



Authority in the Local Church

The Pastor's Responsibilities

The setting of Acts 20:17-19 is that Paul is eventually going to end up in Jerusalem. Acts 20:16.

"For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost." (Acts 20:16, NASB)

He got within 30 miles of Ephesus and held a pastor's conference with all of the pastors of Ephesus (what is now Western Turkey) attending. These pastors represented about 50-100 homes that were local churches and possibly 50-100 pastors there for Ephesus which was a large city.

"From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them, 'You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews;' (Acts 20:17-19, NASB)

In Acts 20:17, "called to him the elders of the church" refers to the many local churches that made up the church at Ephesus. Three Greek words refer to a pastor-teacher's duty. "Elders" is πρεσβύτερος (presbuteros) and speaks of pastor-teachers. It's the word for "old man" and speaks of the authority of the appointment, the ranking member of a local congregation.

In Acts 20:28, "overseers" is ἐπίσκοπος (episkopos) and refers to the function of the pastor. This work comes from *epi* - upon or over and *scopos* - to observe. Therefore, it means to oversee. The authority of a pastor-teacher lies in his teaching of Bible doctrine. The responsibility of a pastor is to feed the congregation the Word daily under the Hermeneutical principle of Isagogics, Categories and Exegesis (ICE), not to administer programs, not to keep people active, and not to hustle. He is to study and teach.

"Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." (Acts 20:28, NASB)

"Shepherd" is ποιμαίνω (poimainō) and means "get rid of the wolves." The responsibility of a pastor is to protect the flock. This word emphasizes the gift of pastor-teacher given by grace to shepherd the flock.

Acts 20:18-21 states the characteristics of the pastorate. Serving with humility of mind in Acts 20:18 and means to be oriented to grace, thinking grace, the first floor of the edification complex, grace orientation. He must have grace thinking and as such he will never have any illusions about himself.

"And when they had come to him, he said to them, 'You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.' (Acts 20:18-21, NASB)

Acts 20:29-30 indicates the authority of the pastor-teacher to troubleshoot. However, the pastor must not abuse his authority. The congregation does not have to worry about whether the pastor needs divine discipline. The Lord will give him a double dose when needed. 1 Peter 5:1-6; 1 Cor. 15:10.



"I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." (Acts 20:29-30, NASB)

"shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;" (1 Peter 5:2, NASB)

"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me." (1 Corinthians 15:10, NASB)

If God does not promote a pastor, a pastor is not promoted. This is also true of all believers. Joshua 3:7. When the pastor is promoted, then Isaiah 54:17 applies.

"Now the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you." (Joshua 3:7, NASB)

"No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their vindication is from Me," declares the LORD." (Isaiah 54:17, NASB)

In Acts 20:19, "tears" these are the disappointments and frustrations of the pastorate. Every pastor ought to have been jilted, received about five "dear-John" letters from girlfriends and should have about five years of military service. Then after all the frustrations of military service and being rejected by girlfriends, they will have no trouble in the pastorate. There are probably two categories of people who get to see the seamy side of life more than others, preachers and prostitutes. They see the instability of man.

"serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews;" (Acts 20:19, NASB)

"Trials" refers to pressures of which many are unique to the pastorate. Specifically, these were the religious Jews and the legalists. Today, it is the apostates who tear apart the grace of God, who discredit confessing sin biblically, who accuse, who lie, who misrepresent, the human good types and the loud-mouthed women of which every congregation is plagued from time to time.

So, Paul is the greatest example of all time of a man who laid it on the line and did not give up ever and kept true to the principles of grace.

Orienting to the Authority of Your Pastor-Teacher

In 1 Peter 5:5, "likewise" means in a similar manner. The congregation has responsibilities just like the pastor has responsibilities. The most important responsibility is submission to the authority of the pastor without which you cannot benefit from his ministry. The congregation must recognize and orient to the authority of their pastor to grow spiritually. 1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:7; Heb. 13:17.

"You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." (1 Peter 5:5, NASB)

"But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction," (1 Thessalonians 5:12, NASB)

"Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith." (Hebrews 13:7, NASB)



"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13:17, NASB)

In 1 Peter 5:5, the congregation is called “younger” and is νεώτερος (neōteros) in the Greek and is a word for subordination. The first part *neo* means young and the *teros* is a comparison suffix. By comparison, you do not have the authority of the pastor. This is in contrast to the word “elder” which is πρεσβύτερος (presbuteros). This used to mean older person, but means one with authority. The congregation is made up of believer priests assembling in one location and recognizing the authority of the pastor-teacher.

