



General Topics :: Question about Bishops

Question about Bishops - posted by BlazedbyGod, on: 2009/3/6 9:39

1 Tim 3:2 "A bishop then must be blameless, **the husband of one wife..**"

Any insights on "the husband of ONE wife... "?

Thanks to all who reply

Re: Question about Bishops, on: 2009/3/6 10:00

In context it is excluding anyone who has been divorced because the most of the requirements for "bishops" (elders/pastors) have to do with his reputation and the reputation of his family. Thus the verse about if he can't guide and direct his own house how can he be expected to guide and direct God's house?

For me, this is not open to debate, altho some here will debate all day long that a divorced man can be an elder/pastor. Scripture says **no, he can't**.

In my opinion, this does not refer to men who's wife passed away and then he married a second time. Other scriptures make it clear that that is perfectly acceptable in God's eyes.

This is not in any way to say that divorced people can not be used of God. I get accused of saying that. That's not what I'm saying. But when it comes to being an elder/pastor... scripture, **not me**, says they can not.

Got an issue with that? Go tell God about it... He wrote it.

Krispy

Re: - posted by BlazedbyGod, on: 2009/3/6 10:09

Quote:

KrispyKrittr wrote:

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Krispy

Thanks Krispy, I tend to see it that way too. But I am just curious, because a brother of mine joined a ministry where the Bishop there is called an " ARCH-BISHOP"-and the man is recently divorced from his wife of 26 years and 4 children, they've divorced before, got married again-and now divorced again, and now, he as of 2008 married someone else.

Re: , on: 2009/3/6 11:10

He has no business being in the pulpit or masquerading as an elder. The Bible has another name for "Arch-Bishops"... it's called "NICOLAITAN". This was people who lorded their religious "authority" over the common people. That's what these titles and robes and all that stuff does.

Krispy

Re: - posted by TaylorOtwell (), on: 2009/3/6 12:41

Ditto to Krispy.

Also, do you think that elders **must** be married, since it says that they must be the husband of a wife.

With care in Christ,
Taylor

Re: , on: 2009/3/6 12:49

Personally, I think it's better if they are. But I don't think we can be dogmatic about that based on what this verse says. It's obviously stating that if you're going to be an elder you need to have your own house in order. I think if a single man meets every other requirement, then it's hard to deny him... and God may have given him the gift of celibacy in order to have more time to serve God.

But personally, I think it's better if he is married because a wife and family keeps a man grounded.

Also, how can a single man teach others about marriage or raising children?

Krispy

Re: - posted by HomeFree89 (), on: 2009/3/6 13:56

Paul was single, wasn't he? :-)

Re: - posted by bobmcd510 (), on: 2009/3/6 14:12

Yep, Paul was single and look how much insight he had into marriage! He wrote Corinthians. He said that being single is preferred though not required so it can't mean that a bishop be REQUIRED to have a wife. What he meant by "husband of one wife" was basically a condemnation of polygamy.

Re: - posted by BlazedbyGod, on: 2009/3/6 14:45

Paul was knowledgeable of marriage, yea, Paul was single, yea.....but I still think there is a difference between someone who just has the knowledge and wisdom, versus someone who has the knowledge, wisdom, AND experience.

Paul was not married,but Jesus is, (and of course I do not mean in the flesh)

I think the verse, applies to both against polygamy, but also against divorce and remarriage for someone who calls themselves a bishop.

Paul was an apostle, but isn't a Bishop different?

Re: - posted by bobmcd510 (), on: 2009/3/6 14:48

You said that Jesus is married which is correct. Was not Jesus speaking through Paul as he wrote the scriptures? So I don't see why the Holy Spirit speaking through a single man cannot give advice to a married man.

Re: Question about Bishops - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2009/3/6 15:03

Quote:
-----the husband of one wife

Literally this means "one woman man". The sense in which Paul is writing is that in that culture it was customary to have multiple wives at a time. Thus a bishop should have one wife not many like the unsaved around him.

If you look at the verb tense for the whole passage and the given requirements, it is in the present tense which means "at that moment". It does not mean for his whole life.

Consider the qualifications given-

1Ti 3:2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

1Ti 3:3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

1Ti 3:4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive,

1Ti 3:5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

1Ti 3:6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.

1Ti 3:7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Now if we take the wife part to mean what is being presented by most here, then the language for the whole passage would be different.

If we say that a man can only be married once forever or he is disqualified from being an overseer, then we must also say that if he was ever angry, not hospitable, not sober, quarrelsome, or if he did not keep any of the other traits, or if he broke them at any time in his life then he is disqualified and I really don't know who would be qualified then.

The language does not support this view as it means "presently".

