

The First Place to Look for Spiritual Leaders

1 Timothy 3:2, 4-5

Introduction:

1. In the previous lesson, we learned that there is nothing magical or mystical about becoming a leader for God. It begins with a sincere, heart-felt desire. vs. 1
2. As we desire God's Word and grow in Christ, we want to share what we have learned with others. Many times, out of our growth will come a desire to spend our life serving God.
3. Timothy was one of the apostle Paul's co-workers. A troubleshooter, if you will. Paul had Timothy stationed at Ephesus to help, assist, and give instruction and guidance.
4. One of the primary things that every church must have is godly leadership. But what does a godly leader look like? Read verses 2-3.
 - These attributes have nothing to do with popularity or personality, but they deal with the man's character – who he is. These are not rules or a checklist. This is simply describing what a godly, spiritually mature believer looks like.
5. Leadership is spiritual maturity that others can examine and follow. Hebrews 13:7
 - When Paul mentions bishops, these were not slick, CEO-type guys that gave everybody orders and helped to market the church.
 - These were normal, hard-working believers that had grown spiritually to a place where they were ready to lead others, and probably already were leading others.
6. Do you know where spiritual maturity first shows up? Do you know who notices spiritual growth in a person before anybody else? Spiritual maturity is always first evidenced in the home. A man's spiritual maturity and Spirit-filled life will first be noticed by his family.
7. Do you know where hypocrisy is first noticed? Who are the first ones to notice if you are living a life that is inconsistent with how you present yourself publicly? It is your family!
8. Paul says to Timothy, "When you're looking for church leaders, the first place to look is the home." vs. 5

A spiritual leader is committed to one woman in marriage.

1. This phrase "*husband of one wife*" carries the idea of a man who presents himself as a one-woman man. He demonstrates himself to be faithful in a monogamous marriage.
2. Paul is dealing with the issue of moral fidelity to one woman. This would exclude:
 - A man who was a polygamist. This was common among the aristocrats in Paul's day, as well as in Judea, and still is in many parts of the world today.
 - A man known to be immoral.
 - A man known to be a "ladies man." He likes to play the field. He has an eye for the ladies.
3. Here is the issue: does the man present himself as a man wholly dedicated and committed to one woman? If there is a reason to doubt this, he is certainly not ready for leadership in the local church.
4. In a culture that was sex-crazed, even as part of their pagan worship, Paul was emphasizing that a spiritual leader is faithful and true to one woman – his wife.

5. He is dealing with the present spiritual character of the man, not his deep, dark past.
 - Notice the verb “*be*” in this verse. It is in the present tense. This is the way he demonstrates himself to be **right now**.
 - **Example:** Does “*not given to wine*” mean he has never had a drinking problem in his life? If a man had a drinking problem in his past, is he disqualified? These qualifications are not retroactive for the man's entire life.
6. Paul is dealing with how a man **presently** exhibits faithfulness in marriage. He demonstrates himself to be faithful in his marriage right now – present tense. Paul is emphasizing marriage fidelity. The man's marriage is exemplary. He is married, faithful and true to one woman – his wife.
7. He demonstrates it through sexual purity, by showing respect to his wife in front of others, by bringing his wife along with him on the path of spiritual maturity, and by making his wife feel cherished and appreciated. Ephesians 5:25-28

A spiritual leader provides godly leadership that his family wants to follow.

1. Notice that Paul says that a person that is ready for spiritual leadership is “*One that ruleth well his own house...*”
2. What does this mean? It doesn't mean that he is a bully and dictator, barking orders to his family and, like little puppy dogs, they do what he says out of fear. This is not what the word “*rule*” means here. The word “*rule*” simply indicates a position of leadership.
3. A spiritually mature person knows how to lead his family. Dads, God has called us to be the spiritual leaders of our homes. As you grow in spiritual maturity, you bring your wife and kids along with you.
 - You lead the way to church, to LIFE Group, etc. You lead the way in loving Christ and demonstrating that love, loving His Word, believing and obeying His Word, etc.
4. A spiritual leader at church knows how to mature other believers and bring them along in their faith. How do you know if a guy can do this? Look at his family!
5. If he is bringing his wife and kids down the road of salvation, sanctification, and service, then he can probably do it at the church with other believers. vs. 5

A spiritual leader has taught his children respect and obedience.

1. Notice verse 4 states that a spiritual leader has “*his children in subjection with all gravity.*” Two key words here:
 - “*Subjection*” speaks of having a submissive heart, being obedient, and taking instruction.
 - “*Gravity*” speaks of showing proper respect to those in authority.
2. This must be cross-referenced with Titus 1:6. If somebody desires to be a spiritual leader, he must have “*faithful children, not accused of riot or unruly.*”
 - “*Riot*” speaks of self-indulgence, and “*unruly*” speaks of being insubordinate (they won't listen).
3. Where do kids learn to be kind, giving, and unselfish? Where do they learn to listen to authority and godly instruction? The home! By the example and teaching of Dad and Mom. Ephesians 6:4

- You've probably heard jokes or stories about preacher's kids. The sad part is, many times it is true because Dad preached one thing at church, but lived another way at home. The kids were the first to see it.
 - But this doesn't just happen to preacher's kids, it also happens to deacons, Sunday School teachers, etc.
4. Does a spiritual leader's family go through problems like everybody else? Absolutely! But the leader handles it with Christian maturity and with the grace of Christ. He responds to the problems as a spiritually mature saint of God.
- When problems come, your family sees you trust God and turn to Him in prayer. When you mess up, they see you admit it and ask forgiveness. They see the grace life demonstrated in and through you.
5. As your family sees it, others see it. Before long, you look around and say, "Wow, I'm leading some people." This is how it happens, and it all begins in the home.