The pastor-teacher is the authority for two areas. He has absolute authority regarding policy of the local church. The administrative authority in the local church resides with the deacon board. The pastor can stop the deacon board if they get into any policy that is anti-grace. You cannot have two heads in a local church. The local church cannot have the deacon board as the highest authority. There cannot be two heads in the home, in a business, in anything.

In 1 Peter 5:5, “be subject” is the aorist middle imperative of ὑποτάσσω (hupotassō) and is the strongest word for subordination to authority in the New Testament. It was originally a military term, submitting to the authority of your military officer, to be under their command. This is a constantive aorist and means that as long as you are in the local church, you must submit to the pastor of that church. The same word as used of wives submitting to the authority of their husbands. The middle voice means they are benefitted by spiritual food, by the daily intake of doctrine and daily function of the grace apparatus for perception. The imperative mood means this is a command to all living believers in the Church Age. If you cannot submit to the authority of one local church, you must to go to a local church where you can. It is to your advantage to have a pastor-teacher. You are not permitted to run foot loose and fancy free. Every believer has a right pastor under whose authority you will grow spiritually.

In 1 Peter 5:5, “all of you, clothe yourselves” is the aorist middle imperative of ἐγκομβόομαι (egkomboomai) and means to roll, to band together, to put garments on. The constantive aorist means to be clothed in the soul, the entire Christian life, the times when you are together, with all Christian believers. The middle voice means you are benefitted. The imperative mood means that it is a command to all believers. “With humility” is grace orientation toward each other of the same kind. This is what you wear in your soul.

“For God is opposed to the proud” is ἀντιτάσσομαι (antitassomai) and means to be in line against. He is against the “proud” is ὑπερήφανος (hyperēphanos) and means to appear above, to be proud, haughty, to be arrogant, to be anti-grace, self-righteous, legalistic, have mental attitude sins, ignorant of Bible doctrine. “But gives grace to the humble” means that God keeps on providing grace to the grace oriented. This does not mean self-effacement, or hypocrisy, or standing in poor posture, and trying to take away from self. This is humility of the soul which is grace orientation.

In 1 Peter 5:6, “humble yourselves” is the aorist passive imperative of the verb ταπεινῶ (tapeinoō). The constantive aorist means moving toward grace orientation anytime Bible doctrine is taken in. The passive voice means that any time you take in Bible doctrine, you receive humility. It is not something you acquire. It is not a personality pattern. It is not a personality change. There is no road to humility except through Bible doctrine. The imperative mood means it is commanded that you function under the grace apparatus for perception and become grace oriented. Humility is a mental attitude of the soul which you receive from Bible doctrine.



"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time," (1 Peter 5:6, NASB)

Every person in emotional revolt has some system of self-effacement. This is not humility. Humbling yourself is not from changing your appearance, by becoming sloppy, or by neglecting grooming. Humility is not citing your failures and dumb things to gain rapport from others.

God is not in the business of producing kooks out of Christians. You never want to have a testimony like, "Once I was normal and now I am a Christian." True humility refers to receiving a graced-out mental attitude from Bible doctrine.

In 1 Peter 5:6, "Therefore" is based on Proverbs 3:34. "Under" is ὑπό (hupo) and is a preposition of subordination. You cannot have grace humility without the recognition of authority. "Mighty" is the adjective κραταίος (krataios) and means a ruling system or power and refers to Bible doctrine.

"Though He scoffs at the scoffers, Yet He gives grace to the afflicted." (Proverbs 3:34, NASB)

"Hand" is an anthropopathism and means to assign a human characteristic so we can understand God's attitude at any point. God doesn't have hands. He is a Spirit. Anthropopathisms are used in Proverbs 8:10-36 referring to the hand of God as the source of divine provision, the giving hand is extended to the human race. The hand of God is also used in Psalms 19:1 referring to creation, in Psalms 22:16 referring to salvation, in Isaiah 41:10 referring to His grace provision, and in Psalms 37:24 and John 10:28 referring to eternal security.

