



Message **Transcript**

The Men Who Lead Christâ€™sTM Church

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Lord Jesus, we give you all the glory, all the honor and all the praise for who you are. Lord, we gather here today believing that every time your book is opened and accurately and faithfully proclaimed that you speak. Lord, our invitation to you is, speak Lord, we are ready to hear. Lord, every single person here needs a word from you and every single person that's receptive will hear you. Lord, we confess any known sins to you right now before you and ask that you would have your way with us during this time that we hear your word proclaimed. Lord, be helpful to us as we listen and be helpful to me as I proclaim your word. Now for all who are gathered, who desire to hear God's word, who will believe what He says to you and will by faith put into practice what he shows you, will you very loudly agree with me this morning by saying the word amen?

Amen.

Amen. I heard of a high school assembly some time ago, where there were different branches of service that were coming to get the students to sign up for their branch of military. First went the man from the army and he stood up and began to talk about all the benefits of being part of the army and all the different things that you could do as an enlisted man and all the different opportunities in the G.I. Bill that would pay for college, et cetera. Then the Air Force got up there and they began to talk about, "Hey, you don't want to be in the army. You want to be in the Air Force. You want to fly. You want to be the overhead troops. You want to do all of this." Then the Navy guy got up and said, "Hey, if you want to do both land and air and sea, come join the Navy. We're the best." Then finally the Marine stood up.

The Marine stood up and said, "I've been looking at this assembly the whole time these other three men have been talking, and I realized by looking at you, there's only about two of you in here that can actually be a Marine. Since you already know who you are, I'll just meet with you off to the side afterwards." After the assembly, he was swamped. Now whether that story's true or not, it speaks to the heart of what's inside of a man, which is, "I want to give my life to something greater than just the here and now. I want to be part of something that leaves a legacy that's even greater than me." God designed men differently than he designed women. Last week, we spent time in the book talking about God's role for women in the church. Today, we're going to talk about God's role for men in the church, and we're going to begin that discussion. It's really important that we understand men were designed differently. It's why you as a man were designed for adventure.

It's why you're constantly thinking about, "What is it I can give my life to that's worthwhile? It's bigger than the job that I'm in. It's bigger than the family that I'm in." It's leaving something lasting. It's why every man wants to be connected to something great. You'll notice if men watch sports, when a championship team wins, men will go out and buy that specific gear so they can identify with that champion. Men want to be outdoors. Men want to go after things and do things because men know in their heart they're yearning for adventure. They're wanting to be part of something bigger than themselves. Men, when aligned right with God and do the things God wants you to do, make a difference in society. I got a story sent to my phone last night, I almost showed

the video today. I'll let you look it up, but it was a story about a high school in Shreveport, Louisiana called Southwood High School. Southwood High School had experienced in the course of three days, 23 arrests at that high school.

But do you know, since that third day it's been well over a month? They haven't even had one incident of fighting in the school. Do you know what happened? There were a group of dads that said, "These are our kids and this shouldn't happen anymore." They started a service called Dads on Duty. A group of men went to the school and now they patrol with T-shirts on and they make sure kids get to class and they make sure there's no fighting, and the whole school's changed. They started interviewing the young girls and the young boys and asking, "What changed?" One of the girls is like, "Well, they've got that look." You know the look of a dad, like you better be doing what I'm telling you to do? Why? Because when men align with what they were designed to do, culture changes. John Wesley once said, the great evangelist that evangelized all of the UK and a big part of the United States he said, give me 100 men that love nothing, but God and hate nothing but sin and it is finished.

The challenge that we have in our culture is that we have too many passive, sissified males that don't stand up and lead the way God designed us to lead and that's the problem that we have in culture. A bigger problem with that is that many of those sissified, passive male bleed their way into a church and find their way into leadership. So goes the church and so goes the world. So go the men in the church, so goes the church, so goes the world. If you have sissified, passive men leading in the church, you're not going to have the influence and the culture that Jesus Christ wants

us to have. Today we're going to begin our discussion about what men need to be. Now, last week, we took a look at the women. I know it was a hard message for women to hear. Two weeks ago, I had all the men raised their hands because we talked about lifting up holy hands. What would that look like if men were really men living for God, lifting up holy hands?

It was a pretty cool sight to see. But I've been toying with this idea. I thought I would do this just because you need to see this. Men, when you see this, this is the tragedy and this is why we need to be Godly men that elevate women and elevate our wives and elevate our kids because of what you're about ready to see. Women, listen to me. If you've ever been hurt by a man and you've thought about it for more than two weeks, I'm talking, you've been wounded by a dad, an uncle, a coach, a pastor, a man in some way that scarred you in some way, would you just raise your hand? You see that? That's a tragedy. That was never intended to be what God intended male leadership to look like, and I'm sorry that that's happened to you. It's been happening all the way back since the fall in the Garden of Eden. We as men, we're called to use our strength, but we're called to use our strength to protect. Men, you're wired differently.

God gave you strength to protect and to provide. That's what He called you to do. Men, you weren't designed for safety. Did you know that? Moms, when you tell your middle-school kid, "Be safe. Just be safe." He's not designed for that. He was designed to provide safety. How our culture has shifted. In 1944, we sent 18 year old men up a hill with eminent death in their mind, knowing that they were going to die for

something greater than themselves. Today, we take that same age group and we tell them to hide out and be safe and wear a mask or you might die. Men, death is not what we fear. Living without purpose is what we fear. Men were called to live for something greater than themselves. It's why if you hear two words that men say all the time, you hear it with little boys and you hear it with grown men, here's two words men say. Watch this. Why? Because men want to know that they're doing something, that they're creating something. When men are aligned with Jesus and men have the Godly character that God designed, men can change culture.