Re: , on: 2009/3/7 17:42

Quote:
-----Paul was single, wasn't he?

Paul was single... and Paul was not an elder or a pastor. He was an Apostle and Missionary. You're comparing apples to oranges.

In Paul's particular calling being single is actually an advantage.

Krispy

Re: , on: 2009/3/7 17:48

Quote:
-----Literally this means "one woman man". The sense in which Paul is writing is that in that culture it was customary to have multiple wives at a time. Thus a bishop should have one wife not many like the unsaved around him.

This is the typical argument that is used to justify the ordination of divorced men into the elder/pastoral ministry... and it is a fairytale. Sorry, don't mean to offend, but that's what it is.

Yes, one can read into this that he is speaking about multiple wives... but quite clearly when speaking to the same cultures he dealt quite a bit with adultery. So there was a general culture of marriage (1 man/1 woman) in all of Paul's writings... but NOW we want to say he's only speaking of multiple spouses? No, he is speaking of divorce and remarriage. And yes, "husband of one wife" can address multiple spouses should that ever be an issue... but it was not addressed at all by Paul in any other passages, therefore it is unreasonable to think that this was all Paul was referring to.

Context, baby! Context!

Krispy

Re: - posted by jlosinski, on: 2009/3/7 18:20

What if the divorce and remarriage took place before the person was saved?

Re: , on: 2009/3/7 20:29

I would still err on the side of being too conservative. However, I had an uncle who was married and divorced when he was like 20 yrs old. He was married for about 6 months. No children.

Then he married my aunt, and they were married for about 10 yrs before they got saved. About 5 years after they got saved he felt called to preach.

I think under those circumstances, after much prayer, if the "powers that be" believe God is giving the ok... then yes.

See the spirit of what Paul was writing to Timothy is that the man needs to be above reproach. As to his immediate family, his wife and kids also need to be above reproach. Why? Because if they are not then they bring reproach on the name of Christ, and many folks won't listen to the man anyway.

A man who gets married, has kids, gets divorced, remarries and gets saved STILL has to deal with his ex-wife... still has to deal with a chaotic homelife because his children are torn between two homes... and that is a distraction to him.

A man who has his house in order, whose wife is a support to him and his ministry, and his kids are godly can lead a church effectively and without bringing reproach to the name of Christ.

What I get sick of hearing are all the justifications of why it's ok for pastors to have been divorced. Scripture says it isn't. Period. And when people have to justify something that usually means they ought not to be doing it in the first place. It all so strikes me as extremely prideful for a man to say "I know I've been divorced, but God called me to be a pastor!"

There is nothing in me that wants to be an elder, yet I am. If anything I'm always looking for an escape hatch to get out of it! Not looking to justify why I am.

Krispy

Re: - posted by jlosinski, on: 2009/3/7 21:26

Thanks for the response,

I understand when you say "There is nothing in me that wants to be an elder, yet I am. If anything I'm always looking for an escape hatch to get out of it! Not looking to justify why I am." God uses those that see themselves as unbelievably unqualified, such as Moses, Isaiah, the disciples (after Jesus rebuke), and Paul.

I was recently asked to be a Sunday school teacher for a class that has young believers and older saints that have been part of our fellowship for many years. Do I feel qualified? Not even close, and have made it clear to the group that I am tempted often by spiritual pride, and that I would expect them to hold me accountable to them. With that being said, all I can hope for is to glorify God first, and edify our fellowship second.

Not that I'm a seasoned expert, but I think a lot of trouble could be avoided in churches if people were more stringent (ie. biblical) with their leadership choices.

Re: , on: 2009/3/7 23:02

Paul was a Pharisee, and a member of the Sanhedrin, and therefore at one time had to have been married.

The book of Acts describes some of the activities of Saul (Paul), as well as some of his own statements. Saul belonged to one of the strictest sects of the Jews. "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee..." (Acts 23:6). He did not say; "I was a Pharisee, he said; "I am a Pharisee..."

Saul studied under the head of the Sanhedrin (the highest court in Judea). "...brought up in this city (Jerusalem) at the feet of Gamaliel..." (Acts 22:3).

Saul was himself most likely a member of the Sanhedrin, as evidenced by the following scripture, which fits perfectly the Jewish practice of stoning: "And cast him (Stephen) out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet whose name was Saul." (Acts 7:58).

Since it was the responsibility of the members of the Sanhedrin to witness public stonings, I believe that Saul was present (in an official capacity) at the stoning, while those who were witnesses against Stephen were required to cast the stones.

So, in conclusion, Paul had to have been married at one time. Did his wife die? Did she leave him after his Damascus Road experience? We will never know.

