



NEW TESTAMENT • LESSON 70
CHARACTER COUNTS

Leaders in the church lead by example.



MONDAY

THE STORY: 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-7

Pastors must be above reproach. Some of the instructions that Paul gave Timothy were given to help him watch over the local churches under his care. Timothy, helped Paul care for the local churches that sprung up from Paul's gospel preaching. One of Timothy's responsibilities was to establish leaders in those local churches. Paul wanted Timothy to be certain that any man desiring to lead the church be qualified to do so. Nearly all of the qualifications Paul mentioned relate to a man's character. The only qualification that has to do with a man's gifting is that he be "able to teach." Pastors must have very godly character to qualify to lead the church!

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why must a pastor have godly character? (All the people in the church should follow the pastor's example. If he doesn't have godly character, he should not try to lead others in godliness.)

Why does a pastor need to manage his own family well? (If he cannot lead his family, a small group of people, how can he lead the church, a larger group of people? To use an analogy, if a man finds it difficult to juggle three balls, he certainly won't be able to juggle five balls well at all!)

PRAY:

Take time to pray for your pastor. Pray that God would pour out grace on him and his family to live godly lives in service to Christ and the church.



TUESDAY

THE STORY: 1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13

Other leaders (in addition to pastors) and their wives must be worthy of respect. Not only must the pastors in the church live godly lives, but the other leaders and the wives of leaders must lead godly lives as well. Just as the pastors are examples to the leaders they train, the other leaders are an example to the congregation. Paul understood that we grow, in part, by imitating other godly people. He said, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” All leaders must live lives worthy of emulating, and if they fail, they should be willing to yield leadership to others better qualified. Paul also connects godly living with faith in Christ. Although we don’t do good works to earn our salvation, good works are a product of our salvation. If a person claims to have faith, but has no works, James says that such faith is worthless and dead (James 1:26 and 2:17).

TALK ABOUT IT:

Why is following by example a good way to learn? (It is a lot easier to watch someone do something and then do it than it is to read about it in a book. Imagine reading in a book how to hold a baseball bat. It is much easier to watch someone hold a bat and imitate him.)

Why does Paul hold a leader responsible for his children’s behavior? (Parents are responsible to teach their children. Their children’s behavior is a reflection on the way leaders and their wives have led in their home.)

PRAY:

Pray for the pastor and the other leaders in your church. Ask God to pour out His grace on them, their wives, and their children.



WEDNESDAY WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

THE STORY: 1 TIMOTHY 3:16

At the conclusion of Paul's exhortation to leaders and the church, Paul lists a confession of the mystery, or revealed secret, of godliness. Living godly lives can be a challenge. So Paul gives us the one key piece of information we need: Jesus.

Jesus, who took on human flesh, was proven true by the working of the power of the Spirit of God. He accomplished the salvation of all men, which is now preached and believed among the nations. When His mission was completed, He was taken up in glory. Though the presentation was poetic, it was the gospel nonetheless.

Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build My church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." He loves the church, giving His life to save the lost and bring them into His church family. He is the chief shepherd, and all the leaders under Him must be able to lead by example so that those for whom He died will be well cared for. If it were not for Christ's death on the cross, which brings us redemption, there would be no church and no need for godly leaders.

TALK ABOUT IT:

What did Paul say that helps us know He is talking about Jesus? (Paul says that He was preached among the nations and believed and taken up in glory. Jesus fits that description better than anyone.)

Why is Jesus the mystery of godliness? (Prior to Christ, men would have thought the way to holiness was following the law. In the Bible a mystery is a truth that was hidden, but is now revealed or known. Our righteousness comes from Jesus, and our strength to obey comes from His grace, not the law. Jesus revealed the mystery, or the secret, of a righteousness that is by faith and of obedience empowered by grace.)

PRAY:

Thank God that we don't have to rely on our own strength to obey or on our own works to be righteous.



THURSDAY

THE STORY: 1 TIMOTHY 3:14,15

The congregation must follow the example of its leaders. When we read through the qualifications for leadership in 1 Timothy 3, we should not use this to judge our leaders, but to judge ourselves. When Paul summarizes these instructions, he tells Timothy that he is giving them to Timothy so that “people” will know how to behave. He does not give them just to leaders. Paul’s goal is that we all would live godly lives. We are to all set a worthy example for others to follow. It is much easier to lead a godly life if everyone around you is leading a godly life.

TALK ABOUT IT:

How many of the qualifications for leaders apply to our lives? (All of them apply to everyone. We should all desire to live godly lives, and just about everyone is going to be called to teach someone. Even a small child will grow up to teach his younger brothers and sisters.)

Which of the qualifications on the list do you most struggle with? (Parents, lead by confessing your weaknesses first and then draw out your children.)

PRAY:

Pray for your leaders, their wives, and their children.



FRIDAY
ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

THE STORY: PSALM 144:1-4

The words in verse three are almost identical to the words of Psalm 8:4 and are quoted in Hebrews 2:6. Jesus is the Son of Man spoken of here. Jesus is also our Rock and our Deliverer. Jesus used the title Son of Man to describe Himself on multiple occasions. See Matthew 12:32 and Matthew 26:64.

TALK ABOUT IT:

Where do you see Jesus in Psalm 144:2? (Have your children look at the verse, encouraging them to reason for themselves.)

What does Jesus deliver us from? (Jesus died on the cross for our sin to deliver us from evil, the bondage of sin, and the punishment of sin.)

PRAY:

Thank God for sending the Son of Man to deliver us from our sin and eternal punishment.