If you see a problem in this world and you look at it and you think to yourself, "Why is it that way?" Here's why it's that way. Because we've got sissified, passive males leading in the church and so we're producing, sissified, passive males in our culture, and there's all sorts of garbage going on because of that. If you want to change the culture, you change the heart of a man. That's what Paul wanted to tell Timothy. That's what he was instructing him to do and that's what we're going to take a look at today. We're going to take a look at five categories that God wants us to be aware of as men for us to be the leaders in our church and in the community that God wants us to be. Now, listen, men, this is going to be as hard of a message for you as the message was for women last week. Because last week we talked about submission and how women are called to submit to their husbands, and how Jesus eternally submitted himself to the Father.

We, as men can hear that message, I can even preach that message and say, "That's what the word of the Lord says, go for it." But as a woman, you know, apart

from the Holy Spirit, that's impossible. It's really hard to do. This weekend, we're going to talk about men laying down their lives for the sake of the gospel. That's hard to do too. It's impossible without Jesus. I mean, we see in Ephesians 5, women are to submit to their husbands, but husbands are to love their wives like Christ loved the church and as He gave himself for her. I don't think Jesus dying on the cross was the hardest part of that day. Into your hands I commit my spirit, and letting go, that wasn't the hard part. The hardest part was everything that led up to that.

With the bride that Jesus loved, that spit on Him, that mocked Him, that abused Him, that scourged Him, that did all those things to Him, and He willingly put up with all of that and endured all that because of His love, with which He had for His bride. Men are called to suffer like that for Jesus. Men are called to lay down their lives so that others have a better future. Men are called to give their lives for their wives and for their kids and for the next generation. So that the next generation sees Jesus better than our generation does. That's what it means to be a man, and that's what we're going to talk about today. I want to let you know, when you hear these texts, this is not a text for you to hear and be like, "Well, I guess I'm not called to be an elder." Everything we're going to talk about is everything God designed you as a male to become.

Then when you hear these things that we're going to address that your heart should be, "Lord Jesus, help me become the fullness of what you designed me to be." Ladies, in the same way we encourage husbands not to nudge you last week, don't

nudge your husbands this week. The Holy Spirit will do plenty of work on His own. As he's listening, pray for him. But I'm going to encourage you to open your Bibles up to 1 Timothy 3. We're going to take a look at the first seven verses and then we will unpack those five categories that God wants us to be aware of. Here's what the Holy Spirit says through the Apostle Paul. It is a trustworthy statement. If any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer then must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity.

But if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God. Not a new convert so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. He must have a good reputation with those outside the church so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. In these short seven verses, this succinct passage, we're going to see what God's call is for men who lead in Christ's church. We're going to take a look at these things and we're going to allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us and become what God wants us to be. The first is this, that men who lead in Christ's church must be marked by intensity for ministry. Men who lead in Christ's church must be marked by intensity for ministry. Notice what the word says. He says, it's a trustworthy statement. We see that all throughout the pastoral epistles, all throughout the pastoral letters. It's trustworthy. You can bank on this.

Everything in here is penned by the Holy Spirit. It's all true, but here's something that you can really hang on to. Here's some handlebars. If any man ... Who would any man be? Any male. That would be all of us that are men. Any man aspires to the office of overseer, it's a fine work he desires to do. If any man aspires, it's a fine desire. Let's talk about aspiration and desire. What does it mean to aspire to something? What does it mean to desire something? Aspiration means to yearn, to strive, to reach out. It's the idea of a runner crossing the finish line where he's stretching for it? It's, "I must do this. I've got to do this. I want to be that." The desire is that internal pull. It's that longing for. It's setting your heart upon. Both those things should be in conjunction. For those who are being called up as pastors or elders or leaders in the church, overseers, we'll talk about those in just saying, there should be an outward, "I got to do this."

There should be an inward, like, "I must do this." Both of those things are going on simultaneously. Young men, listen to me. When that's going on in your heart and you're asking the question, "I wonder if God's calling me to ministry." Pursue that. If you're not, God will guide you somewhere else. By the way, God's looking for those who are being pulled and drawn in that way. By the way, there is no greater return on investment that you'll ever have than serving the Lord Jesus Christ and his church. Now let me tell you why that's so important. I've told you my false views of church growing up, how pastors really didn't do anything. They just stood in front of the same people sitting in the same seats week after week and nothing ever happened. I told you my false view of church when I grew up, which was this, I watched what it took to be part

of my football team in high school. I watched the discipline it took. I didn't take vacation with my family in the summer because I was afraid somebody else would take my position.

There was a requirement for how I needed to dress and how I needed to behave and how I had to cut my hair back when I had some, and all these different kinds of things, and how I had to treat my teachers or I couldn't play. There was such demands on that. In the business world, I saw guys saying, "If you're going to be in the business world, if you're going to be successful, here's how you dress. Here's how you look. Here's when you show up for work. Don't be late." Demands for that. But when I saw pastors in churches, I never saw a demand for anything. John Wesley, just so you know, his followers that wanted to be preachers for him, he told them they had to rise by 4:00 AM every day, read their Bible for an hour, pray for an hour, be willing to preach in the streets even when mob violence broke out. If they weren't willing to do that as a prerequisite, he didn't want them. What happened? The movement exploded. Why? Because men in their heart want to give themselves to something great.

The problem in the church is not that we've raised the bar too high. We've lowered it so far that anybody could just step over it. We're talking about the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We're talking about the reality of heaven and hell for lost people. Who does God want? People that are intensely saying that's the most important thing we could be giving our lives to. Men, there's nothing you can give your life to more important than serving Jesus Christ and His church, period. That's who God's looking for. You say, "Well, what's this role?" It says, it's a fine work he desires to do. That

sounds kind of passive. It's fine. It's okay. It means it's a good work. It's good that you feel tugged to this. It's good that you want to strive for this. It's good that you want to serve the Lord, Jesus Christ and His church. Well, let's think about what an overseer is. What's the thing I'm supposed to strive for? What's an overseer? I want to give you three Greek words today and tell you what they mean.

