

STUDY GUIDE

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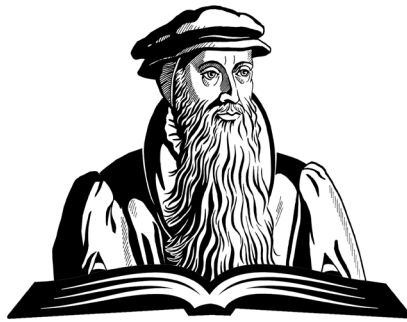
Biblical Eldership

VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

by Rev. Robert D. McCurley, ThM

Lecture #3

Qualifications



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

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Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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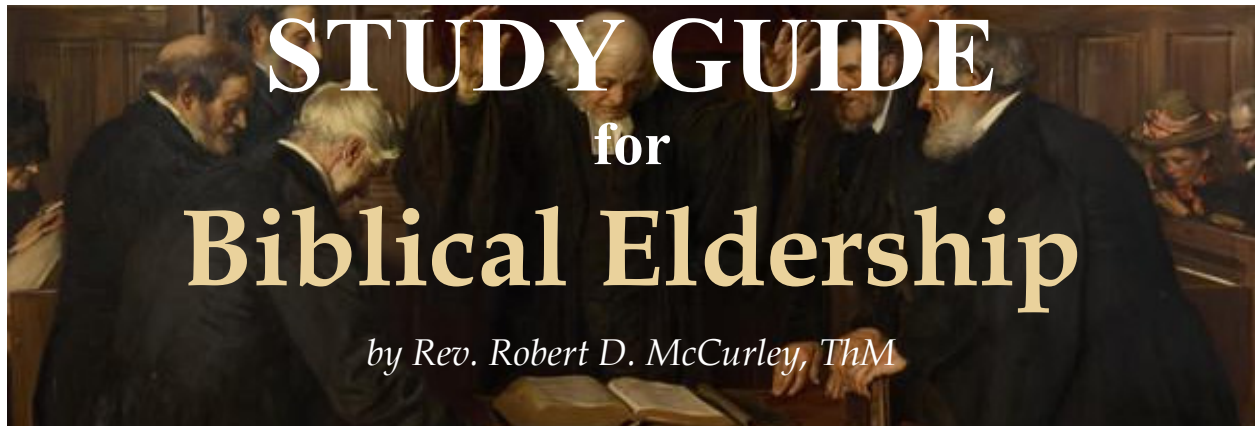
Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

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Cover image: “The Ordination of Elders in a Scottish Kirk,” 1891, John Henry Lorimer



