

STUDY GUIDE

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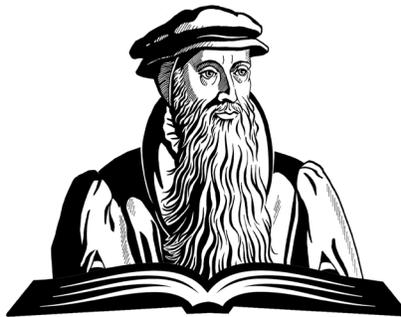
Biblical Eldership

VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

by Rev. Robert D. McCurley, ThM

Lecture #4

More Qualifications



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

John Knox Institute of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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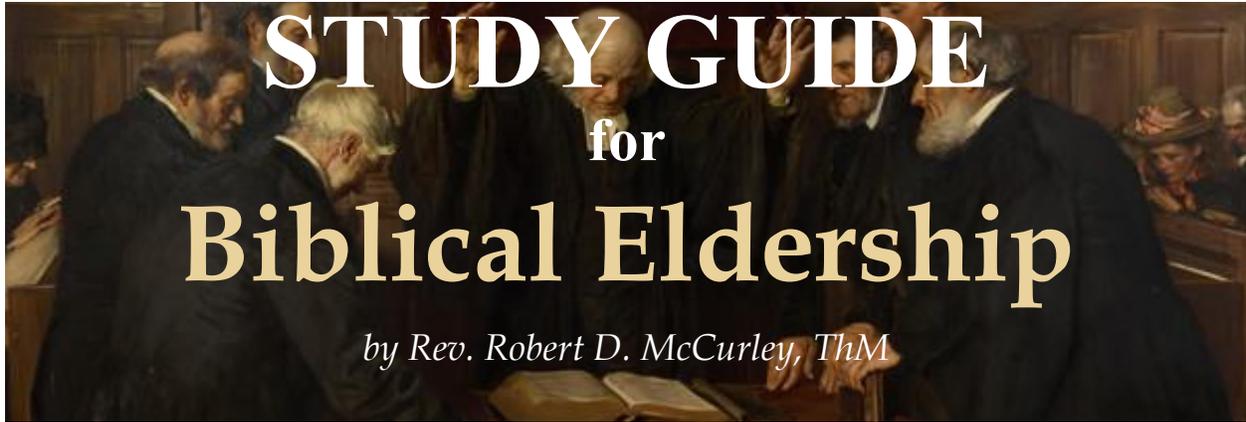
Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

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Rev. Robert D. McCurley, ThM, is minister of the gospel at Greenville Presbyterian Church, in Taylors, South Carolina, USA, a congregation of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), Presbytery of the United States.

www.greenvillepresbyterian.com

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



1. Introduction

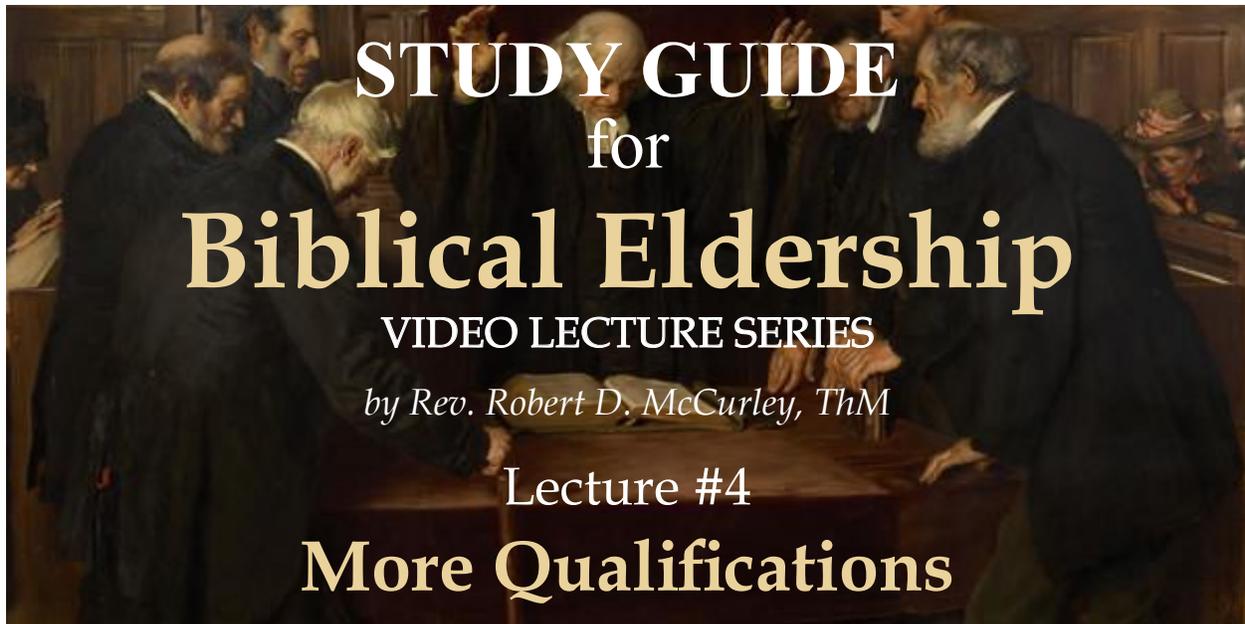
2. The Office

3. Qualifications

4. More Qualifications

5. Doctrine

6. Shepherding



Introduction

We all recognize the important relationship between responsibilities and qualifications. In order to assume responsibility for a task or role, we must be qualified to do so, otherwise the outcome could be disastrous. In this module, or course, we're considering what the Bible teaches about the New Testament office of Ruling Elder. God specified in his Word certain criteria that must be met, in order for a man to serve as Elder in Christ's church. In this lecture, we continue to explore those qualifications, which are recorded in 1 Timothy 3, and also in Titus chapter 1.