All three of these words are used interchangeably throughout the New Testament. I'll give you one example of that here in a minute. But the three different words used interchangeably are this. The first word is [Greek 00:15:53] or [Greek 00:15:54]. It really means overseer or Bishop. It's the word that's being used here. The significance of that is the position that the person has. He's an overseer. He's walking the fence lines. He's seeing what's going on in the entire church. He knows the direction God's leading and he's working to guide people into that. He's very aware as he sees the whole flock of God, what's taking place. That's an overseer. Bishop, it's what it looks like. The second word is [Greek 00:16:23]. [Greek 00:16:23] is the word we have for pastor or shepherd. That's the significance of that. That's what he does. An overseer shepherds the flock of God. A shepherd provides for the flock. A shepherd prays for the flock. A shepherd leads the flock, feeds the flock, protects the flock.

That's what a pastor does. That's what a shepherd does. He's not a boss. He's not a bully. He's not the administrator. He's not the director. He is feeding God's people. He is leading God's people. He is helping God's people. He's talking with God's people. He's shepherding. I had a friend that went to Israel one time, I've been

there a few times, and he was talking about how shepherds lead and how they have distinct tones that they make with their mouth and all the sheep know the voice of the shepherd and they just follow. He was watching the Bedouin shepherds do that when he was there and one day at the end of the trip, he noticed the guy walking behind all the sheep yelling at the sheep and beating the sheep and moving them in a certain direction. He said, "Hey, you told me that shepherds walk out ahead of the sheep and that they guide the sheep and the sheep know his voice." The guy said, "Well, that's not a shepherd. That's a butcher." Overseers shepherd. They lead, they guide.

That's what they do. The third word used interchangeably is [Greek 00:17:45], which means elder. The significance of the word elder denounces his maturity, life and spiritual. Elder simply means older. Oftentimes when we talk about overseers, pastors, shepherds, we're talking about older men. It doesn't prohibit somebody in their 30s from being an elder. Perhaps they have more life maturity. Perhaps they have more spiritual maturity. Perhaps they grew up in a home where they came to know Christ when they were five and they've been pursuing the Lord for a period of time. But what you will notice about these three words, if somebody's an overseer, an elder, a pastor, there should be a life and a spiritual maturity about them and who they are. That's what it means. All these words are used interchangeably in the scripture. Now, why is that important? Because for those of you who are 30 years old, let me ask you a question, do you see the world differently now than you did when you were 10? I'll tell you. When you're 50, you'll see the world differently than you did when you were 30 as well.

For those of you who are 70, you would tell me, "Hey, Pastor Jeff, in 20 years, you're going to see it even different." Why? Because the older you are, hopefully the more mature you are with your life and hopefully the more mature you are with your spiritual life. What's God looking for? He's looking for mature shepherds to guide his church into greener pastures. Now, I'll give you an example of this. I'm going to open up to 1 Peter 5, where you'll see these three words used interchangeably. 1 Peter 5. You can also look at Acts 20. When Paul is talking to the Ephesians elders, you'll see the word overseer, pastor and elder all used interchangeably. This is just one spot. 1 Peter 5, therefore I exhort the elders, the [Greek 00:19:28]. I exhort the elders among you, you mature men, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ and a partaker also of a glory that it to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God. Pastor them, provide for them, pray for them, protect them, lead them.

Shepherd the flock of God among you exercising oversight. Oversight, there's that word. That's your position. That's who you are. You're helping guide because of your maturity in those different things. Not under compulsion, but voluntarily according to the will of God. Not for sordid gain, but for eagerness. All these words are used interchangeably throughout the New Testament. It's talking about the spiritual leader. Now, some of you are going to pause right here, men, and you're going to be like, "Well, I'm not called to do any of those things." Yes you are. Because when we're talking about this, we're not talking about structure. We're not talking about position. Here's what we're talking about. The character and the heart of a man of God and anyone who is a Christian man, should aspire and desire to be everything the word of

God teaches you to be. Whether you ever hold a "position" or office in the church, that's just the truth. What does it mean? It means this. Whether we're talking overseer, pastor, elder, these are men of exemplary example of Christ.

That's what it means to be an overseer. That's what it means to be a pastor or and elder. You're an exemplary example who willingly shepherds God's people with grace, guiding them into all truth. That's what an overseer does. Now, let me say this about being an overseer because as we start walking through the list, here's what you might say, "I'm disqualified." No, you're not. We're talking about men that possess these, but they are growing them in them increasingly, not perfectly. Let's be clear. There's only one perfect man who's ever lived. That's the Lord Jesus Christ. Can we agree to that?

[crosstalk 00:21:22].

At the end of the day, we're growing in these things increasingly, not perfectly. There's not one man here who says, "I do this perfect all the time." Not one. We're growing in them increasingly, not perfectly. But what we want to be able to say as an elder, a pastor and overseer is much like Paul said in 2 Corinthians 11:1, be imitators of me as I am of Christ. Follow me as I follow Christ. By the way, men, every single one of us should aspire to be able to say that. What you should be able to say to your wife, to your children, to your family, to the church, to people at work, "Just follow my lead. Do what I do. Speak like I speak. Talk like I talk. Repent like I repent. Confess like I confess. Pray like I pray." If you do, you'll grow in Christ. For most of us as men,

we run and shy away from that, like, "Well, I don't know. I'll share the gospel and sub, but don't look at my life. I'm not quite put together yet."

Now, you have the Holy Spirit in your life if you're a Christian and you should aspire to be able to tell others, "I'm not perfect. But to the extent you see me following Christ, you should follow me that way and you'll grow." Can you say that, men? That's what God wants you to be able to say. Paul said the same thing to the church at Philippi in Philippians 4:9, the things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things and the God of peace will be with you. Not the whole, do as I say, not as I do. None of that stuff. Do as I say and as I do. Watch me. What I'm teaching you and saying to you and living before you, do those things and you'll grow in Christ. That's what every man at BRAVE Church should be able to say, or is increasingly growing in being able to say that. We need intensity for the ministry.