"For the choir director. A Psalm of David. The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands." (Psalms 19:1, NASB)

"For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet." (Psalms 22:16, NASB)

"Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10, NASB)

"When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, Because the LORD is the One who holds his hand." (Psalms 37:24, NASB)

"and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand." (John 10:28, NASB)

In 1 Peter 5:6, "that He may exalt you at the proper time," means that only through Bible doctrine does God promote. There is no self-promotion or group promotion where one is promoted in the eyes of the people. In 1 Samuel 16:7, "the Lord looks at the heart" means that looks at what is in the right lobe of the believer's soul. David's promotion came through learning and applying Bible doctrine resulting in his spiritual growth.

"But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.'" (1 Samuel 16:7, NASB)

"Exalt" is the aorist active subjunctive of ὑψόω (hupsōō) and means to elevate, to promote, to exalt. The aorist tense refers to the time when a believer has maximum doctrine in their right lobe. This is a culminative aorist and means that after you have taken in Bible doctrine, you have an edification



complex of the soul. This is the point of promotion.

The active voice means that God always does the promoting. He does it on the basis of His omniscience and His ability to read your soul. The subjunctive mood indicates that the promotion is potential, depending upon Bible doctrine and the key is grace orientation. God cannot and will not promote a non-grace believer. Joshua 3:7.

"Now the LORD said to Joshua, 'This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you.'" (Joshua 3:7, NASB)

"Proper time" is *en* plus the locative case (sphere) of *καῖρος* (kairos) and occurs in our time on earth. We're all promoted in eternity. This is the point when we have taken in enough doctrine in the daily function of grace apparatus for perception, grace orientation to the point where God can trust you with authority. No one can use authority until they become authority oriented. See category on [Authority of the Pastor-Teacher](#).

Follow the Dictates of Psalms 37

In Psalms 37:1, "Do not fret" is *חרה* (chârâh) and means to glow, to melt, burn, dry up, to blaze, to be incensed, to be very angry. It actually means to burn with the heat of jealousy, to vie with a rival. The possessiveness of man is turned into jealousy. He is turned into a vicious competitor as in the animal world in everything he does! "Evildoers" is *רָעַע* (raa). "Envious" is *קנא* (qânâ') and means to be jealous, jealousy offering.

"A Psalm of David. Do not fret because of evildoers, Be not envious toward wrongdoers." (Psalms 37:1, NASB)

In Psalms 37:3, "Trust in the Lord" is *בָּטַח* (bâtach) and means to be bold, decisive, and to slam down an opponent like a wrestler pins his opponent. "Do" is *עָשָׂה* (asah) and means to manufacture something out of something. "Good" is *טוֹב* (tob) and means divine good. "Dwell in the land" is *שָׁכַן* (shâkan) and means to permanently reside in the land, even means to rest. "Cultivate" is *רָעָה* (raah) and is the word for tending a flock, to be shepherding.

"Trust in the LORD and do good; Dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness." (Psalms 37:3, NASB)

In Psalms 37:4, "Delight" is *עָנַג* ('ânag) and means to be soft, or pliable, used for being luxurious, delicate, have delight, sport self. "Desires" is *מִשְׁאֵלָה* (mish'âlâh) and means to petition, request, to demand, to earnestly desire.

"Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart." (Psalms 37:4, NASB)

In Psalms 37:5, "Commit" is *גָּלַל* (gâlal) and means to roll, to trust, to seek occasion. It means to roll your burdens on the Lord, to put your issue of life in His hands. He will then promote you. In Psalms 37:6, "He will bring forth your righteousness" means He will promote you publicly.

"Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it." (Psalms 37:5, NASB)

"He will bring forth your righteousness as the light And your judgment as the noonday." (Psalms 37:6, NASB)

In Psalms 37:7, "Rest" is *דָּמַם* (dâmam) and means to cease from your own devices and techniques, gimmicks, what you think are the solutions. To stop what you are doing and let the Lord mold your thinking. "Wait patiently" is *חָיַל* (chîyl) and means to twist, to whirl, to dance, to wait. In Isaiah 40:31,



“to fret” is קוה (qâvâh) and means to bind, to twist.

"Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes." (Psalms 37:7, NASB)

"Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary." (Isaiah 40:31, NASB)

In Psalms 37:8, “Cease” is רפה (râphâh) and means to slacken, to abate, to forsake. “Anger” is אף ('aph) and means the nose or nostril and refers to the face getting red, the rapid breathing in passion, to breathe hard, to be enraged against the evildoer! “Forsake” is עזב (azab) and means to loosen, relinquish, permit, refuse, leave. “Wrath” is חמא (chêmâ') and means to be hot, heat, anger, poison (from it fever), hot displeasure, indignation.

"Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing." (Psalms 37:8, NASB)

Consider the conclusions of Psalm 37:9. The humble will inherit the land. “Inheriting” is ירש (yârêsh) and means to occupy by driving out previous tenants, and possessing in their place, to seize, to expel, to impoverish, to ruin.

"For evildoers will be cut off, But those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land." (Psalms 37:9, NASB)

In Psalms 37:11, “Will delight themselves in abundant prosperity” is the prosperity of believers in peace, in spiritual maturity.

"But the humble will inherit the land And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity." (Psalms 37:11, NASB)

The little of the mature believer will be more than the wealth of the wicked. Psalms 37:16.

"Better is the little of the righteous Than the abundance of many wicked." (Psalms 37:16, NASB)

The humble will have their financial obligations taken care of. The humble will not be destroyed by the enemy, when they stay with Bible doctrine. Psalms 37:25.

"I have been young and now I am old, Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken Or his descendants begging bread." (Psalms 37:25, NASB)

Procedure for Disciplining an Erring Pastor

The Lord puts the erring pastor under double divine discipline. Double honor in reverse is double discipline. 1 Tim. 5:17; James 3:1.

"The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching." (1 Timothy 5:17, NASB)

"Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment." (James 3:1, NASB)

The deacon board is responsible for administering discipline. I am speaking of categorically oriented boards. When a man jettisons Bible doctrine, he has no authority. His authority comes from Bible doctrine. Then a proper biblical procedure is to be followed. 1 Tim. 3:2; 1 Tim. 5.

"An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach," (1 Timothy 3:2, NASB)



To guarantee objectivity, two or three of the proven, mature believers must have witnessed (heard or observed) the sin (false doctrine, overt activity). In 1 Timothy 5:19, “accusation” is κατηγορία (katēgoria) from *kata* (down) and *agora* (a place of public speaking). This is a trial situation. The word accusation is referring to an orderly public tribunal held in a local church.

"Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses." (1 Timothy 5:19, NASB)

The pastor explains his position or gives his defense before a small group of two or three which is an idiom for the board of deacons. This is not before the congregation. They will “admonish” him. This is νουθεσία (nouthesia) and means to put in mind. This is a verbal warning. Titus 3:10.

"Reject a factious man after a first and second warning," (Titus 3:10, NASB)

Then if this does not straighten up the matter, there is another warning. If this doesn’t straighten out the erring pastor, then 1 Timothy 5:20 is true. “Rebuke before all” meaning the whole congregation. The word rebuke is ἐλέγχω (elegchō). Although Timothy did the rebuking here, it would be the duty of the chairman of the deacon board. Obviously they are sinning.

"Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning." (1 Timothy 5:20, NASB)

By this time, the pastor-teacher is out of the ministry and his resignation should be in hand. If he still is obstinate, then the congregation should vote him out which is a constitutional provision rather than a doctrinal provision.

In Titus 3:11, it is obvious that the individual is subverted – the perfect passive indicative of ἐκστρέφω (ekstrephō). He is a troublemaker, a promoter of factions. He is against the mind of Christ, Bible doctrine. “Being self-condemned” is αὐτοκατάκριτος (autokatakritos) and means literally, you become a critic against yourself.

"knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned." (Titus 3:11, NASB)

Training Men For the Ministry

Men training for the ministry should attend Bible class under the pastor-teacher at least once per day. If you have the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher or evangelist, it is compulsory to master the original languages. You need to be exhibiting a strong evidence of positive volition and a strong, tough, consistent mental attitude.

No evangelist can function in his spiritual gift as a private. His spiritual gift makes him a general and as such, he must be conditioned. No pastor-teacher can function in his spiritual gift without showing evidence of being a shepherd (a leader of men) and a teacher (a communicator of Bible doctrine).

You need to show evidence that you are a man’s man with maturity and the filling of the Holy Spirit so necessary to minister in these days of widespread apostacy. The standard is low today. Isaiah 3. The need is for divine wisdom. The need is for obedience with a strong positive volition that says Bible doctrine is first priority. There is a need for power and influence and to develop the doctrine of desires.