

I. Intro:

- a. Show small group leaders video:
- b. Sometimes without intending to we expect that our leaders should be perfect
 - i. We would not say it that way
 - ii. But sometimes there is a part of me when a leader falls that says – yea
 - iii. That’s terrible right. But I think its because I know I’m not perfect and when someone else shows they are not too – I like it.
- c. Where there is the expectation for me to be perfect or close to it I don’t do well
 - i. The video we just watched kind of illustrates that the Bible leaders we all admire in the Bible in many cases we would not allow to be church leaders
 - ii. We certainly would not have picked the goof balls that Jesus ends up picking for His 12 disciples – we need people closer to perfection
- d. In the book of Matthew – Matthew is about the life of Jesus on earth
 - i. Jesus gives this sermon that has come to be called the Sermon on the Mount
 - ii. In the sermon He says some things that blow the minds of the people He is speaking to.
 - iii. The people He was talking to knew a lot of the rules that God introduced in the Old Testament (the first part of the Bible)
 - iv. But the people really did not get the heart of the rules that God had introduced – they missed the point of the rules
 - v. So Jesus does this sermon where he clears some things up. This is where Jesus introduces ideas like
 - 1. If you hate someone it is just like murder to God
 - 2. Or if you are checking out someone who is not your spouse that’s adultery
 - 3. Turn the other cheek
 - 4. Love your enemies
 - 5. All of these were mind blowing modifications to the rules that they thought they had known
 - vi. But after all that Jesus tops it off with this: Matthew 5: **48** Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
- e. Certainly you have been in a situation where you feel like no matter how hard you try you will never be good enough
 - i. Maybe you’ve had a boss like that – it did not matter how much work you did or how well you did – it was just expected
 - 1. But as soon as you mess up you are going to hear about it
 - 2. You were never good enough
 - ii. Or your parents expected you to be perfect
 - iii. Maybe you grew up in a church like that –
 - iv. When you are in a situation like – what does it make you want to do?
 - 1. Give up – yeah
 - 2. Why bother if I am never going to be able to get this right?
 - 3. There is hope for those of you who feel like you will never be able to get this right.

- f. I have another list that the Apostle Paul gives to us – it is a list for church leaders
 - i. It is similar to Jesus' list in its near request for perfection for church leaders
 - ii. This is guy named Paul is talking to a guy he is discipling named Titus
 - g. Titus 1: **5** The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. **6** An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. **7** Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. **8** Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. **9** He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.
 - i. This guy sounds like Superman
 - ii. He has his house straight – He is faithful to his wife which we all just learned means that he can't even look at another woman and lust
 - iii. Words like holy & blameless are used - other versions use the word irreproachable, faultless, guiltless, perfect, pure
 - h. Super duper high standard for leaders of the body of Christ
 - i. When I was growing up I was a part of 2 churches who did not have Shepherds or official church leaders
 1. First of all those churches were always train wrecks
 2. There was no one to protect or lead the sheep
 3. Second this situation always seemed to come about because no one could ever meet the standard in that church
 - a. Oh you are not as hospitable as you should be you can't be a shepherd
 - b. Oh one of your kids isn't going church anymore you are out
 - c. Oh you were divorced before you were even a Christian looks like you are out
 - d. And on and on it went
 - e. No one could ever measure up
 - ii. It came to a point – in both cases – the church – the people – just kind of gave up they stopped chasing the high call of church leadership and no one aspired to be the person that is described in Titus 1 and the church just became irrelevant
- II. Don't stop chasing
- a. There seems to be this epidemic all over our country where great men have stopped pursuing their great calling (great women have done the same in some cases)
 - i. Sometimes it is because the standard seems un reachable
 - ii. Sometimes it is because they are busy doing other things
 - b. A psychiatrist named Dr Pierre Mornell wrote a book called Passive Men & Wild Women