God is looking for His best and brightest people that when we see people in the pulpit and we see people that are guiding and leading the church, people would say, "That's who I aspire to be like. That's what it looks like to go after Christ. I'm growing because of their example." Number two is this, not only do we need intensity for the ministry, but men who lead Christ's church must be marked by immunity from vices. Immunity from vices. That means they're freed up from things that would trip them up in their character. If intensity for ministry is the opposite of passivity, then immunity from vices means that you have character. We have a lot of characters in our pulpits around our country today. We have fewer that have character. God is looking for character. Character is who you are when nobody else is watching you. Character is who you are

when God's the only person that's there watching you. Character is who you are when you're on your phone and nobody else is watching.

Character is who you are with your wife when nobody else is there to see.

Character is who you are with your kids when nobody else sees any of that. Character is how you handle your finances when nobody else knows about it. It's how you pay your taxes. It's what you do. It's character. There's no perfect man, but we're growing increasingly in these things. We're growing into the perfection that God would desire us to have. Let's begin to walk through that list. We're going to see 15 items that we're going to see as we go through this. Again, as we go through this, ask yourself, "Am I growing in this increasingly?" If not, maybe you stop right where you are and confess and repent before the Lord and ask Him to change you. Because you cannot change yourself. But I want to give you something truth on the authority of God, and that is this, God can change you. I got one, two, three, five. I got five amens from five women. Now listen, God can change you. You're not stuck where you were.

As you listen to these, don't hear this as judgment. Here these as God aspiring you and desiring you to become this. Here's what he says. As you have immunity from vices, the first is this, it's the overarching umbrella of all of them. An overseer then must be above reproach. Above reproach is the overarching umbrella for all of the character qualities of an elder, an overseer, a pastor. It means a charge or accusation will not stick. He's blameless. It means the charge or accusation may come, but it's not going to hold any weight because it's just not true. You say, "Well, wait, wait, wait, wait, Pastor Jeff, you've talked about before you became a pastor, you've got some

things in your past." Yes I do. Let's talk about what it means to be blameless before the Lord. If you open your Bibles to Proverbs 28:13, I think it gives us a picture of what it looks like to be blameless. It says this in Proverbs 28:13, he who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

It means, if you're an overseer, pastor, or elder, if there's been things in your past you've confessed them, you've forsaken them and you've done everything under your power to make those things right, that's what it means to be blameless. It's not that somebody couldn't say, "Look at you and your past. Look what you did." You're right. That's not the first time I've been aware of that. I've confessed that. I forsake that. People that were around me at the time, they know that was true of me. That's not who I am. God has forgiven me. I'm redeemed. That's what it means. Blameless doesn't mean perfect. Because if you were perfect, only Jesus could be an elder. I've confessed. I've forsaken. If a charge came against me, it wouldn't hold any weight because I'm above reproach. How about this one? The husband of one wife, literally reads a one-woman man. Now there is as many different ways of interpreting this as you possibly can. I'll keep it really simple for you. Some people say, "Well, that means single guys can't be elders." I don't think that's true.

Otherwise, Jesus and the apostle Paul couldn't have been leaders in the church. I don't think that's what it says. I think God gives the gift of celibacy to some men. In 50 years of my life, I personally met two that God has given the gift of celibacy to. I don't think it's a gift God gives out. Meaning this, men, if you have sexual desire, you do not

have the gift. Celibacy is a gift for those that would say, like my two friends have, "I'm glad that I don't have a desire to get married because I can spend my time focusing on Jesus Christ and Him alone." One of those guys has three different degrees. He has a medical doctorate degree. He has a doctorate in ministry and one other doctorate that he has, and he spends all of his time teaching. He's thrilled with that and he's glad he's not married. One of them went to the Czech Republic. A good friend of mine learned to Czech language, which is one of the hardest to learn, and he's been a missionary there for the last 20 plus years. He's thrilled that he's not married.

Most men don't have that gift. If you don't have that gift, then here's what God's telling you. Get married. Well, how do I get married? Find one woman and give your entire life to that one woman until death do you part. That's what a one-woman man does. It means this, that man is totally satisfied with that one woman and that woman is totally satisfied with her one man. That's what it means to be a one-woman man. It means this. It doesn't mean I'm satisfied in my marriage, but I look at porn. Because if I'm looking at porn, I'm not satisfied in my marriage. It doesn't mean I'm satisfied in my marriage, but I'm looking around at church to see who else might be interested in me giving me emotional kudos. No, because I'm satisfied in my marriage. I'm a one-woman man. Now some will ask, "Well, what about if I'm divorced? Can I be an overseer? Can I be an elder?" Different people will interpret it differently. Let me just say this from the outset, can God completely redeem and heal every kind of sin?

Yes.

Yeah, he can. I think that's an option that could be available. However, as an example, I would say, we should be cautious with that. Here's why. I remember when we started our church some 11 years ago, there was a man in our church that was trying to divorce his wife. Me and another one of our leaders went to meet with them. He wasn't an elder. We went out just to kind of help them in their marriage, but this man had been divorced and now he was remarried. As we were talking to this guy about why he shouldn't get married, the guy we were talking to pointed at my friend, he goes, "You divorce your wife and got remarried and you're happy. I'm looking forward to doing the same as you did." The discussion was over. Because the example was modeling it's okay to get divorced and get remarried. I'm just saying, I'm not saying divorced men can't. The Lord knows how to guide and every situation is different. I would just say we walk carefully in that because men are called to be one-woman men.

It doesn't mean that if my wife passed away and the next year, I can't get remarried because marriage is good for time and space. Once the marriage ends by death, then you're allowed to remarry again. That's what it means. It means that these men are satisfied in their wives and those wives are satisfied in their men, or they're single and they're totally satisfied being single. That's what it means. Second or third, being temperate. What does it mean to be temperate? Literally it means unmixed. It's moderation in drinking. But because we're going to talk about not being addicted to wine later, I don't think that's what it's talking about here. Although I think that's good. It's really talking about being sober-minded. It's avoidance of extremes. It's being

careful and vigilant and clear-headed and alert. It's 1 Peter 3:15, always being willing to give an answer for the hope that you have within you. It means if you meet me at any time, I'm ready for the gospel. I'm living for Christ on purpose at all times.