Sincerely,

Walter

Quote:

HomeFree89 wrote:
Paul was single, wasn't he? :-)

Re: - posted by jlosinski, on: 2009/3/7 23:34

Hi Walter,

How does this prove that he may have been married? Were the Sanhedrin required to be married? If they were not, this seems to be pure speculation.

Re: , on: 2009/3/8 0:26

Hi Jlosinski:

I have always thought that it was a requirement that all members of the Sanhedrin had to be married. After your post, I checked it out in detail, and can honestly say that it must be an "urban legend".

I will have to retract my prior post. If anyone else has information to verify that members of the Sanhedrin had to be married, from the Talmud or wherever, please post it here.

So, in conclusion, it would appear that there is no proof that Paul was ever married, but then what does that have to do with being a deacon, anyway?

Sincerely,

Walter
:-)

Quote:

jlosinski wrote:

Hi Walter,

How does this prove that he may have been married? Were the Sanhedrian required to be married? If they were not, this seems to be pure speculation.

Re: - posted by jlosinski, on: 2009/3/8 0:50

No problem :-D I just wanted to be sure I hadn't missed something. Grace and peace,
Joe

P.S.- I'm used to people mispronouncing my name when they're talking to me, but come on man, my user name is right here on the page :-P :-P

Re: , on: 2009/3/8 9:34

Whether Paul was married or not has nothing to do with this conversation because Paul was neither an elder or a pastor. He was an Apostle, Missionary and Evangelist. Not a pastor. In Paul's "line of work" he made it clear it was better for a man NOT to be married.

But in the case of an elder/pastor, who has to deal with the day to day lives of those who are under his care... it is best for him to be married, and married to one woman without divorce or family break up. How can a man who can not rule over his own house also rule over the house of God?

Besides being a heretical false church, the Catholic Church's idea of forbidding marriage for its clergy has no basis in scripture whatsoever (no surprise since most of their teachings have no basis in scripture). You end up with a bunch of sexually frustrated men who in time are open to all kinds of deviancy. Also, it is a fact that many young "homosexual" Catholic men flock to their seminaries to become priests. I think many of them do so because they think that perhaps being in the ministry will help them with their temptations... but as we have seen in recent years... bad things have happened.

So who really cares if Paul was married or not? It does not apply to this conversation.

Krispy

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiiss (), on: 2009/3/8 17:10

Hi Krispy,

Quote:

-----Whether Paul was married or not has nothing to do with this conversation because Paul was neither an elder or a pastor. He was an Apostle, Missionary and Evangelist. Not a pastor. In Paul's "line of work" he made it clear it was better for a man NOT to be married.

Actually, I think that Paul's instructions in I Corinthians 7:1-9 were for men and women in general...and not just apostles.

In addition, the translators of the KJV chose a very poor word in this passage. The Greek word used for "bishop" in this passage (I Timothy 3:2) is *episkopos*. It is used six times as "bishop" and once as an "overseer" (in Acts 20:28). The word *episkopos* literally means an "overseer," "supervisor," "guardian," "curator," or "superintendent." There is much debate over why the translators of the KJV chose to use the word "bishop." The most common perception is that it was derived from the traditional Roman and Holy Roman Empire (papal state) hierarchy, whereas "bishops" were often endowed with the status of "feudal lords." In the traditional Roman sense, a "bishop" held a higher position than a priest or local lay preacher.

I believe that it was a poor word choice by the authorized translators of the state Church in England. Several historical works state that the translators were instructed to keep certain "traditional" terms in the translation...even if they knew that they weren't particularly correct (such as *A Textual History of the King James Bible* by the Cambridge University Press). The position of "Bishop" existed in both the official Roman and Anglican churches for many centuries prior to the publication of the KJV...with most claiming "Apostolic Succession."

Ironically, the last time that the word appears in Scripture, it is directed toward the Lord Jesus...as "the shepherd and *episkopos* of your soul" (I Peter 2:25).

General Topics :: Question about Bishops

I do understand the arguments about marriage and divorce in regard to Church leadership. The aforementioned passage (I Timothy 3:2) could be speaking about divorce...or polygamy...or both. I just don't know if it is wise to use a different standard for different Church "positions" (like a pastor and an apostle). Peter was an apostle...and was married. Paul was an apostle...and was unmarried.

:-)

Re: , on: 2009/3/9 9:41

Quote:
-----I do understand the arguments about marriage and divorce in regard to Church leadership. The aforementioned passage (I Timothy 3:2) could be speaking about divorce...or polygamy...or both. I just don't know if it is wise to use a different standard for different Church "positions" (like a pastor and an apostle). Peter was an apostle...and was married. Paul was an apostle...and was unmarried.

