

#114 “The Husband Who Is Above Reproach”

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The Scriptures give us many places where we can go to study about men of character. In the Old Testament, there is often a one sentence commentary about a king. Either he followed God, or he did not. The central issue for him was the state of his heart before God. It is no different for the man of God today. In order for a young lady to know whether she should even consider pursuing a relationship with a particular Christian man, she must be able to identify whether or not he is a person of character.

It is all about integrity, the idea of being above reproach. This means that there is no obvious reason for criticism, correction, or rebuke, for the man is living out a life according to the will of God. There are then specific lists of characteristics of what makes a man godly and qualified to lead within a church. I would assume that a lady desiring to meet a man of God would expect that the man would meet the qualifications of an elder or deacon, regardless of whether or not her husband would have a formal position of leadership within a church. Let us take a few of these texts and examine them to see what makes a spiritual leader and one who is above reproach.

1 Timothy 3:8-10 says, "Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach." Just as the excellent wife in Proverbs 31 is a person of dignity, so is the man of God. Watch how the trait of integrity is written all over these next phrases. It says that he is not double-tongued. Ladies, you do not want a guy who says one thing and then does another. You want somebody who keeps his word so that you know he will be there when you need him and that he will fulfill the promises he will make you. A double-tongued man is slick and sly like a snake, which coincidentally has that split tongue. You want a man who is up front with you and who doesn't say anything that indicates a minimizing of the seriousness of sin in his life or in the lives of others. A man of God is not addicted to much wine. He is not a drunkard. We could also infer here that he is not obsessed with any idea, hobby, career path, or anything else that makes him "drunk" with success, sinful pleasures, worldly recognition, or the like. He is so filled with the Spirit that he has no room to insert anything else that is of an idolatrous nature. He is not fond of sordid gain. He does not use people or enjoy taking advantage of those who are weaker or in a place of vulnerability. He despises when others do that, and, when possible, he stands up for the weak. The ends do not justify the means for the man of God. He holds to the faith with a clear conscience. He does not take sin lightly or regard sin in his heart. In addition, his conscience is clear because he is convinced that his faith is the truth. He does not live in uncertainty and doubt about Christ and God. He is completely devoted to the purposes and works of God.

In Titus 2:6-8, we are given some insight into what a young man of God should be characterized by. It says, "Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in

speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us." The young man of God ought to be sensible. That means that he is level-headed and not prone to lose his temper or get into fights. He is wise and uses good judgment. His testimony is pure and flawless because in all things he is an example of good deeds. This does not mean he has never sinned or is perfect, but that as a general rule he is living according to God's commands. When he does not, he repents, asks forgiveness, and moves forward in truth. His doctrine is pure. This is a big one in my opinion. This young man knows God's Word. Not only is he familiar with the Bible, but his understanding of it is mature and pure. He has taken Paul's advice to Timothy to be a diligent worker in studying the Scriptures so that he will understand them and teach them properly (2 Timothy 2:15). Again, we see the theme of being dignified. This is one whom others ought to readily respect and admire. Finally, he is sound in speech. He does not let any unwholesome word proceed out of his mouth (Ephesians 4:29). He guards his tongue, knowing that it can be an instrument of great hurt (James 3:1-12). He speaks words that encourage and edify. He avoids coarse jesting and joking about questionable content (Ephesians 5:4). He doesn't take the Lord's name in vain by using it flippantly as a meaningless or degrading expression (Exodus 20:7).

A righteous man is rare just as a virtuous woman is hard to find. But as the excellent wife is a gift from God, so too is a husband who is above reproach. In other words, though these standards are very high, it is possible by grace through faith because all things are possible with Jesus (Philippians 4:13). May God raise up more young men who are willing to live above reproach by faith in Jesus Christ.