It's not like, "Well, on Sunday, I'm really living for Jesus. But if you caught me on Monday, you would think, man, I don't even know if that guy really a Christian." Now there's a consistency in his life. He's temperate. He's tempered. He's even. He's the same when you meet him no matter when you meet him. If you see him outside the church, inside the church, that's what he's like. What else is he like? He's prudent. Prudent means disciplined. It means this man gives careful attention and consideration for his responsible actions. He's serious. He's earnest. He says, "I know that I'm called to do this and this is serious work. The gospel is super important." You don't just hear him in the church talking about how it's important. If you met him anywhere, he would have that in his heart that this is super important. Now, this doesn't mean that he can't have a sense of humor for heaven sakes. I mean, we can have fun. We can have humor. I mean, even as I was thinking about this list, I mean, guys, this is sobering, ain't it? Dead quiet in here.

It's sobering to think about this list that God calls all of us to be as men. I mean, it's easier if we used another list. I mean, just a couple of weeks ago, I was out with my kids. We went out for Chinese food and at the end of the meal, they gave out the fortune cookies. You ever do this before? As they were giving out fortune cookies, we were looking at them. Listen, I know fortune cookies aren't true and I know horoscopes aren't true. I know it can be demonic and all that, but we read them for fun. But it just

so happened to mind was truthful, so I wanted to read it to you. I mean, it was so good I kept it. It says this. You want to hear it?

Yeah.

With brains and beauty, you are the complete package. I kept that one. I told my kids, "That's not always true, but this one happened to be." Now, why do I tell you that? Because we sometimes want to measure by other standards or we sometimes think we need to be stiff and stodgy in church. We don't. We want to follow God's statutes. We want to follow his standards, but we can have fun too. We can enjoy what God has for us. If we're going to be prudent, then what's the next one?

Respectable. Respectable means qualities that evoke admiration or delight. It's an ordered life. It's honorable. When you see an overseer, a pastor and elder, you would say, "Man, the way that they structure their time or how they spend time with the Lord or the way they give their attention to the right things, that's honorable. That's really good that they're doing that." You can tell that Jesus comes first in their life. That's who they are. They have a life that's marked by respectability. Then they're hospitable. Hospitality literally means welcoming strangers or showing love to strangers. You say, "Well, what does that mean?"

It means this person's willing to engage with all people. They're approachable. They're the same person in the pulpit as they are when they see people on I-25 in hand and holding up a homeless sign, they'll stop and talk to them too. It means when people come into the church, everybody's welcome and everybody's on equal ground.

It means they may even open up their home and invite people in and say, "You're welcome and we just want to spend time with you." It's the welcoming of other people. They're not above anybody else. They don't just have a few people around them. It doesn't mean they hang out with these five people and nobody else gets in their inner circle. There is no inner circle. Jesus had an inner circle, Peter, James and John. He had another inner circle at 12 disciples. But who did Jesus not welcome? Who did he say, "I'm not talking to you. You're a prostitute." Did he ever say that? "I'm not talking to you. You're a Roman soldier. I'm not talking to you. You're a Pharisee." no, he was wanting to engage everybody.

He loved strangers. He welcomed them. He was hospitable. Hospitable clearly doesn't necessarily mean you have to invite them in your home. Jesus didn't have a home. How could He be hospitable if He didn't have a home? I mean, he welcomed and he loved strangers. Then you have this one. It's the ability to teach. It's able to teach. This is what separates deacons from elders. You'll see that when we talk about it next week. This is the one that's not really a character quality as much as something that elders are called to do. You said, "Well, what does it mean?" Because some people say, "Well, it means that they can get up in front of 5,000 people and preach the word." I don't think it means that because very few people can do that. I don't even think it means they have to have the gift of teaching. In Titus, if you turn to books over to your right, in Titus 1:9, he talks about what it means.

Titus 1:9 says holding fast the faithful word, which is in accordance with the teaching so that he will be both able to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those

who contradict. The ability to teach means this, these three things. One, this man clings to the book, which is the Bible, and adheres to sound doctrine. He knows sound doctrine. He may not know every chapter and verse, he may not know every finer point, but he knows what sound doctrine is. He knows that Jesus Christ is the Lord. He knows what it means to get saved. He knows the difference between the gospel and false ways. Number two, he's able to exhort those in sound doctrine. He's able to help guide people into all the truth. Here's the way you should go. Here's what the scriptures say. That's what it looks like. He refutes those who contradict sound doctrine. When there's somebody in the church and say, "I'm divorcing my wife because I just met somebody at work that's prettier and we just get along better and God's told me to get married."

They say, "No, that's not true. That's false. That's from the pit of hell. You stay married to your wife." You're together until one of you dies, and you're called to lay down your life for her. That's refuting doctrine. Refuting those who contradict sound doctrine. That's what they need to be able to do. Elders and overseers need to be able to pull out their Bibles and be able to do that to some degree. Then he continues on. He says, not addicted to wine. The Bible says nothing about whether you drink or don't drink. It says not to break the laws. If you're under 21, you shouldn't. But it doesn't say you can't have a glass of wine. It doesn't say that you can't do that, but do not overindulge in drinks. In other words, the pastor or elder should not be known as a drinker. The pastor and the elders should not be known, "Man, I love your pastor. I saw him out at the bars last week, we drank it up. It was awesome." That's not how

the overseer should be known.

He's not known for his ability to mix drinks. He's not known for his ability to consume large portions of alcohol. He may have a drink every now and again. He may not. In our culture, I find there's so many people that are addicted to alcohol. It's probably good if that's not really even part of his life. Or if it is, maybe it's in private with one or two people he knows and it shouldn't be something that's going on on a regular basis. He shouldn't be marked by his drink. Number two, he should not be pugnacious. Now we don't use the word pugnacious very much. What's pugnacious mean? It means a fighter. Someone's going to strike somebody. He's a bully. It means if the pastor doesn't get his way, I mean, it shouldn't be like, "What happened to you? Where did you get that black eye?" "Well, I want to talk to our pastor and he beat me." I mean, and it's not just physical abuse, it's also emotional abuse.

