. It likely is not the *best* way for every church to prepare men for ministry, but it is a biblically faithful way for LBC to train men for ministry.

### **Evaluation of the Project Goals**

The project was built and measured on the accomplishment of three goals. The first goal was to survey a committee or ministers to identify the necessary components of an elder training plan. The second goal was to develop an elder training plan. This curriculum became known as the Elder Training Plan (ETP). The third goal was to have the current church officers adopt the elder training plan. Each of these goals was successfully reached in the process of this project.

#### **Goal 1**

King Solomon advised, “In an abundance of counselors there is safety” (Prov 11:14). This truth has application in many areas, including knowing how to train and test men for ministry. Thankfully, I was not left to my own knowledge, wisdom, and experience to develop the ETP. Since the first goal was to survey a committee to identify the necessary components of an elder training plan, I sought the multitude of counselors for input and wisdom in developing a training plan for ministry.

The survey included twenty-five questions that took about thirty minutes for the participants to complete. The time commitment to the survey depended on the length

of written response. Each of the ten men responded within a week of receiving the survey. Their answers were thorough and helpful.

## **Goal 2**

The second goal was to develop the Elder Training Plan document. The ETP was designed over the course of about one month. While this might not seem like a long time, the design of the course was influenced by many years of ministerial experience and the last two years of reading and writing on the topic. After a significant amount of reading, thinking, and discussion, the writing of the ETP was done rather quickly.

This goal was in many ways the focus of my project. The ETP is the tangible result of this endeavor. This training manual will serve as a tool to train men now and, Lord willing, in the future. This plan can be used here at Liberty and can be customized to serve other churches as well.

To ensure its usefulness and potential for effectiveness, the ETP was submitted to a panel of four pastors who reviewed it according to the rubric provided.<sup>1</sup> The rubric allowed them to assess the plan in areas such as biblical faithfulness, comprehensiveness, and achievability. The men evaluating the plan were able to rate and mark areas as insufficient, requires attention, sufficient, and exemplary. Upon their first evaluation, several areas were marked as “requires attention.” First was a concern that there was a lack of scriptural references used in the teaching outline. Second was a concern that there was not a sufficient number of ways built into the plan to test for character and competence. Finally, there was concern that a section for instruction in pastoral counseling was needed.

Based on these comments, changes were made to address these concerns. First, a lesson on pastoral counseling was added. Second, Scripture references were added to the teaching material. Third, a monthly competence evaluation discussion was added.

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 3.

Fourth, a sermon and lesson evaluation form was added. Fifth, a personal character assessment exercise was added. Finally, a marriage evaluation form was added.

This goal was met when all four of the reviewers marked all the areas of the rubric as sufficient or exemplary. The reviewers' input was extremely helpful, and their insightful recommendations helped shape the final edition of the ETP.

### **Goal 3**

The final goal was the adoption of the ETP by the current church officers. The plan was presented to the collective group of elders and deacons. The rationale and an overview of the ETP was presented. Several questions were asked and addressed, and the group unanimously agreed to adopt the plan for use at LBC.

While this was the easiest goal to achieve, it was also the most important step in the project. It was necessary for the LBC leadership to see the biblical imperative to actively train the next generation of church pastors and to adopt a plan to accomplish this objective. The leadership at LBC understands this biblical imperative more clearly than ever.

### **Strengths of Project**

The primary strength of this project was its relevance to the current ministry need of LBC. God had recently raised up two men to serve as the first lay pastors at LBC. While there was not time to officially go through the ETP with these men prior to the completion of the project, the pursuit of this project helped us think carefully about their ordination as pastors. A plan similar to the ETP would have been extremely valuable to work through several years ago when these men were first identified as potential pastoral candidates.

In the future, the ETP will be a necessary starting point for men who are potential future elders. There were more men in the congregation whom God was raising up and were being considering for ministry roles. This training plan will supply a helpful

and intentional plan for men as the church moves forward. The newly established pastors at LBC were eager to study this material along with the first class of men to do the ETP.

A second strength of the curriculum is how it raised awareness amongst the current church leadership (both elders and deacons) of the importance of training men for ministry. All of these men (elders and deacons) wanted to see men being trained for ministry, and seeing the ETP gave them an understanding of a concrete way for this to happen. It also exposed many of them to the level of proficiency in *head, heart, and hand* that is demanded of men in ministry.

A third strength of this project is its ability to be used and adapted for use in other ministry contexts. Individual churches will need to determine the best way to train men for ministry, and every church has the biblical responsibility to do so. There are many helpful ministry training programs available today, and this ETP is another resource to be added to that list. One of the pastors who reviewed the material asked for permission to use the material in his church. Other churches can benefit by adjusting the ETP to fit their ministry's needs.

A final strength is the accessibility of the training to men who have not had theological training. The books selected for reading and review were chosen based on their doctrinal faithfulness, clarity, simplicity, and brevity. Many of the other resources were chosen because they were available in video or audio formats. Most of the men at LBC do not have many hours each week to spend reading and writing, so the workload had to be attainable. The ETP was developed to bring a depth of ministry preparation to men who work full-time and also ministering in the church.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

Though not necessarily a weakness, my primary regret was that I was not able to take any men through the ETP. The plan necessitates one year to give appropriate time to the training and testing included in the program. This time allotment did not allow for a group to progress through the material during the development of the project. There

was no way around this, but it does seem to be a significant area of weakness. No doubt there would have been areas of adjustment after the first use of the ETP that would have provided helpful feedback.

Another potential weakness of the project will be the schedule. The workload and schedule of many LBC men varies significantly from season to season. For instance, during harvest season (October and November), the men are often extremely busy, working from sun-up until sun-down for six or seven days each week. The ability to read the material and be ready for discussion during these months could be extremely challenging for the men involved. This weakness is related to the primary weakness of the project—it has not yet been tested.