1. Introduction

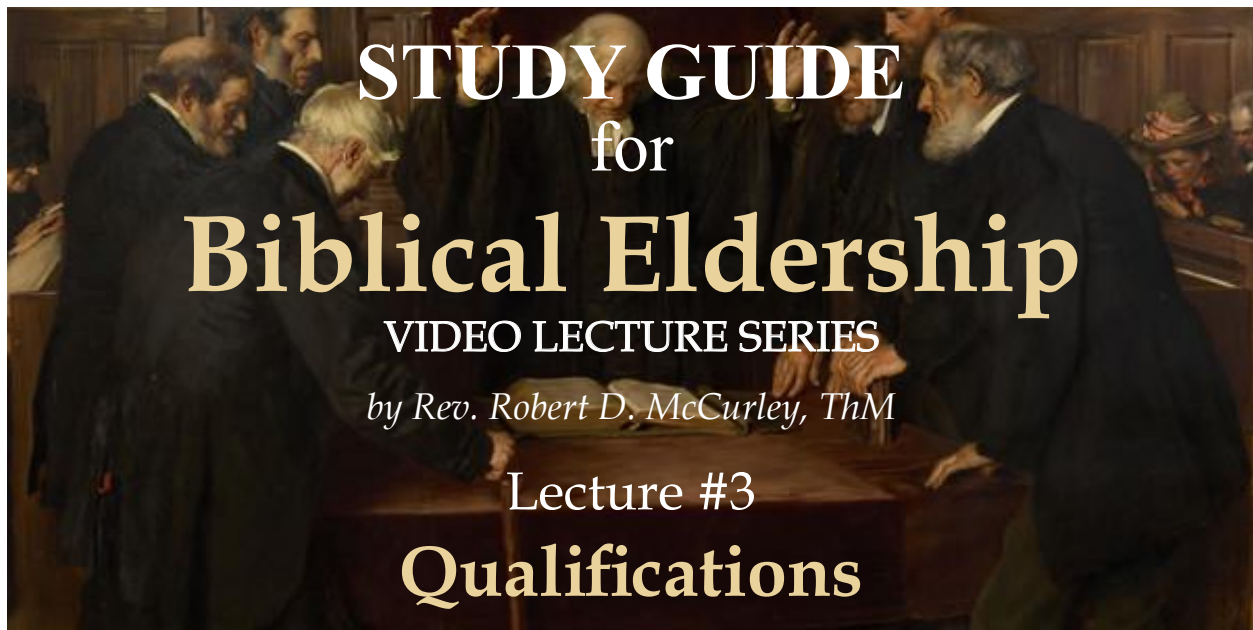
2. The Office

3. Qualifications

4. More Qualifications

5. Doctrine

6. Shepherding



Introduction

When an employer needs to hire new personnel, they often advertise the job opening with a description of what the job entails, and qualifications necessary to be selected for the position. A person interested in the job would fill out an application, and include their credentials, training, work experience, and related matters, in order to demonstrate their competency and qualifications for the position. If that is true with regards to worldly employment, how much more for service in Christ's kingdom? We should expect that the Lord would provide criteria and qualifications for men to serve as elders in Christ's church. And that is exactly what he does in the Scriptures.

Theme

The Lord's requirements for Elders in Christ's church.

Key Points

1. Biblical qualifications of elders—1 Timothy 3.

a. *Must* be blameless.

- 1) In word, conduct, love, spirit, faith and purity.
- 2) He must be a man—women are not to teach or usurp authority over a man.
- 3) Blameless does not mean sinless, but beyond reproach.

b. The husband of one wife.

- 1) He must be blameless with respect to marriage and matters of divorce and remarriage.

c. Vigilant.

- 1) Clear-headed, self-controlled, moderate, frugal, sober-minded, prudent, reasonable.
- 2) Watchful against turning away from the truth of the gospel of Christ.

- 3) Discerning the times, truth from error, and the needs of the flock.
- 4) Maturity and experience.
- d. Sober.
 - 1) Prudent, thoughtful, self-controlled, having wisdom, good sense, a sound mind.
 - 2) Good judgment in dealing with people. Reasonable, sympathetic.
- e. Of good behavior.
 - 1) Respectable, honorable; his life must be in order.
- f. Given to hospitality.
 - 1) Loves to host, to minister to people in whatever capacity.
- g. Apt to teach.
 - 1) Must know Scripture and doctrine well.
 - 2) All elders teach, but only ministers of the gospel are called to preach.
- 2. Conclusion.
 - a. God calls all elders to rule, to shepherd, to oversee, to watch for and care for the church.
 - b. Elders must make sure the congregation hears the preaching, but also is living in obedience to God's Word.

Study Questions

1. How do we know that the qualifications for elders, in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9, apply to both elders and to ministers of the gospel? What does it mean in this context, to have a “good desire”?

2. Are those qualifications optional for elders in the church? What is implied by the word “must” in those verses, and what does that require of the congregation?

3. How should we understand the qualification of being “blameless”? Does that mean “sinless”? What does it mean for an office-bearer? Why is this necessary?

4. What is implied by the qualification, “a husband of one wife”? What is the historical background of this epistle to Timothy which addresses that matter? How should an elder’s marital status or his married life reflect the commands of the Seventh Commandment? Why is that so important?

5. How should we define the word “vigilant” in this passage? How does being vigilant affect the duties of an elder in the church?

6. What does it mean to be “sober”? Exactly what does that require of an elder?

7. Please explain the meaning of “good behavior” in this list of qualifications. What would that look like in the life of an elder in the church?

8. What does it mean to be “given to hospitality”? Does this require any special abilities? For an elder, what kinds of services would hospitality include?

9. What does it mean to be “apt to teach”? Why is this an important qualification for the elders of the church? What kinds of teaching situations or environments might it include?

10. If all elders are required to teach in the church, are all elders also required to preach the gospel? What other qualifications are required for the gospel minister?

Further Study

1. Please list the six qualifications required of elders in the church, according to the text in 1 Timothy 3, verses 1 to 7. When we consider all these qualifications in the elders of the church, what image do they actually bear?

2. Practically speaking, what are some ways that we, as a church family, can be encouraging and helpful to the godly men who God has raised up to be the elders watching over us in the church?