Where the elder or overseer will be known as a bully emotionally. You can't talk to him, he's going to bully you. He's not going to listen to you. He's going to push you around. No, that's not true. You're not a fighter. You're not known for your fighting. You're not known for your bullying. But on the other side, you're these two things, you're gentle. Gentle means you're considerate and gracious and forbearing and yielding and tolerant and you're quick to forgive. It means, "Yeah, I know he's strong, but when I met with him, he listened to me. He cared about me." He doesn't hold grudges against people. He's quick to forgive other people. He wants to live for Jesus. He wants to be gentle. He's peaceable. That means he's not contentious. He's not marked by strife for being quarrelsome. It's not in every single conversation it's a fight.

In every single conversation he's got to win. In every single conversation with his wife and with people in church and with the small group, he's always arguing every single thing and can never hear anybody else's point.

That's quarrelsome. It's not that. He's peaceable. He's peaceable. He's gentle. Finally, he's this, he's free from the love of money. It means he's not known for his greed, he's known for his generosity. We'll talk about how to pay a pastor as we continue this book, but it doesn't mean how much a pastor makes and it's not how much he has, it's how much has his money have him? What's his motivation? Is his motivation for more material wealth or is his motivation more for generosity? What's he marked by? What's he known for? Who is this man? Those things are character qualities that God would have for any man in the church. Now, for those of you that would say, "I don't think I'm called to be an overseer." Here's my question to you. Which one of these would you be willing to punt so that one day you could meet Jesus and say, "I just wasn't interested in that." I mean, which one? "Well, I just love drinking." You want to tell Jesus that someday? "I would've served your church, but I love to put them back." Which one do you want to tell Jesus?

"Yeah. I would have served your church, but I love to bully people and I just didn't want to give that up." You want to give Him that one? "Yeah. I would have served your church, but I didn't want to live an ordered, disciplined life. I wanted to live completely for me." I mean, which one do you want to stand in front of Jesus and say? The answer is none of them. That's why all of us as men are called to this standard. Jesus Christ raised the bar. I mean, when I study the scriptures, I'm always wondering why

did Jesus pick the 12 that He picked? I mean, why in the world would you pick those guys? Because anybody who was young by the time that they were the age of Jesus' disciples would have already had a rabbi. It means that every rabbi worth his salt would have already picked the guys that He picked. They were already taken. Why did Jesus pick these guys? Because nobody else wanted them. But what did God know?

You take these men because these men are the guys on the inside that aspire and desire that, and they'll even die for you getting the message out. Amen?

[crosstalk 00:40:21].

See, the reason they are so important, is man looks at the outward appearance, the Lord looks at the heart. Man looks for leadership like this, "This guy does great in the business world. He makes a lot of money. This guy he's a great sportsperson. Everybody knows who he is. Hey, this guy's this. This guy's this." God's like, "Yeah, I don't care about any of that. I care about what he is in here. Will this man's submit to me? Will this man be changed by me? Will this man grow in me? Will this man loved the things I love and hate the things I hate, and will he be that? Because if he's not that, I don't want him." Jesus raised the bar of His disciples. That's what He's doing here. That's why these things are so hard to hear. But it's important for us to hear because too often in the church, we have men who lack character and they're passive. I mean, friends, this is not a career choice that we're talking about here. I had the ability to go to three different seminaries.

I remember when I graduated from college, I told my mom, I'm like, "I'm never

taking another class for the rest of my life." I was only 10 years off. I kept taking classes and taking classes. But I remember in the first seminar I was in, I remember thinking, "I would never be here if I wasn't called to be here. I want to know the word and I want to do this, but I hate being in school. I want to be out there preaching or doing stuff. Why am I in class?" I remember I met this guy, I still remember his name, and I asked him, "Hey, why are you here?" Here's what his answer was. "My granddaddy was a Methodist pastor. My daddy was a Methodist pastor and I'm going to be a Methodist pastor. It's a good career choice." I was in my 20s at the time, I'm like, "Yeah, you shouldn't even be here." I said, "If I wasn't called, there's no way I would be here."

Two years into my trip at Dallas seminary, I went to graduation because I had two more years to go and I was asking the Lord, "Should I finish?" I mean, there's always people going to hell and I'm going to the library. I don't want to go to the library. I went to graduation, I watched people walk across the platform and the Lord spoke to my heart like, "You only get this one time in your life to devote yourself to the book like this. Give me everything you have." That's why I stayed in school. I mean, God is looking for people that will say, "This is a priority." By the way, just so you know, so I don't confuse you, God doesn't need people to have a seminary or even a Bible degree to serve in this role. He doesn't. He's looking for men with the right character that love Him and His word to serve and come alongside and love his people so that the church can grow to maturity. Amen.

Amen.

Then he continues. Amen. That was like a golf clap. Can we give God better praise than that? All right. Here's the third, that the men of the church must be also marked by priority of family. Priority of family. I did some study on this word priority in our English language because we talk about priorities all the time. "What are your priorities? What are your top three priorities?" Do you know that the original word priority was always singular? It's only been in recent years that we've made it plural. Priority means singular focus. You can't have more than one priority. You can't have two priorities by definition. We've changed the definition because we're so busy we want to have 17 priorities. I'm talking about, when I talk about priority of family, I'm saying most important as a pastor. Here's what he says. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity. Titus, two books later, says this in Titus 1:6, namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.

What? My children have to be believers? Well, since we can't make a child a believer, let's be clear on that ... I can't convert my children. Only God can do that. What does that mean? It means this, men, when your children see your witness in the church, they believe your witness in the church that you believe what you believe because they see you living the same thing out at home. They're believers because they see when daddy preaches on the weekend or daddy's leading, they also see daddy leading at home. They see daddy with his Bible at home. They see daddy praying at home. They see daddy treating mommy kindly at home. They see it. That's

what it means. Family's priority. I mean, did you hear me? There'd be nothing more tragic than for me to extend a long ministry here at BRAVE and we accomplish all sorts of great things around the world only to get into my 70s or 80s and you realize Kim divorces me and my kids no longer talk to me because I didn't prioritize them.