A final weakness of the project was the minimal amount of time the church officers had to review the material before they were asked to vote to approve its use in our church setting. Only two of the six men in that meeting had thoroughly reviewed the material prior to the meeting. The ETP was emailed to the men several days prior to the discussion and vote, but it is not likely that the men read through it with any level of understanding.

### **What Would I Do Differently**

Based on the weaknesses listed, there are several things that could have been done differently to ensure a better project and project outcome. First, there should have been a way to work through a portion of the ETP with a test group to determine the workability of the plan. This could have been accomplished by recruiting several men to go through two months of the program. This would have helped determine whether the workload and busyness of the program was feasible.

The second improvement would be to spend more time preparing the church leaders to understand the ETP prior to their vote to implement the plan. This could have been done through a brief meeting two weeks prior to the vote in which the material could have distributed and briefly explained. Then, at the second meeting the material could

have been thoroughly covered and discussed prior to voting. This would have given the church leadership a better understanding of the ETP before they were asked to vote on its use.

Finally, I should have worked at a steadier pace. Unfortunately, my habit was often to cram reading and writing for the project into a few weeks and then allow several weeks to pass without thinking about or working on the project. In hindsight, I would have worked more consistently on the project with just an hour or so each day. I failed to schedule study and writing into my everyday work and suffered for it. Daily work with writing goals scheduled several weeks before due dates would have served me well.

### **Theological Reflections**

As I have given several years to reading, thinking, and writing on the topic of training men for ministry, two passages of Scripture have been deeply burned into my heart. The first is Paul's exhortation to Timothy which states, "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2). The second is the passage in Acts in which we are reminded to "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

First, the command to entrust the gospel message to other faithful men is one that I hope, by God's grace, to continue obeying for the rest of my life. Meditating on this passage for several years has increased my burden and commitment to be used by God to develop men for ministry. This responsibility is to be a focus of all churches. As a church follows this command faithfully, churches, families, communities, and individuals will be blessed, strengthened, and grow in the gospel. This command from God has impressed on my heart and mind the importance of training men for ministry.

Second, the passage in Acts deeply impressed upon my heart the value of Christ's church. The phrase "obtained with his own blood" often echoes in my mind. The

importance and value of the body of Christ is seen so clearly in this passage. The church does not belong to a pastor or an eldership. The church is the possession of God, bought by the blood of His Son. This makes her valuable. As an undershepherd of Christ, this truth must continually inform my love for and ministry to the church of God. Therefore, the importance of raising up men who will faithfully minister to the church is of highest priority.

### **Personal Reflections**

Personally, I have grown throughout the process of this project. The achievement of this project is one that regularly seemed out of my reach. I often doubted whether I had the theological and academic ability to finish the course. Thankfully, the Lord used my wife, family members, and friends to encourage me. Likewise, the Professional Doctoral Office at Southern never tired of my simple questions and were always ready to help. God's grace sustained me through this project.

Writing has been a particular challenge, yet this skill has been the one to develop the most. God used these years to sharpen my writing ability, and I trust I will be a better communicator because of it. The writing requirements for each class were at times laborious, but God used these assignments to push me in areas I would have never developed on my own. The demand for quality academic writing was at a level I had never experienced before, and this forced me to think, write, and rewrite.

As I conclude this project, I am also aware that my love for the church of Christ has grown. I am thankful for the undeserved privilege to serve the Chief Shepherd as one of His undershepherds. I pray that God will use me to be one of the faithful ones who help other faithful ones carry the gospel forward into the next generation. This project is intended to bless and strengthen the church.

Finally, my love for Christ has grown through this project. His church is worth giving my best. He is worth living for. He is worth serving in humble settings. He is the



one worth training other men to know so that the church will continue on into the next generation.

### **Conclusion**

By the grace of God, the goals of this project were met. Now, the ETP remains to be implemented at LBC. May God use it powerfully in the lives of men who will be the next pastors here and elsewhere. The church has been bought with the blood of Christ, so she is worth giving our all to training men to serve her well. I trust God will use these feeble efforts to entrust more men with the gospel that will save and sanctify the church of God which He has “obtained with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). To Him be glory.

## APPENDIX 1

### PRE-CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PASTORAL SURVEY FOR EXPERT PANEL

The terms *elder* and *pastor* are used synonymously throughout this questionnaire.

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify principles and practices that affect the training of men aspiring for ministry in the local church. This research is being conducted by Jeremy McMorris under the supervision of Dr. Joe Harrod, of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for purposes of preparing a training manual for men aspiring for ministry. In this research, you will be asked to respond to several questions pertaining to your experience with training elders. Any information you provide will be held strictly confidential, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. By your completion of this survey, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

Do you agree to participate?

- a. Yes
- b. No

#### **Demographic Info**

1. What is your current role?
  - a. Senior Pastor
  - b. Staff Pastor
  - c. Lay Pastor
2. What level of education do you have? Select all that apply.
  - a. No ministerial education.
  - b. Informal ministerial education. (Discipleship in the local church.)
  - c. Bible college.
  - d. Seminary.
  - e. Other.
3. How long have you been in your current position?
  - a. Less than five years
  - b. 5-10 year
  - c. 10-15 years
  - d. Longer than 15 years

4. How many full-time/staff pastors at your current church?
  - a. Only 1
  - b. 2-3
  - c. 4-5
  - d. More than 5
5. Does your church have paid and unpaid (lay) elders?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
6. What is your church's average attendance?
  - a. Less than 100
  - b. 100-200
  - c. 200-300
  - d. More than 300
7. Church
  - a. Urban
  - b. Suburban
  - c. Rural