Theme

Part 2 of the Lord's requirements for Elders in Christ's church.

Key Points

1. Elder qualifications under three general heads.
 - a. His graces.
 - 1) Godly, mature in life and character.
 - b. His doctrine.
 - 1) He must know, believe, hold fast, and defend the apostolic doctrine of Scripture.
 - c. His gifts or abilities.
 - 1) Skills with people: leadership, communication, decision-making, etc.
2. Biblical qualifications of elders, from 1 Timothy 3, verses 1 to 7 (continued from last lecture).
 - a. Not given to *much* wine.
 - 1) This does not prohibit him from drinking, but from excessive drinking, drunkenness.
 - 2) The principle applies to any food or drink which can impair his judgment or speech.

b. Not a striker.

- 1) Not a violent man, not given to fits of anger, not physically abusive.
- 2) Lawful self defense is an exception.
- 3) Punishment by civil magistrates is an exception.
- 4) Discipline by parents is an exception.

c. Not greedy of filthy lucre.

- 1) Not profiting from dishonest or shameful means.
- 2) Not seeking power and control or authority for himself, but for the benefit of others.
- 3) Not using the office of elder as a means to gain money, power, or control, rather than to glorify God and to edify the church.

d. Patient.

- 1) Gentle, yielding, kind, peaceable, forbearing.
- 2) Not abrasive, not caustic, not oppressive, not easily offended or provoked.
- 3) Especially patient in difficulties, conflicts, and disputes.

e. Not a brawler.

- 1) Not quarrelsome, not given to disputes or strife.
- 2) Not having sinful hatred toward others; not speaking evil of others.

f. Not covetous.

- 1) Not loving money; not placing confidence in money, possessions, pleasure and wealth.
- 2) Money, wealth, or possessions are not wrong in themselves.
- 3) He must love God above all else.

g. One that rules his own house well, having his children in subjection with all gravity.

- 1) If he cannot rule well at home, how will he rule well in God's house?
- 2) This requires ability to run his own affairs properly; good judgment and discipline.
- 3) There must be reverence, honor, respect, and good order in his home.
- 4) Includes servants, employees, property, business affairs, etc.
- 5) This does not include those who have left his home.
- 6) This does not require that all his children be converted.

h. Not a novice.

- 1) Not a new Christian, or a new member of the church.
- 2) Christian graces don't come overnight; he must be a mature Christian.

i. He must have a good report of them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

1) An elder cannot be a hypocrite who does one thing and says another thing.

2) He must be innocent of scandal.

3) Outsiders should be able to see that behaves himself honorably.

3. Conclusion.

Study Questions

1. What is the right use of wine taught in the Bible? What use of wine is forbidden for both elders and all Christians? How does this principle apply to other things that can impair our judgment, or our speech?

2. What is meant by the term, “no striker”? What kinds of behavior would describe a striker? What aspects of self control is needed in an elder?

3. What is the meaning of the phrase “greedy of filthy lucre”? What are the correct motivations for an elder serving the church of Jesus Christ? What would be wrong motivations?

4. Why is it so important for an elder to have the qualification of being patient? How does the Bible describe this characteristic? What are some other graces that accompany being patient?

5. Why is it important that an elder should not be “a brawler”? What are some of the traits you would expect from a brawler? How would a brawler be apt to react in an argument or dispute in the church?

6. Why is covetousness a forbidden trait for a man being considered to serve as an elder? What are the dangers? What are some biblical proofs for that?

7. Why is it important for an elder to first be able to rule himself and his own house well? What is Paul’s argument in 1 Timothy 3, verses 4 and 5? What does this have to do with the elder’s ability to rule in the church? Does this qualification mean that all the man’s children must be converted?

8. Why is it so important for an elder to have much Christian experience and spiritual maturity? What dangers are there for a new Christian to be ordained as an elder in the church? How does experience affect a person’s growth in Christian graces?

9. Why is a good report by those outside the church so important when considering a man for the office of elder in the church? Why does Rev. McCurley say that a Christian man without a good testimony from those outside has a divided heart?

10. Why is a good report, a good witness, or testimony from those outside the church an important qualification for an elder? How are a man's actions at his work or in his business dealings important indicators of who he really is?

Further Study

1. In this lecture, we learned that one qualification for eldership is that a man must be able to rule his own household, his own family, well. If so, then how does this help him to rule well over the house of God? How does this help him to guide other men in the church to rule their families well? How does this benefit the families of the church?

2. We have seen that there are many snares of the devil just waiting for the elders of the church of Jesus Christ. What are some ways that an elder can be on guard and keep himself from those snares? Do you think Christians can be of help by praying for the elders of their congregation?