Would we say, "Well, he still pastored a really nice church. I'm sorry that happened to him." Or would we say this? Like, we should say, "What a pity. That man wasn't even qualified to be in that pulpit." That's what we'd say. Family's a priority. I meet too many men in the ministry that make the church they're mistress. "I got to be at church. I got to be at some group. I got to do this. I got to do that. I got to be around. I'm sure you kids have some important things, but I got to do stuff for Jesus." No. The thing you need to do for Jesus the most, if you're married is love your wife. If you have kids, then you love your kids as well. They need to feel it palpably. It means that you love them and you sacrifice for them and you order your finances for them and you provide safety for them and hope for them and you model godliness for them. You guide them, you lead them, you protect them, you provide a blanket of covering for them. You do all that so that you earn their respect.

You don't demand it. You live it. Now, I can tell you this, if I brought any of my kids up here or brought my wife up here, or you were to ask them, "Is your daddy perfect? Is your husband perfect?" They would say, "No way." But if you ask them, "Does your dad really love Jesus? Does he try to grow in the word? Does he genuinely love you? Does he try to answer your questions about God? Is he there for the things that matter the most? Does he encourage you? Does he build you up?" They would all

tell you, yes. If they don't tell you that, then I'm not doing my job. By the way, for those of you married men, I can always tell how good of a job you're doing just like you can tell how good of a job I'm doing by looking at your wife's face. She's a billboard describing how much she agrees with your leadership. Then if you have the courage, you should ask your wives, "How am I doing?" Now, ladies be gentle.

What men are not asking for is a 35 page document, bullet pointed and color coded that you've been saving for a long time, like, "Here's a good place to start." We as men because we're wired differently, oftentimes don't understand what we're supposed to do. We're really good if we have a plan like, "Hey, do this or do this." But we're not always good on the emotional side of, "I don't even understand what that means. Help me." Ladies, here's what I'm encouraging. If they ask you for something, think about the one or two things that they could work on that's applicable. Not, "You never love me." I don't even know what that means. "You should just know." Women, you're intuitive. If you're stepping over dirty clothes and you ask your husband, "Do you see those clothes there?" Here's what he's going to say. "No. They never bothered me. I just intuitively stepped over them." You have to explain to him, "Hey, listen, when you do that, that hurts my feelings and it offends me. It would mean a lot if you picked those up and put them in the laundry room for me."

Okay, I can do that. That's something I can do. Ladies, help your husbands. They really do want to love you. They really do want to preference you. They really do want to honor you. They just don't know how. I don't know how. My marriage has been learning how to speak the language of a woman. I've told Kim many times, I took

Hebrew for four semesters, I took Greek for six semesters. I've taken the language of a woman for longer than that and I still don't get it. Because the way you see things and the way you feel things, and the way you emote things is just different than how we as guys communicate, so be patient with us. But it doesn't mean be silent. Help us. We want to honor you. We want to honor our families. We really do. But make family a priority. Make family a priority. If you're out seven nights a week, or you're out six nights a week doing the work of the Lord, you're are not being a priority to your family. I do not apologize for putting my wife and my family first. I never will.

That's what it means to honor God. Amen. You say, "Well, why is that so true?" He tells us in verse five, but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God? I mean, I don't care if you've got 10 kids, that's 12 of you in a home. If you can't do it with 12, how you going to do it with the whole church? If you can't even get it right in your domain, how are you going to get it right with everybody? I mean, church is just one big dysfunctional family picnic, you all. I mean, every single one of us is broken. Every single one of us has a past. Every single one of us has sin patterns. Every single one of us has selfishness. Every single one of us is trying to figure things out just like in your own microcosm of your family. If you can't get the family right, how are you going to come in and lead the whole church? If your family's messed up and you come lead the church, guess what you're going to mess up.

You'll mess up the church. There are way too many people in leadership

positions in the church is men that can't even get their family right and they need to go take care of their family first. It's a priority according to the word of God. Then he says this, the men who lead Christ's church must also be marked by maturity and development and not a new convert. What does that mean? It means if you got saved at the Band-e-Amir this year at Easter, probably not ready to put you in the pulpit yet. Probably not ready to put you as an overseer or an elder. Because just because you're a gifted man and just because you're a leader, it doesn't mean you have the spiritual qualifications yet to lead. It takes time. The Bible would say, you're a babe in Christ. You're a newbie. You're just learning these things and you need to grow in the character and knowledge of the word. The why. So he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

Now God hates all sin. But one of the sins he hates the most is pride, conceit. Like I've said many times, and this is not original with me, pride is one of those insidious sins that you're the last person to know about. It's like bad breath. Everybody else knows long before you. Pride kills a church. Spiritually immature believers think that an overseer, a pastor or an elder is position that they hold. Spiritually mature believers recognize that's just something that God made me and that's who I am. Whether you take the position away or I serve in that position matters not because this is who I am as a believer in Christ. That's what spiritual maturity looks like. Because if you think about being a pastor or an elder or an overseer as a position you attain and who you are and that it belongs to you and you hold it, pride is going to seep in and you'll begin to think I can never get replaced. Can I just tell you in just total

consciousness, total belief?

If God didn't want me to be the pastor of BRAVE Church, I still believe BRAVE would flourish because God would find another man who can preach and lead and put them in the pulpit and God can continue to do this without me. I wholeheartedly believe that. If you don't believe that, that's called pride. Pride is when you say, "The church needs me. If you don't listen to my opinion, you're not really listening." That's pride. Spiritually immature believers always think they have a position so that they can boss other people around or have authority over a person. Jesus said just the opposite. He goes, "That's how the Gentile leaders lead. They Lorded over everybody, but not so with you." He says, "If you want to be great, you must become a servant. If you want to be the greatest, you must become slave of all." Anybody who understands the authority of an overseer, pastor, elder, here's what they understand. That I've been given authority by Christ to serve His body under His Lordship.