#### **Your church and Lay-Elder Training**

8. Does your church have a plan for training men who aspire for pastoral ministry?
  - a. Yes, we have a formalized plan that is the same for every candidate.
  - b. Yes, we have a formalized plan, but it allows for flexibility given the candidate.
  - c. Yes, we have a plan, but it is informal and unstructured.
  - d. No, we do not have a plan.
9. Does your church focus intentionally on testing a man's call to ministry?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
10. Does your church focus intentionally on training and testing a man's character.
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
11. Does your church focus intentionally on training and testing a man's competence.
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
12. Does your church focus intentionally on training and testing a man's convictions.
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

13. Approximately how many months does your training take?
  - a. Less than 6 months.
  - b. 6-12 months
  - c. 12-24 months
  - d. More than 24 months
  - e. NA
14. How often do you meet for training with aspiring elders?
  - a. Weekly
  - b. Bi-weekly
  - c. Monthly
  - d. Quarterly
  - e. Other
15. Does every candidate go through the same body of material?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

**Short answer questions**

16. How does your current elder team choose men to train for ministry?
17. Is your training rigidly structured or, is the training tailored to a man's unique gifting or needs?
18. What traits are you seeking to train and test for pastoral ministry?
19. When do you train your candidates? (What day of the week? What time of day? How often?)
20. How do you train and test a man's calling to ministry?
21. How do you train and test a man's character?
22. How do you train and test a man's competence for ministry?
23. How do you train and test a man's theological convictions?
24. What resources do you recommend for training men for ministry?
25. Any further recommendation for training men for ministry?

APPENDIX 2

ELDER TRAINING PLAN EVALUATION RUBRIC

<b>Elder Training Plan Evaluation Tool</b>					
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>					
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Comments</b>
The pre-training evaluation tests Christian character well.					
The pre-training evaluation tests Bible knowledge well.					
The training is biblically sound.					
The training covers all necessary pastoral issues.					
The training is both practical and spiritual.					
The training is appropriate for various educational levels.					
The training is doable for someone with a job and family.					
The reading involved in the training supports the topics well.					
The assignments required support the training well.					

APPENDIX 3  
SURVEY RESULTS

Table A1. Survey information

1. Current role:	60% Lead Pastor 20% Staff Pastor 10% Lay Pastor 10% Other
2. Level of education:	90% Seminary 10% Bible College
3. Tenure in current position:	60% Less than 5 years 30% 5-10 years 10% Longer than 15 years
4. Number of full-time/staff pastors:	60% Only 1 30% 2-3 10% 4-5
5. Church has paid and unpaid elders:	80% yes 20% no
6. Average church attendance:	40% Less than 100 20% 100-200 10% 200-300 30% More than 300
7. Church setting:	60% Suburban 30% Rural 10% Urban
8. Does your church have a plan for training?	50% Yes, we have a formal plan 30% Unstructured plan 20% No plan
9. Focus on testing a man's call?	70% Yes 30% No
10. Focus on training and testing character?	90% Yes 10% No
11. Focus on training and testing competence?	90% Yes 10% No
12. Focus on training and testing convictions?	90% Yes 10% No
13. How many months for training?	40% One year 20% Two years 10% More than two years 30% N/A
14. How often do you meet for training?	30% Weekly 20% Bi-Weekly 30% Monthly 20% N/A
15. Does every candidate go through the same training?	60% yes 40% no

## APPENDIX 4

### ETP TRAINING PLAN

# Elder Training Plan

## Purpose

Welcome to the Ministry Development program! We hope this next year will be one of the most exciting and spiritually profitable years of your life. This program is designed to help train and test men for ministry. Our desire is to instruct, inspire, and identify gifting in the men God has placed here at Liberty Baptist Church.

God has given us the responsibility to glorify Him by making disciples here in Dalhart and around the world. Serving in the church is a life and death endeavor—an eternal life and eternal death endeavor. The souls of men and women are at stake. So, we take seriously Paul’s words to Timothy when he says, “What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.”

Aspiring to become an elder in Christ’s church is a wonderful thing, but it takes more than desire (calling). A man who desires to pastor must also have the necessary character, competence, and conviction to lead Christ’s church. This program is meant to both train and test men in these areas.

While we hope the result of this training will result in many men being ordained to gospel ministry, we want to be clear from the outset that merely completing this course does not guarantee that a candidate will be ordained. We are trusting that God will lead the current elders at LBC to ordain the right men at the right time. This training program is simply meant to train and test men. God will prepare men, and the elders will identify and ordain men to pastoral ministry.

This document will serve as a field guide for the training plan. There is no way this 19-session training can be exhaustive. The intention is to provide helpful and clear instruction in many of the most important areas of ministry. The work involved will not be easy, and the level of personal transparency and assessment necessary may not always be comfortable. This will be a challenge.

## Plan

1. The teaching lessons
  - a. Each lesson will require reading, thinking, and writing done prior to the in-person meeting. This will be referred to throughout as *pre-work* or *homework*. On average the pre-work will take two to three hours each week.
  - b. The meeting time for each lesson will consist of the following:
    - i. Open discussion: discussion of the reading and writing the candidate has completed.
    - ii. Teaching Points: formal teaching session.