- i. This is what he said in his book, “Over the last few years I have seen in my office an increasing number of couples who share a common denominator.
 - ii. The man is active, energetic, and often successful in his job and inactive, inarticulate, lethargic and withdrawn at home.
 - iii. In his relationship with his wife he is passive and his passivity drives her crazy. In the face of his retreat she goes wild.
 - c. This guy is not a Christian
 - d. That passivity – that withdrawal is happening in the home and it is happening in the church
 - i. Many of you know that the church has been on the decline in this country
 - ii. This is why. This is why.
 - iii. At some point we stopped chasing Titus 1 in regards to our families and our churches where it means the most
 - e. But when you look closely at what Jesus asks of his people it is impossible
 - i. When you look at Titus 1 closely what is being asked is nearly impossible
 - ii. When Paul writes this to Titus the churches that Titus is watching over are in a place called Crete
 - iii. The church is pretty new in Crete – these are all new Christians
 - iv. So he wants to take what he says in Titus 1 about being blameless and holy and pure and above reproach and apply it to a bunch of new Christians
 - 1. How are you going to be able to find any leaders among a bunch like that
 - 2. Why set the standard so high?
 - f. Here is why Jesus did it and here is why Paul did it – they intended that there would always be tension between being the leader Titus 1 describes and who we are
 - i. And no matter how great of a leader any of us become – there would always be more –
 - 1. And we could be loved and accepted right where we were in Jesus Christ
 - 2. But there would always be this tension between the standard – who we could be and who we are
 - ii. Be we have released the tension
 - 1. We stop trying
 - 2. We stop aspiring to be leaders in the home & church – stop chasing the superman
 - g. But Darryl...– I’m not going to be a shepherd – Titus 1 does not apply to me - I’m not a leader
 - i. Sure you are -
 - ii. Leadership = influence – REAL leadership = influence
 - iii. Do you any influence over anyone in your life?
 - iv. You are a leader

- v. And even though Titus 1 are qualifications for Shepherds I believe that it is a standard that we are all supposed to chase and not stop chasing

III. Qualifications

- a. I want to talk a bit with you the Spirit of Titus 1 and what Paul is asking for from leaders – some of may disagree with me here – that is cool we don't all have to agree – but I think that what we have done with verses like these have made the burden heavier than it needs to be
- b. Titus 1: **6** An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.
 - i. Paul starts out with a call for us to be blameless leaders
 - ii. So often we turn this into – can not have made any huge mistakes at any point
 - iii. We know by experience that no one can match a request like that – so what does it mean
 - iv. There was a time in Israel's history where there were no kings – God was the King, but God appointed judges to help people figure out the law and what God wanted
 - 1. Arguably the greatest judge Israel ever had was a guy named Samuel
 - 2. At the end of Samuel's time as a judge he makes a speech
 - v. 1 Samuel 12: He said, "I've done everything you asked me to do. I've placed a king over you. **2** Now you have a king as your leader. But I'm old. My hair is gray. My sons are here with you. I've been your leader from the time I was young until this very day. **3** "Here I stand. Bring charges against me if you can. The Lord is a witness. And so is his anointed king. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Have I cheated anyone? Have I beaten anyone down? Have I accepted money from anyone who wanted special favors? If I've done any of those things, I'll make it right." **4** "You haven't cheated us," they replied. "You haven't beaten us down. You haven't taken anything from anyone." (NirV)
 - 1. I think here is an example of a guy who is clearly not perfect
 - a. If you look at how he has raised his sons that is clear
 - 2. But as a leader he was blameless
 - a. He was above any accusations that people make of him
 - b. Not perfect but blameless and always reaching toward more blamelessness in his life
 - c. Maybe his example of blamelessness will help us be encouraged to keep on chasing this standard and to give more grace to the leaders in our lives
- c. Titus 1: **6** if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, (NKJV)
 - i. All my life people that I know have taken this to mean you have to be married to one wife
 - 1. If you have ever been divorced – under any circumstances – you are out