I am humbly bowing myself before Him and doing it in His way in His time. That's what it means. That's why there has to be spiritual maturity. As I said earlier, it doesn't mean that there's an age limit. There's some countries in the world where there's been genocide in all sorts where the oldest Christians in the church are 35 years old. It doesn't mean there's somebody that's in their 30s that's not qualified to be an elder of BRAVE. There very well may be. But really what you're looking for is you're looking for seasoned men. Men who have been around the block in their life. Men who have been seasoned in their walk because they see the world differently. They see it in a mature fashion. Why is this important? Because God hates pride. This is just one verse about

it. In James 4:6 he says, but God gives a greater grace. Therefore it says God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. He's quoting Proverbs 3:34. Submit therefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you.

What's the problem with having a prideful person in leadership? Because God doesn't just hate the sin, what's God do? He opposes the person that's in that sin. You have a prideful pastor. Here's what you have. You have God opposing that pastor. You have prideful overseers. What do you have? You have God opposing those overseers. Do you want God opposing the work that He's trying to get done in the church?

Answer.

No.

No. You want God to work through that. How does God work? God works through humility. God works through humbling ourselves before Him. God doesn't work through us telling other people how gifted we are and what we need to do. Maturity and development versus immaturity. Then finally is this one, the men who lead Christ's church must be marked by civility towards outsiders. Civility towards outsiders. Notice what he says. He must have a good reputation with those on the outside of the church so he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. We saw in verse six, the condemnation of the devil when God opposes those who are prideful. What's the snare of the devil? The snare of the devil is when God gets men to think that there's something special. The snare of the devil is when the devil gets men to think that God needs me. The snare of the devil is when they get tricked into all sorts of these other side sins. That's why they need to be civil towards outsiders.

In other words, here's what it means. If we're trying to take the gospel to the world, those that are in leadership in the church should be known by those outside the church as good men. You shouldn't invite someone to your church and have them say, "That guy's your pastor? That guy's a total jerk. I changed his oil this week and he treated me like garbage. You know what? I served that guy at a restaurant. He didn't tip at all and he treated me horrible. I'm never coming to your church." You should be known as an overseer, elder, a pastor of people outside your church of people that non-believers would even respect because of the way you treat them. Say, "I disagree with his belief, but I tell you what? He treated me with kindness. He demonstrated love to me." That's what it looks like. Because if the leaders in the church are known as jerks, what is the church going to be known as? What do people say about church more than anything else?

"I wouldn't go to church. Just a bunch of hypocrites." Why? Because the people that they see put on the pedestal don't genuinely love the people outside the church. These are all markers of what it looks like to lead for Christ. Why is this so important? Because there's not one of them that we can punt. There's not one. We've already talked about the first, but just said, "Well, I keep all of those things. I'm just not a good husband. I kind of flirt around a little bit. Other than that, I made all the other requirements." Or, "I'm good at everything. I'm just not that spiritually mature. I don't really want to do what Christ wants me to do." Or, "I keep them all, I'm just kind of a jerk to non Christians because I hate them." I mean, which one of these can we get rid

of? Friends, I'm here to tell you that the reason that more men don't rise up and say, "I'll give my life to that."

Is because most men think the church is for sissified, passive males to sit in the same seat for the next 30 years and nothing to ever change. That's not how Jesus Christ sees the church. Jesus Christ sees the church as a group of men who will rise up and take the gospel to the world, being willing to give their lives so that other people will hear about the gospel of Christ and be part about the greatest mission that's ever hit the planet, the gospel of Jesus Christ. God's looking for a few good men to do that. Amen.

I mean, I heard Tony Evans preach years ago and he could do this in a way I'd never be able to do this, but he always said, if you've got a messed up man, and you put him in a family, guess what you got. You got a messed up family. If you've got a messed up man and a messed up family and he cursed those kids in family to church, what do you got? You got a messed up church. If you've got a messed up man living in a messed up family, going to a messed up church and you try to reach the community, what do you got? You got a messed up community. If you got a messed up man going into his messed up family, leading his messed up family to the messed up church, investing in the messed up community, what do you got? You've got a messed up state. If you've got a man that is messed up, messing up his family, who's going to his messed up church, who's messing up his community, who's messing up his state. What do you got? You got a messed up nation.

If you've got a messed up man in a messed up family, that's going to a messed

up church, that's messing up the community, that's messing up the state, that's messing up the nation, guess what you got. You got a messed up world. If you want to change the messed up world, what you got to do? You got to change the messed up man, and that's what Jesus Christ is in the business of doing. Amen. Men, no matter who you are, God can and will change you. But it doesn't come from your commitments, it comes through your repentance and confession saying, Lord, "ake me the man you want me to be?" Any man that will say, "Make me the man you want me to be." Who will allow Jesus to touch him, will grow increasingly, not perfectly, but increasingly into the man God wants you to be. We, with Christ's help, can and will change the world. Amen.

Amen.

Amen. Would you stand with me?

Yeah.

Lord Jesus, you are worthy because you're God. You are worthy because you're Lord. Lord, you love women and you love men. Lord today help us become the men you want us to be. If you're here today and you say, "I don't even think I'm a Christian." Here's how you can pray. Lord Jesus I believe that I'm separated from you because of my sin. But right now I repent of my sin. I want to turn from that and I want to receive your life. Come into my life, Lord Jesus. If you know the Lord and the Holy Spirit is resident in you, what's he convicted you of today? Maybe two things, maybe 17 things. It matters not.

Men, let's just say to the Lord, let's just hold our hands up just for a minute, if you'd be willing to do that, say Lord, you know me. You know all my flaws and frailties and yet you still love me. Lord, I confess the things I'm aware of. Change me into the man you want me to be. Lord, we give you all the praise for what you're going to do, in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Can we give God praise today?