- iii. Mentor questions: challenging questions posed by teacher.
  - iv. Mentee questions: remaining questions posed by student(s).
  - v. Prayer
  - c. Each session will be two hours in length.
  - d. The sessions will meet on the second and fourth Sundays of the month.
2. Three Tracks
- a. Practical Track<sup>1</sup> (Head/Heart)
    - i. Track one will consist of a variety of ministry topics.
      - 1. What is the gospel?
      - 2. What is the church?
      - 3. What is an elder?
      - 4. Personal character
      - 5. Marriage and Family (character and competence)
      - 6. Competence - able to teach
      - 7. Competence - praying
      - 8. Conviction
      - 9. Counseling
      - 10. Calling
  - b. Doctrinal Track (Head/Heart)
    - i. Track two will consist of the primary doctrines covered in systematic theology.
      - 1. Bibliology
      - 2. Theology
      - 3. Christology
      - 4. Pneumatology
      - 5. Anthropology/Hamartiology
      - 6. Soteriology
      - 7. Angelology
      - 8. Ecclesiology
      - 9. Eschatology
  - c. Practice Track (Hands)
    - i. Each month, during the practical training, the trainee will discuss recent ministry opportunities and schedule preparation and assessment by an elder for the upcoming month.
    - ii. Track three will consist of observation and evaluation in the following areas of ministry:
      - 1. Preaching/Teaching
      - 2. Personal discipleship
      - 3. Hospital/Nursing home visits
      - 4. Wedding/Funeral preparation and delivery
      - 5. General ministry to and shepherding of congregation
3. Miscellaneous:

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<sup>1</sup> The Practical Track and Doctrinal Track will alternate throughout the year. The practical lessons are odd numbered lessons and the doctrinal are even numbered.



- Questions and input do not have to wait until the monthly meetings. If you are working on an assignment and have a question, ask right away!
- There is some flexibility built into the program. Any lesson can be given an additional two-week block if it becomes clear that further reading, thinking, or discussion is needed. Occasional breaks can be factored into the schedule as well.
- Books to purchase: (If you have read one of these, please ask about reading an alternate.)
  - *Bible Doctrine* – Wayne Grudem
  - *The Cross-Centered Life* – C.J. Mahaney
  - *What is a Healthy Church?* – Mark Dever
  - *Gospel Eldership* – Robert H. Thune
  - *Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons* – Thabiti Anyabwile
  - *Masculine Mandate* – Richard Philips
  - *Saving Eutychus* – Gary Millar & Phil Campbell
  - *Praying the Bible* – Don Whitney
  - *The Pastor and Counseling* – Jeremy Pierre & Deepak Reju
  - *Am I Called* – Dave Harvey

## LESSON 1 – WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read one of the following:
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. *The Cross-Centered Life* – C.J. Mahaney
    - iii. *The Gospel for Real Life* – Jerry Bridges
    - iv. *What is the Gospel?* – Greg Gilbert
  - b. View: *American Gospel* (Together as a cohort if possible)
  - c. Write: What is the gospel?
    - i. One page
    - ii. Email to Jeremy prior to the meeting.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Review ministry involvement and plan ministry assessment for next month.<sup>2</sup>
    - ii. Participants will share personal testimony
    - iii. Participants will read their papers.
    - iv. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s)
      2. Sermon(s)
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. What is the gospel?
      1. God, Sin, Christ, Response (Gen 2,3)
      2. How we get the gospel wrong?
    - ii. The gospel for unbelievers. (2 Cor 5:21)
    - iii. The gospel for believers. (Rom 1:1-15)
    - iv. The gospel for life. (Col 2:6)
    - v. Why must the gospel must be at the center of all of our thinking, preaching, teaching, discipling, etc.?
    - vi. Why must pastors be clear on the gospel?
      1. To avoid confusion.
      2. To present true Christianity and not mere moralism.
      3. To build a church of genuine converts.
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. Share the gospel in 60 seconds or less.
    - ii. What are some key passages you can utilize to share the gospel?
    - iii. Can you identify where the gospel is missing or insufficient? (Read from illustrations in Gilbert's book)
    - iv. Students read their papers again and critique each other's papers.
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

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<sup>2</sup> Use Sermon evaluation form for preaching/teaching opportunities.

## LESSON 2 – BIBLIOLOGY

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read:
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. Chapters 2-3 in *Bible Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem.
  - b. Listen
    - i. Required: Relevant lessons from *Drive by Theology* – Todd Friel & Steve Lawson
    - ii. Recommended: Relevant lessons from *Systematic Theology (Audio Lectures)* – Wayne Grudem
  - c. View
    - i. Can We Trust the Bible? – YouTube – Honest Answers, SBTS
    - ii. Does the Bible Have Errors? – YouTube – Honest Answers, SBTS
    - iii. What is the Apocrypha? – YouTube – Honest Answers, SBTS
  - d. Write: Define each of the following terms and provide biblical passages to support them: necessity, inspiration, inerrancy, sufficiency, canon, preservation, translation.
    - i. One page total
    - ii. Email to Jeremy prior to the meeting.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Participants read their papers.
    - ii. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s)
      2. Audio(s)
      3. Video(s)
  - b. Teaching points
    - i. God has communicated. (2 Pet 1:19)
    - ii. The Bible is our source of life and doctrine. (2 Tim 3:16)
    - iii. Why does Bibliology matter?
    - iv. The historical and cultural reality of Bible access and reading throughout history.
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. Have you read the entire Bible?
    - ii. Do you understand the phrase *sola scriptura*?
    - iii. How do we know that the 66 books we possess are the Bible and that there aren't other books that should be included?
    - iv. What are some key passages on inspiration?
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

## LESSON 3 – WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read:
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. *What is a Healthy Church?* – Mark Dever
  - b. Listen – 2 *Pastor's Talk* podcasts
  - c. Write – What are the essential elements necessary to comprise a church?
    - i. One page
    - ii. Email to Jeremy prior to meeting.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Review ministry involvement and plan ministry assessment for next month.
    - ii. Give testimony of church history
    - iii. Participants read their papers.
    - iv. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s)
      2. Sermon(s)
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. Define the universal church
    - ii. Define the local church (Acts 2:41-43)
      1. Working definition
      2. Explain 9 Marks
    - iii. Church membership
      1. (Acts 4:4; Acts 16:5)
      2. (1 Cor 5:11-13)
      3. (Acts 20:28; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:2)
      4. (Heb 10:24-25)
      5. (Col 3:11)
      6. (Heb 3:13)
      7. (Acts 20:28)
    - iv. Church attendance
    - v. Inter-church fellowship/partnership
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. What are some key passages that define the church and/or the importance of the church?
    - ii. What should be the prerequisites for church membership?
    - iii. Why do denominations exist?
    - iv. Students read their papers again and critique each other's papers.
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

