

THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

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Pastors: Shepherds Of The Flock

“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work” (1 Tim. 3:1).

Scriptural Names.

Men so qualified and appointed could be called pastors or shepherds (poimen), bishops or overeers (episkopos), or elders (presbuteros). Members of a local congregation are referred to as “the flock” (Acts 20:28-29; 1 Pet. 5:2). The number of elders in a local congregation must be plural (Acts 14:23); they can shepherd only one flock (1 Pet. 5:1).

Qualifications.

Basic qualifications for the office are found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. The qualified person must be a man, desire the office and want to work. Qualifications include the following: blameless (above reproach), husband of one wife (one only), vigilant (temperate), sober (sensible), of good behavior (well-ordered), given to hospitality (hospitable), apt to teach (able at teaching), ruleth well his own house (Greek: having faithful children, not in accusation of loose behavior or insubordinate), having his children in subjection (not accused of riot or unruly), have a good report of them which are without (a good witness from those without), a lover of good men (a lover of good), just (upright), holy (devout), temperate (self-controlled), holding fast the faithful word (Greek: clinging to the faithful word). The man is not to be: given to wine (not a drinker), a

striker (not a contentious one), greedy of filthy lucre (not greedy of ill gain), a brawler (not quarrelsome), covetous (not loving money), a novice (not a new convert), self-willed (not self-pleasing), soon angry (not prone to anger). “Sometimes it is argued that no man can attain to the high standard as described by the Holy Spirit in giving the qualifications. The Holy Spirit has never required of man anything that man could not do. God encourages man to measure up to this high standard” (Boles, p. 23).

An Example.

Elders must continue their work for the right purpose, in the right way and for the right reason. The power of love can never become the love of power. They must live lives in such a way that the flock knows what they say is what they mean. Elders stand related to the congregation as a father is to the home. Principles of cooperation and teamwork must be followed. “The good elder must be a pattern for the church to follow. Example is a part of his duty in ruling. A shepherd sets the example for the sheep to follow. The most effective way of leading people is to be an example to them. The bishops should be good examples of workers themselves” (Phillips, pp. 193-197). “Elders are to be examples to the flock. They should realize that they are examples to other members in faith, in purity, in love, in word, and in all manner of living. They are watched closely by other members, and should set such examples as will lead others, when they follow those examples, closer to the Lord Jesus Christ” (Boles, p. 26).

“It is a joyous experience to have members of a congregation where qualified elders work in harmony, Scripturally serving Christians who respect them as fellow-saints and as overseers” (Wallace, p. 15).

References: Boles, H. Leo, The Eldership of the Churches of Christ; Phillips, H.E., Scriptural Elders and Deacons; Wallace, William E., Outlined Lessons on the Eldership.

✍ Charles Carpenter

“Why Me?”

Have you ever been in a situation that was unpleasant or in a situation where you were forced to deal with something that you really preferred not to have to deal with? I venture to say that we all have probably been in a situation like that at some point in our lives, and I also venture to say that while faced with such a situation many of us probably also felt like, and or asked, “why me?”

You see, often times when one is faced with a difficult or challenging situation in life they will often express and ask the question of “why me?” However, this attitude denotes a sense of self-pity (i.e. unhappiness over one’s own troubles), and we need to be careful about falling into the self-pity trap (Proverbs 17:22).

Now, although it is common for one to seek pity during a trying time in life (Psalm 69:20) we need to avoid self-pity, and we need to always be mindful of these inspired words of James, “*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience*” (James 1:2-3).

I know that it is hard for many of us to comprehend the concept of being joyful while experiencing various trials in life. However, James says, count it all joy when you fall into various trials not because they are enjoyable, but rather because they should be regarded as something that can result in a benefit to you. What is that benefit? Well, James says, the testing of your faith produces patience, and the word patience in this verse implies persevering endurance, and when persevering endurance is defined, it means “the quality to withstand hardship.”

When I think about persevering endurance, I think about the apostle Paul. For, one never reads in the Scriptures where the apostle Paul asked: “why me?” You see, Paul was one who withstood hardships (2 Corinthians 11:24-28), he was able to count it all joy when he fell into various trials (Acts 20:18-24), and he possessed an “I can” attitude rather than a “why me” attitude (Philippians 4:13).

Therefore, let’s all strive to have the same attitude that Paul had, and let’s not pity ourselves when we fall into various trials and ask “why me?” Rather, let’s be one who does count it all joy when we fall into various trials, and let’s always remember that the testing of our faith is more precious than gold that perishes (1 Peter 1:6-7).

So, in conclusion, when life presents its challenges, do not be one who is quick to complain and ask the question of “why me?” For, the fact of the matter is, many of the challenges that we face in life often turn into opportunities!

✍️ Brad Phillips

Belleville church of Christ

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Schedule of Services

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship	5:00 p.m.
Wednesday Bible Study	7:00 p.m.

Evangelist

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