I'm not discussing apostles, tho. The conversation is about elder/pastor. And we can debate what Paul meant about "husband of one wife", but the spirit of the whole issue is summed up at the end of Paul's discourse when he asked the question "how can a man manage the house of God when he can't manage his own house?".

If a man is divorced, he is disqualified. The divorced may not have been his fault (tho I have never seen a divorce that didn't have plenty of blame to go around for both people!), but the fact is... there is chaos and distraction in his current life because of his past divorce.

And who will take him seriously when he counsels people about marriage and family life?

The Bride of Christ is pure. Pastors are not perfect, to be sure. But scripture is clear on this subject.

There are many many ways in which divorced people can be in ministry and serve God... but not as an elder or pastor.

Krispy

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiiss () , on: 2009/3/9 12:26

Hi Krispy...

I understand that you're pinpointing the role and responsibilities of "pastors." Yet the passage in question is directed at "bishops." Is a "bishop" a "pastor?" The word "bishop" seems to have been a poor choice of word by the translators of the KJV. Properly translated, it is an "overseer." Are we saying that God applies a different standard to pastors than he does apostles? It seems like the words of Paul in I Corinthians 7 were directed to all men and women...and not just apostles and those outside of the "ministry."

Remember, at the time that Paul wrote both I Corinthians 7 and I Timothy 3, polygamy was rampant throughout the various states of the Roman Empire. It wasn't illegal in Rome...nor overtly in the Scriptures. Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Caleb, Gideon, David, and even Ezra (amongst others) had more than one wife. Why? Because the Law did not expressly forbid it. Yet God set the example by giving Adam only one wife...which should have sufficed as an example (Genesis 2:24).

On the other hand, divorce/remarriage is not mentioned as a "sin" in the Law either. The hardest thing that the Old Testament says about divorce seems to be a command to NOT remarry a previous spouse who had been remarried (Deuteronomy 24:1-4). The New Testament, on the other hand, is far more direct in its prohibition of divorce. Jesus was very blunt about the matter of remarriage. The question, however, is whether or not this passage is applying to remarriage (where the believer is not at fault, before or after conversion...or both). This passage might have been directed toward all believers regarding polygamy, divorce or BOTH.

I don't pretend to know what it is that Paul is referring to in this passage. I can't help but question just what it is that would prohibit a man who remarried before his conversion (or after his unbelieving wife commits adultery and divorces him) from serving the Lord in ministry. The Assemblies of God held a very strict view toward divorce and remarriage until just recently...and even then, some still think that it is strict.

I have to admit that the best "pastor" that I have ever had was a youth pastor who had been divorced and remarried before he came to the Lord. This was the guy who introduced me to Christ more adequately than anyone else...and also introduced me to the messages of many of the men contained on this website. Granted: He was a strict youth pastor (too strict, according to some), but his words went a long way with the youth group and the rest of the congregation. He went through Bible School with the Assemblies of God but was denied a license or ordination at the time because of his "failure to uphold the conditions of I Timothy 3:2)."

I do find it interesting, however, that we are so eager to focus upon the divorce/remarriage portion of this passage -- when it seems that many more people would be restricted on the basis of the other conditions found with the passage. Here are the conditions found in I Timothy 3:1-3:

1. He must be blameless (verse 2)
2. The husband of one wife (verse 2)
3. Vigilant (verse 2)
4. Sober (verse 2)
5. Of good behaviour (verse 2)
6. Given to hospitality (verse 2)
7. Apt to teach (verse 2)
8. Not given to wine (verse 3)
9. No striker (or *not violent* verse 3)
10. Not greedy of filthy lucre (verse 3)
11. Patient (verse 3)
12. Not a brawler (verse 3)
13. Not covetous (verse 3)
14. One that ruleth well his own house (verse 4)
15. Having his children in subjection with all gravity (verse 4)
16. Not a novice (verse 5)
17. Must have a good report of them which are without (verse 7)

This passage can be read in the NIV by clicking
(<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Timothy%203;&version=31;>) HERE.

It seems to me that there are plenty of conditions listed here that aren't quite followed either. It is easy to focus on the portion about divorce/remarriage, but I think that it is just one part of a larger list of conditions that are often ignored by would-be "bishops."

Re: , on: 2009/3/9 15:27

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This was good Chris.

I saw you on the David Wilkerson thread as well, so I thought you'd be the one to ask, just one question that I've had --- though not asking for a "word of knowledge" here - because you may not know - but why would you think that Brother David used that word 'bishop' in his last two blog entries?
My only reason for asking is because my family are RCC.

Thank you.