## LESSON 4 – THEOLOGY PROPER

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read:
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. Chapters 4-8 in *Bible Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem.
  - b. Listen
    - i. Required: Relevant lessons from *Drive by Theology* – Todd Friel & Steve Lawson
    - ii. Recommended: Relevant lessons from *Systematic Theology (Audio Lectures)* – Wayne Grudem
  - c. View: Does God Change His mind? – YouTube – Honest Answers, SBTS
  - d. Write: Does God have one attribute that outshines the others?
    - i. One page
    - ii. Email to Jeremy prior to the meeting.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Participants read their papers.
    - ii. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s)
      2. Audio(s)
      3. Video
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. The existence of God (Deut 6:4)
    - ii. The names of God
    - iii. Communicable attributes
    - iv. Incommunicable attributes (Ps 139; Isa 40)
    - v. Trinity (Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14)
    - vi. Providence (Dan 4:25; Matt 6:26)
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. What does *solus deo gloria* mean?
    - ii. Did God create the universe? How?
    - iii. If God controls all things, how can our actions have real meaning?
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

## LESSON 5 - WHAT IS AN ELDER?

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read:
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. *Gospel Eldership* – Robert H. Thune
  - b. Write: What is the Scriptural Support for a Plurality of Elders?
    - i. One page.
    - ii. Email to Jeremy prior to meeting
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Review ministry involvement and plan ministry assessment for next month.
    - ii. What has been your experience been with pastors/elders?
    - iii. Have guys read their papers.
    - iv. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s)
      2. Sermon(s)
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. Biblical explanation of Pastors/Elders (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17; Titus 1:5)
    - ii. How they are called? (1 Tim 3:1)
    - iii. What kind of men they are? (Character) (1 Tim 3:2-7)
    - iv. What ability(ies) must they have? (Competence) (1 Tim 3:2-7)
    - v. What must they believe (Conviction) (Titus 1:9)
    - vi. Chemistry necessary to serve on pastoral team
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. What is the difference between an elder and a deacon?
    - ii. What is the difference between an elder and a pastor?
    - iii. What are some key passages dealing with:
      1. plurality of eldership?
      2. the character and qualifications of an elder?
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

## LESSON 6 – CHRISTOLOGY

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read:
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. Chapters 14-16 in *Bible Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem.
  - b. Listen:
    - i. Required: Relevant lessons from *Drive by Theology* – Friel & Lawson
    - ii. Recommended: Relevant lessons from *Systematic Theology (Audio Lectures)* – Wayne Grudem
  - c. View:
    - i. “Is Jesus Just a Copy of Other Gods?” – YouTube – Honest Answers, SBTS
    - ii. “How Do I Respond to the Claim of a Jehovah's Witness That Jesus Is Not God?” – YouTube – Real Truth Real Quick
    - iii. Are Mormons Christians? – YouTube – Real Truth Real Quick
  - d. Write: List three key passages highlighting the deity of Christ and explain them in your own words.
    - i. One page
    - ii. Email to Jeremy prior to the meeting.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Candidates read their papers and explain doctrine supported by each passage.
    - ii. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s)
      2. Audio(s)
      3. Video
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. Hypostatic union (1 Jn 4:2; Heb 1:8)
    - ii. His work (2 Cor 5:21)
      1. Active obedience
      2. Passive obedience
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. Explain why Jesus had to be fully God and fully man in order to atone for our sins.
    - ii. Can someone be saved without knowing who Christ is?
    - iii. What does *solus Christus* mean?
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

## LESSON 7 – PERSONAL CHARACTER

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read:
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. *Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons*, Part 2 – Thabiti Anyabwile
    - iii. Select articles from *Shepherding: The Work and Character of a Pastor* (9 Marks ejournal)
  - b. View: “The Character of the Pastor” – YouTube – John MacArthur
  - c. Write: Fill out Character survey.<sup>3</sup>
    - i. Also have wife, one pastor, two close friends fill out.
    - ii. Email to Jeremy prior to the meeting.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Review ministry involvement and plan ministry assessment for next month.
    - ii. What have you observed regarding personal character of pastors?
    - iii. What are the key passages dealing with the character of a pastor?
    - iv. Participants read their papers.
    - v. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s)
      2. Sermon(s)
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. Walk through the explanation and application of the nineteen character qualifications listed in Timothy and Titus. (1 Tim 3; Titus 1)
    - ii. Bring gospel hope to this standard for pastors.
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. What do we typically judge a man by for pastoral ministry?
    - ii. Is there any character trait that is more important than the rest?
    - iii. Can a man serve if he has major character flaws in his past?
    - iv. Should there be any adjustments to paper?
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

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<sup>3</sup> Attached at end of Plan.



