

Introduction

Recall that there are certain family qualifications, personal qualifications, and doctrinal qualifications for a pastor. These cover the areas of character, convictions, and competency. As to character, he must be blameless, a word summarizing the litany of requirements in verses 6-8. As to conviction, he must “hold fast the faithful word” (v. 9a). As to competency, he must “be able by sound doctrine to exhort and convict” (v. 9b).

The answer to the question in the title of these notes is given by the “for” at the start of v. 10. It is explanatory as to why the elders must be qualified as laid out in vv. 6 to 9.

1. The Basic Reason: Many False Teachers

The false teachers are described by several words.

- A. First, there are **many** of them.
- B. Second, they are **unruly**. This means they refuse to submit to authority, they are undisciplined, disobedient, rebellious, insubordinate. This is the same word used of wild children in verse 6.
- C. Third, they are **vain talkers**. This means they talk idly, they produce words of no use or truth. They are full of fruitless discussion. They are windbags!
- D. Fourth, they are **deceivers**. They mislead concerning the truth. They probably have a grain of truth here and there to make their teaching sound good. They make “carefully considered deception” their trade.
- E. They are **especially** from a group known as the “**circumcision**.” That is to say, of all the people that come to Paul’s mind in his writing, the main group are those who are of the circumcision. Note that in the Bible, this generally refers to Jewish people (Gal. 2:8). In Acts 10:45, there are a subset of these folks mentioned “who believe.” These are Jewish Christians. Then in Acts 15:1, 5 we see another subset of these folks who are a sect of the Pharisees. They may make a Christians profession or not, but they are not true believers, for they believe that it is necessary to keep the rite of circumcision and the law in order to be saved. It is this latter group that is mentioned here in Titus 1:10.
- F. They **subvert whole households**. Note that this does not mean that they destroy dwelling places. Rather, they bring whole families into ruin. How do they do this? The word “teaching” gives the *means* by which they ruin families—by teaching false doctrine. Note: they “subvert whole households **by** teaching things...” It sounds like works-based salvation is what they teach and they draw people away from the truth. A family which follows after this doctrine is most certainly ruined.
- G. They do this in order to make a **profit**. They don’t care that it is **dishonestly** gained.

Note that while the sound teaching of v. 9 may be the most important qualification relative to the false teachers, the character and convictions must match their teaching for it to have full impact. The qualified pastor is to have totally opposite character from the false teachers—he is not to be unruly, an empty talking, a deceiver, one who is greedy for money, and certainly he must have convictions that are in accord with sound doctrine, not opposite to it. What I’m saying is this:

if you are in a rush to get someone who can eloquently refute false teachers, do not let that blind you to the other requirements of the pastor earlier in the passage. They are ALL important relative to the false teachers.

2. The Ultimate Reason: Render the False Teachers of No Effect

The phrase I refer to here is “whose mouths must be stopped.” Literally the verb means to “put something on the mouth” or to “stop up the mouth.” A muzzle, bridle, or gag gives you the idea of what this is talking about. It means to hinder or prevent from speaking.

It might be nice if God would simply do that to all false teachers. Unfortunately, when men take it to themselves to do this job, disaster usually results. In a combined state-church system, those who think they have all their beliefs just right can oppress those who believe differently. For example, though we cherish our religious freedoms in this country, in colonial America it was not so in New England and in some areas of the south. Puritan Congregationalism, the so-called “standing order,” who believed in infant baptism, physically abused those who believed in believer’s baptism like we do. The state/church confiscated their property, forced them to pay church taxes, ran them out of town, etc. in order to attempt to silence their teaching.

Given our atmosphere of religious freedom, it is also difficult to effectively tell the false teachers to “shut up.” Certainly there are certain measures that can be taken to exclude them from fellowship. However, it undoubtedly won’t solve the entire problem because those teachers are called “unruly” which indicates their rebelliousness and insubordination. They probably won’t listen if you try to tell them to stop their false teaching.

The better approach is given in the previous context, verse 9. The text says “that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convict those who contradict.” In other words, BY SOUND DOCTRINE, the teaching of the false teachers is silenced, brought into disrepute, brought to shame, and brought to no effect. Those who are solidly grounded in the faith should be able to easily recognize false teaching and thus cause it to stop dead in its tracks. Thus *exhortation* is needed. And those ones who are the false teachers will hopefully, God willing, be brought to repentance regarding their false teaching. Thus *convincing* is needed.

Conclusion

The need for qualified pastors is great because of the many false teachers that are out there. There are so many “churches” that teach condemning doctrines. Woe betide those who follow that doctrine. We need men who will teach the truth far and wide so as to bring the false teaching to nothing.

The passage is not done yet—there is another section in vv. 12-16 which supports the reasoning here for the need of qualified ministers, particularly on the island of Crete.