

## 11. Creativity and Spiritual Qualifications

One of the most important questions we can ask ourselves, as it relates to Biblical qualifications, is, “Does Scripture give spiritual qualifications to disqualify people or to help qualify people?” The way you answer that question may give you a better understanding of your own creativity at the present time.

One of the most common complaints of pastors is that they pastor a church that does not have enough qualified leaders. Some, in small churches, will say that they have no qualified leaders. When I hear that statement, I will sometimes ask the question, “What are you doing to help people become qualified spiritual leaders?” Whether such pastors realize it or not, in many cases, they are using spiritual qualifications to disqualify people in their minds. These pastors need to realize that they did not meet the qualifications for spiritual leadership at the time they became Christians. One or more people helped them develop and become qualified. The people who helped them develop were probably creative and used a variety of ways to help them develop and mature.

In Titus 1:5-9, Titus was given a list of spiritual qualifications for spiritual leaders. However, when people study that list, they often begin with verse 6, instead of reading verse 5, the verse that puts the whole passage in context. Titus 1:5 says, “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.” Paul had not been on the island of Crete long enough to develop those qualifications in a group of men in each city. As a result, he left Titus to complete the work of developing a godly leadership team in every city. Titus was to use this list of qualifications to help additional men become qualified.

Titus 1:6-9 says, “If a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.” This meant that Titus was to spend time working with men to help them grow in godliness, so they would become qualified for spiritual leadership.

We might summarize these verses by saying that the primary responsibilities of Titus were to:

- ◆ help potential leaders develop a respected life
- ◆ help potential leaders develop a healthy marriage
- ◆ help potential leaders develop a healthy family relationship
- ◆ help potential leaders become Christ-centered, not self-centered
- ◆ help potential leaders deal with former sinful habits
- ◆ help potential leaders learn to use their homes for ministry
- ◆ help potential leaders develop godly character
- ◆ help potential leaders learn to teach the Word of God
- ◆ help potential leaders learn to correct those who contradict

This list, of the primary responsibilities of Titus, is actually a primary part of the job description God gives to every spiritual leader. The night before Christ was crucified, as He prayed to the Father in John 17:4, He said, “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.” Christ had not yet gone to the cross. Yet, Christ could say that He had finished the work the Father had given Him to do. That work was the development of the leadership team that would lead the church when the church began on the Day of Pentecost. Christ knew that His most important work, before He went to the cross, was to develop the leadership team that would lead the church. Leaders develop leaders.

The effectiveness of any leader is best seen when the Lord takes that leader to heaven. If that leader has devoted his life to leading people to Christ, and then helping them grow in their spiritual lives to become qualified for spiritual leadership, that leader has been effective. If Titus carried out the primary responsibility Paul had given him, by the time Titus left Crete, he would have developed a team of godly leaders in every city to lead the churches. Those leaders in turn were equipped to multiply their ministry by helping potential leaders develop these qualifications.

Creativity is a key element in the development of potential leaders because no two potential leaders have the same spiritual gifts, heart (or passion), abilities, personalities, or experiences in life. In addition, no two are at the exact same spot in their spiritual development. The leaders of the early church knew that they would develop potential leaders the same way Christ developed them. Christ had developed them in a small group where they could discuss His teachings with Him and get their questions answered. He walked alongside them, and gave them an example to follow, as they grew in their spiritual lives.

Even the Jewish religious leaders were forced to recognize that Christ had helped unqualified men become qualified for spiritual leadership. Acts 4:13 says, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.” The religious leaders could not deny what Peter and John did and taught. They chose to try and threaten them. Peter and John gave their answer, in Acts 4:19-20, “But Peter and John answered and said to them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.’” The disciples had become like the One who had walked alongside them and given them an example to follow.

The early church leaders used the same pattern to develop the three thousand people who became Christians on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:42 says, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” Here, we see that every Christian became involved in a small group Bible study. These groups were small enough so that they could enjoy fellowship. These groups were small enough so that they could discuss the teachings of the apostles. They were also able to eat together and pray together. The apostles knew how Christ had developed them, so they used the same pattern to develop others.

Many years later, as Peter approached the end of his life, he wrote in 1 Peter 2:21, “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His

steps.” Peter did not point to his own example. Instead, he pointed to the example of Christ. Peter had walked with Christ. Peter has also suffered for Christ. As Peter walked through life with other Christians, he had said and done what Christ had said and done. Now, Peter could point to the example of Christ and say to follow His steps.

Paul had done the same thing with Timothy, Titus, and others. After leading them to Christ, and helping them grow, Paul gave them the opportunity to walk through life with him, as he walked with Christ. Paul could write to the Corinthians, in 1 Corinthians 4:17, “For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.” Timothy had walked with Paul and had seen how he walked with Christ. He had listened as Paul taught others. Now, Paul could say that Timothy would remind them of his ways or actions that were the result of walking with Christ.

Paul, Silas, and Timothy also walked with new Christians and helped them grow. They were showing these Christians, by their example, how to walk with Christ. When they wrote to the Christians in Thessalonica, we see that the Thessalonians had also learned to walk with Christ and shown others how to walk with Christ. 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10 says, “And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.”

The Thessalonians had watched the example of Paul, Silas, and Timothy and had learned to walk with Christ. Now, they were walking with Christ and showing others how to walk with Christ. In fact, people in other places were telling Paul, and the team, about the impact the Thessalonians had in their lives as they showed others, by example, how to walk with Christ. The creativity demonstrated by Paul, and the team, had helped the Thessalonians develop a creative ministry in the lives of others. They were now showing others how to become qualified for spiritual leadership.

The Lord will use your life to make a great impact for eternity if you will make it the focus of your life to walk alongside others and help them grow, and develop, and become qualified for spiritual leadership. That will make it possible for you to multiply the impact of your spiritual life. May the Lord richly bless you as you focus on helping people become qualified for spiritual leadership.