## LESSON 8 – PNEUMATOLOGY

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read:
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. Chapters 29-30 in *Bible Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem.
  - b. Listen:
    - i. Required: Relevant lessons from *Drive by Theology* – Todd Friel & Steve Lawson
    - ii. Recommended: Relevant lessons from *Systematic Theology (Audio Lectures)* – Wayne Grudem
  - c. View: “What Is the Gift of Tongues?” – YouTube – Honest Answers, SBTS
  - d. Write: Can you pray in tongues and be a member of Liberty Baptist?
    - i. One page
    - ii. Email to Jeremy prior to the meeting.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Participants read their papers.
    - ii. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s)
      2. Audio(s)
      3. Video
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. The promise of the Holy Spirit. (Jer 31:33; Ezek 36:26-28)
    - ii. Who is the Holy Spirit? (Acts 13:2; Eph 4:30; Acts 5:3-4)
    - iii. What does the Holy Spirit do? (Gen 41:38; John 7:39, 14:17; John 16:8-11; 2 Pet 1:21; John 15:26)
    - iv. The Holy Spirit and the Christian. (1 Cor 12:13; John 3:5-8; Rom 2:29; John 14:17; 2 Cor 3:18; Eph 5:18; 2 Cor 1:22)
    - v. The Holy Spirit and the Charismatic gifts. (1 Cor. 14)
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. Is it appropriate to address the Holy Spirit in prayer?
    - ii. When does a person “receive” the Holy Spirit?
    - iii. How do we undervalue/overvalue the Holy Spirit?
    - iv. What is the difference between the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit?
    - v. Should there be any changes to your paper?
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

## LESSON 9 – MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read:
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. *Masculine Mandate* - Rick Phillips
  - b. View: “Biblical Masculinity In the Home” – YouTube – Voddie Baucham
  - c. Write: Fill out Marriage Evaluation form.<sup>4</sup>
    - i. Have wife fill out and turn in directly to pastor.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Review ministry involvement and plan ministry assessment for next month.
    - ii. Why is there a stereotype about pastors kids?
    - iii. Participants read their papers.
    - iv. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s)
      2. Sermon(s)
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. What is marriage? (Eph 5:22-33)
    - ii. Is your marriage accurate?
    - iii. Why is “rule his own house well” one of the qualifications of a pastor? (1 Tim 3:4)
    - iv. What are the roles of each gender in marriage? (Eph 5:22-33)
    - v. Primary principles of parenting (Deut 6; Eph 6)
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. What are some key passages dealing with the marriage and family?
    - ii. Can a divorced man be a pastor?
    - iii. Should there be any adjustments to paper?
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

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<sup>4</sup> Use Marriage assessment form – appendix 3.

## LESSON 10 – ANTHROPOLOGY/HAMARTIOLOGY

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. Chapters 11-13 in *Bible Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem.
  - b. Listen:
    - i. Required: Relevant lessons from *Drive by Theology* – Friel & Lawson
    - ii. Recommended: Relevant lessons from *Systematic Theology (Audio Lectures)* – Wayne Grudem
  - c. View:
    - i. “Image of God” – Bible Project
    - ii. “What does it mean to be made in God’s image?” – Ask Pastor John
  - d. Write: Where did we come from? Why are we here? What went wrong? How can it be fixed?
    - i. One page
    - ii. Email to Jeremy prior to the meeting.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Participants read their papers.
    - ii. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s)
      2. Audio(s)
      3. Video
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. Created in the image of God (Gen 1:26)
    - ii. Nature of man
      1. Body/soul/spirit (Matt 10:28)
      2. Male and female (Gen 5:1-2)
    - iii. The Fall (Gen 3:1-7)
    - iv. The Curse (Gen 3:8-21)
    - v. Depravity (Isa 64:6)
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. Which social issues are tied to the *imago dei* concept?
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

## LESSON 11 – ABLE TO TEACH

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read:
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. *Saving Eutychus* – Gary Millar & Phil Campbell
  - b. Listen: “The Functional Centrality of the Gospel” – Mike Bullmore
  - c. Write: What makes for good preaching?
    - i. One page
    - ii. Email to Jeremy prior to the meeting.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Review ministry involvement and plan ministry assessment for next month.
    - ii. What makes for good preaching?
    - iii. Participants read their papers.
    - iv. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s)
      2. Sermon(s)
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. Why do we preach? (2 Tim 4:2)
    - ii. How do we preach?
    - iii. What do we preach?
    - iv. Difference between preaching and teaching.
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. What are some key passages dealing with teaching and preaching?
    - ii. Must a man be skilled at preaching in order to be a pastor/elder?
    - iii. Should there be any adjustments to paper?
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

## LESSON 12 – SOTERIOLOGY

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. Chapters 17-25 in *Bible Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem.
  - b. Listen:
    - i. Required: Relevant lessons from *Drive by Theology* – Todd Friel & Steve Lawson
    - ii. Recommended: Relevant lessons from *Systematic Theology (Audio Lectures)* – Wayne Grudem
  - c. View: “Do I have to call myself a Calvinist?” – YouTube – Honest Answers, SBTS
  - d. Write: As letter to a friend answer their question, “How can I become a Christian?”
    - i. One page
    - ii. Email to Jeremy prior to the meeting.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Participants read their papers.
    - ii. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s), Audio(s), Video
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. Human condition before conversion
    - ii. Before Conversion
      1. Foreknowledge (Rom 8:29)
      2. Election (Rom 9:11)
      3. Effectual calling (Rom 8:30)
    - iii. Simultaneous with conversion
      1. Regeneration (John 1:12)
      2. Conversion (Acts 3:19; Acts 16:31)
      3. Justification (Rom 3:20)
      4. Reconciliation (Rom 5:10)
      5. Redemption (Eph 1:7)
      6. Atonement (Isa 53:6; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24)
      7. Propitiation (Rom 3:25)
      8. Adoption (Eph 1:5)
    - iv. After conversion
      1. Sanctification (1 Cor 1:2; 6:11)
      2. Preservation/perseverance 5)(Heb 7:2)
      3. Assurance (1 John 5:13)
      4. Glorification (Heb 12:23)
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. What do *sola fide*, and *sola gracia* mean?
    - ii. What is the gospel? (Answer in 60 seconds.)
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