2. If your wife has passed away – you are disqualified.
3. If you decide to follow Paul’s advice to remain single so you can free from other concerns and can focus on the Lord’s affairs
 - a. Very dedicated of you
 - b. But you are disqualified
- ii. I think that some sense that we have to be perfect if we can be a church leader is from this point here – it has made many give up
- iii. But let me say this – Titus is originally written in Greek – the phrase “husband of one wife” when translated literally would be translated
 1. One woman man
 2. One wife husband
- iv. I think that the Spirit of this command that all of us but especially shepherds should be faithful, honoring our promises, true to one woman – above reproach in his sexual and marital life –
 1. I don’t think it was Paul’s intent to keep godly men who demonstrated their character over – time from helping to lead the church
 2. I have been at a church where a godly man’s wife passed away but the church wanted to have him in the role of a shepherd
 - a. Here you have this single godly man who had proved his leadership and character over time
 - b. He ended up getting married again – so in his life time he was the husband of 2 wives
 - c. It would have been a mistake to miss out a man’s leadership
- v. Paul wanted to create this list and give churches who are seeking God the ability to make the best decision they could in regards to choosing their church’s leaders
- d. Titus 1:6 An elder must be without blame. He must be faithful to his wife. His children must be believers. They must not give anyone a reason to say that they are wild and don’t obey. (NIRV)
 - i. Same kind of concept here in regards to children – I’ve seen this verse used to break people – and they stop pursuing greatness
 - ii. This has been interpreted to mean a shepherd must have children – so if you stick to what say that means at least 2 kids
 - iii. All those kids must be baptized believers attending church regularly, involved in ministry, married to believers, giving faithfully
 1. This places an impossible burden on any person – even the best Christian parents can’t guarantee their children will follow Christ
 2. The verse is better translated having faithful children (which is how some translations do it) – faithful – dutiful – trustworthy
 3. Pointing to the idea that if you do have children – as leader in your family you are able to keep your kids under control with all dignity (I Timothy 3:4)

4. That if you have you children or if you don't - the most ideal situation calls for leaders who demonstrate their ability to disciple people in close relationships
 - a. Their ability to manage their family – their willingness to be intentional in that role
 - b. That is the Spirit of the law Paul is going for
 - c. Not making some impossible standard for making all your children love God – a feat that God Himself has not been able to do
- iv. Some of you know Terry Dalrymple – one of the former Shepherds at our church – some would say the best Shepherd we have had here in recent years
 1. Terry never had kids – never raised kids – when he married his wife she had kids already but her youngest kid was 17 at the time of their marriage
 2. Paul wanted to create this list and give churches who are seeking God the ability to make the best decision they could in regards to choosing their churches leaders
 3. To look for men who have shown overtime their ability to spiritually lead people in the same over time.
- e. I believe that the call for us as people and as a church to chase God through His word –
 - i. Knowing that we will never meet the standard, but leaving room for broken people who are seeking the Lord
 - ii. Doing our best at every turn – always keeping the tension between what we can do and what we will do one day through Christ.
 - iii. Don't stop chasing Christ and the high standard He has created for His leaders.
 1. Don't stop because you think the list is too tough
 2. Because you are too busy with your work
 3. Because you think the church is too broken
 4. Don't stop and disengage from your most important roles on this planet
 5. Don't use the qualifications for Shepherds or anything else in the Bible to crush people and make them give up
 6. Next week we are going to look at something more important than this list (Titus 1) in regards to being a leader
 - iv. It what Jesus addresses when he talks to the spiritual leaders of his day– I hope you will be here for that
 1. My friend Jay Estes will be helping me out with that sermon

IV. Close

- a. If you know you need to re-engage as a leader (maybe you have never seen yourself as a leader) if you need to engage and would like our help – talk with us – you can talk with us right now by coming down front – while we stand and sing.