## LESSON 13 – PRAYER

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read:
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. *Praying the Bible* – Donald Whitney
  - b. View: “Helping Your People Discover a Praying Life” - YouTube – Paul Miller (on Desiring God YouTube page.)
  - c. Write: Why is it so hard to pray?
    - i. One page
    - ii. Email to Jeremy prior to the meeting.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Review ministry involvement and plan ministry assessment for next month.
    - ii. Describe the history of your prayer life.
    - iii. Participants read their papers.
    - iv. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s)
      2. Sermon(s)
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. What is prayer? (Jer 29:12)
    - ii. Why do we pray? (1 Pet 5:7)
    - iii. How can we pray? (Heb 4:16)
    - iv. Why is prayer part of pastoral ministry? (Acts 6:4)
    - v. How can we make sure prayer is part of pastoral ministry?
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. What are some key passages dealing with prayer in pastoral ministry?
    - ii. Discuss any adjustments to paper.
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

## LESSON 14 – ANGELOLOGY

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. Chapter 10 in *Bible Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem.
  - b. Listen:
    - i. Required: Relevant lessons from *Drive by Theology* – Todd Friel & Steve Lawson
    - ii. Recommended: Relevant lessons from *Systematic Theology (Audio Lectures)* – Wayne Grudem
  - c. View: “Can a Christian be demon possessed?” – YouTube – Honest Answers, SBTS
  - d. Write: What do you think of books like, *Heaven Is for Real*?
    - i. One page
    - ii. Email to Jeremy prior to the meeting.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Participants read their papers.
    - ii. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s)
      2. Audio(s)
      3. Video
  - b. Teaching points
    - i. Spiritual beings (Heb 1:14)
    - ii. Angels (Ps 91:11)
    - iii. Satan (Eph 6)
    - iv. Demons (Rev 12:9)
    - v. Our awareness of spiritual beings and the spiritual world
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. What is spiritual warfare, and what does it look like in the life of a believer?
    - ii. What about guardian angels?
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

## LESSON 15 – CONVICTION

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read:
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. LBC Doctrinal Statement
    - iii. *London Baptist Confession 1689*
  - b. Write: Highlight where you disagree or have questions in either document.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Review ministry involvement and plan ministry assessment for next month.
    - ii. What beliefs would you die for?
    - iii. What questions do you have from the reading?
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. Why conviction is essential. (Heb 10:23)
    - ii. Understanding Theological Triage
    - iii. Why a pastoral team must agree on primary and secondary, but not necessarily tertiary issues.
    - iv. LBC doctrinal statement.
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. Are there doctrinal positions as LBC that, at present, you would not be in agreement with?
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer



## LESSON 16 – ECCLESIOLOGY

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. Chapters 26-28 in *Bible Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem.
  - b. Listen:
    - i. Required: Relevant lessons from *Drive by Theology* – Todd Friel & Steve Lawson
    - ii. Recommended: Relevant lessons from *Systematic Theology (Audio Lectures)* – Wayne Grudem
  - c. View: “What Should a Local Church Look Like?” – YouTube – The Gospel Coalition
  - d. Write: Answer the question: “Why can’t I just worship God by myself at the lake on Sunday?”
    - i. One page
    - ii. Email to Jeremy prior to the meeting.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Participants read their papers.
    - ii. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s)
      2. Audio(s)
      3. Video
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. What is *the* Church? (Col 1:8)
    - ii. What is *a* Church? (Acts 2:42)
    - iii. Polity/Structure
    - iv. What does a church do? (Matt 28:18; Acts 2:42)
    - v. What makes a healthy church?
    - vi. What does a believer do in relation to a local church?
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. What should pastors expect from members and vice versa?
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

## LESSON 17 – COUNSELING

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read:
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. *The Pastor and Counseling* – Pierre & Reju
  - f. View: Biblical Counseling vs Christian Counseling – YouTube – Zondervan, Heath Lambert
  - g. Optional Listening: *Drive by Counseling*
  - b. Write: How does the Bible’s sufficiency inform our ability to help people solve their problems?
2. Meeting Time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Review ministry involvement and plan ministry assessment for next month.
    - ii. Do you think you are called to ministry?
    - iii. Discuss workbook.
    - iv. What stood out to you from the reading?
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. The nature of man (Gen 1:27; Gen 3)
    - ii. The nature of man’s problems. (James 1:14)
    - iii. The solution to man’s problems. (Col 2:6)
    - iv. God’s methods for helping man with problems. (2 Cor 3:18; Prov 27:17)
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. How should you approach someone who is struggling with a life-dominating sin?
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

## LESSON 18 – ESCHATOLOGY

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read:
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. Chapters 31-34 in *Bible Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem.
  - b. Listen:
    - i. Required: Relevant lessons from *Drive by Theology* – Todd Friel & Steve Lawson
    - ii. Recommended: Relevant lessons from *Systematic Theology (Audio Lectures)* – Wayne Grudem
  - c. View: “An Evening of Eschatology” – YouTube – Desiring God
  - d. Write: Describe, in basic terms, the three primary millennial positions.
    - i. One page
    - ii. Email to Jeremy prior to the meeting.
2. Meeting time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Have guys read their papers.
    - ii. What stood out to you from the reading, listening, watching?
      1. Book(s)
      2. Audio(s)
      3. Video
  - b. Teaching points
    - i. The return of Christ. (Matt 25:13)
    - ii. The millennium. (Rev 20:1-6)
      1. Amillennialism
      2. Postmillennialism
      3. Premillennialism
    - iii. God’s judgment of people. (Rev 20:11-15; 2 Cor 5:10)
    - iv. The new heaven and earth. (Rev 21:1-4)
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. Does it matter what eschatological position you hold?
    - ii. What affect does the doctrine of the imminent return have on our daily lives?
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

## LESSON 19 – CALLING

1. Pre-session homework
  - a. Read:
    - i. *The Bible* – using Bible reading plan to read through the Bible in 40 weeks.
    - ii. *Am I Called?* – Dave Harvey
  - b. Write: fill out SBTS workbook
2. Meeting Time
  - a. Open discussion
    - i. Do you think you are called to ministry?
    - ii. Discuss workbook.
    - iii. What stood out to you from the reading?
  - b. Teaching Points
    - i. Biblical understanding of calling (1 Tim 3:1)
    - ii. Subjective call (1 Tim 3:1)
    - iii. Objective call
      1. Character (1 Tim 3; Tit 1)
      2. Competence (1 Tim 3: Tit 1)
      3. Conviction (Tit 1:9)
    - iv. Actual call
  - c. Mentor questions
    - i. Would you continue to pursue ministry if your pastor(s) said they did not think you should pursue ministry?
    - ii. Does your wife think you are called?
  - d. Mentee questions
  - e. Prayer

## Appendix 1 - Character Assessment

1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Character Trait	1	2	3	4	Comments
Above reproach (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6)					
The husband of one wife (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6)					
Sober-minded (1 Tim 3:2)					
Self-controlled(1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)					
Respectable (1 Tim 3:2)					
Hospitable (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)					
Not a drunkard (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7)					
Not violent but gentle (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7)					
Not quarrelsome (1 Tim 3:3)					
Not a lover of money or greedy for gain (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7)					
Not a recent convert (1 Tim 3:6)					
Well thought of by outsiders (1 Tim 3:7)					
Not arrogant (Titus 1:7)					
Not quick tempered (Titus 1:7)					
Lover of good (Titus 1:8)					
Upright (Titus 1:8)					
Holy (Titus 1:8)					
Disciplined (Titus 1:8)					

- “Able to teach” be tested in the Practice Track of the ETP using the Sermon Evaluation form.
- “Manage household well” will be tested in the Practical Track of the ETP using the Marriage Evaluation Form.)

## **Appendix 2 – Preaching/Teaching Evaluation Form**

Preacher's name:

### **1. Content:**

- Bible passage:
- Title of sermon:
- Was there interest created by the introduction before the Scripture was expounded?
- Was there evidence of one clear, big idea through the sermon? What was it - in one sentence?
- Was the point of the sermon faithful to the point of the passage?
- Was your attention held?
- Were the thoughts, words, and sentences easy to follow?
- Were there effective stories and illustrations?
- Were the main points clear?
- Was there clear application of the text to the listener's lives?
- Was the hope of the gospel given? Was Christ the "hero?" Was it a truly "Christian" sermon?

## **2. Delivery**

- Was their variation in pitch, volume, and pace?
- Was the verbal/oral delivery natural, or did he “sound like a preacher?”
- Was there energy and interest in the way the sermon was delivered?
- Did the preacher’s style feel natural and conversational?
- Was the preacher interesting to watch?
- How long was the sermon? Did it feel too long (be honest)?
- Did this message move you to change anything in your thinking or life?
- Did the preacher seem knowledgeable and comfortable with his content?
- Was the language used appropriate for the audience?
- Was their illustration and application that would get the attention of everyone from teenagers to the elderly?

## **3. General comments**

- How could this sermon have been improved?
- Are there any other thoughts you’d like to share?

### Appendix 3 - Marriage Evaluation Form

Questions for the Husband					
1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary					
Character Trait	1	2	3	4	Comments
Christ and His gospel are central in our home.					
We read the Bible and pray together regularly as a couple/family.					
I put my wife's needs above my own.					
I make my marriage and family a priority.					
I speak positively about my wife in private and public.					
I support my wife and her authority in front of the kids.					
I enjoy spending time with my wife.					
We have a mutually satisfying sexual relationship.					
We have sex frequently.					
I am faithful to my wife mentally, emotionally, and physically.					
We are financially stable.					
We are not in significant debt.					
I love my wife as Christ loves the church.					
My wife is flourishing under my leadership and care.					
My children are flourishing under my leadership and care.					
I take responsibility for the discipline and discipleship of our children.					
My children are generally obedient and enjoyable to be around.					
I do not provoke my children to wrath.					
I am intentional in training my children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.					



<b>Questions for the Wife</b>					
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>					
<b>Character Trait</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Comments</b>
I am walking with God and growing in my faith.					
I am personally in the word and praying.					
I am guided by God's Word rather than my own thoughts and feelings.					
The fruit of the Spirit is evident in my life.					
I am ministering in the church joyfully.					
I submit to Christ by submitting to my husband's authority.					
I am respectful to my husband privately.					
I am respectful of my husband publicly.					
My husband and I agree on our financial decisions.					
My husband and I have a satisfying sex life.					
I am faithful to my spouse mentally, emotionally, and physically.					
My husband and I agree and are united in our parenting efforts.					
I support my husbands desire to serve in the church.					
I believe my husband is honest and transparent with the pastors					

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## ABSTRACT

### PREPARING AN ELDER TRAINING PLAN FOR THOSE ASPIRING TO THE OFFICE OF ELDER AT LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH OF DALHART, TEXAS

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021  
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The purpose of this project was to develop and implement a training manual for aspiring elders at Liberty Baptist Church of Dalhart, Texas. Chapter 1 explains the ministerial context of Liberty Baptist Church and the need for the development of an elder training plan. Chapter 2 demonstrates the biblical and theological basis for training and testing men for ministry, as well as providing the areas in which men should be trained and tested. Chapter 3 considers a sampling of resources that speak directly to the process and content of training and testing. Chapter 4 provides an overview of the process and methodology used in this project. Chapter 5 is an evaluation of project determining its effectiveness.

## VITA

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### EDUCATION

BA, Bob Jones University, 2000

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### MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Assistant to the President, Bob Jones University, Greenville, South Carolina,  
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Youth Pastor, Hampton Park Baptist Church, Greenville, South Carolina,  
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