

# ***StraitWay***



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## **Overseeing The Flock Part Six (The Elder's Wife)**

We read the qualifications of the office of a bishop and the qualifications of a deacon in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:1-10. As we read further, in verse 11 it says, "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." There are those that believe 1) Verse 11 is talking only about the wives of the deacon. 2) That it is talking about both the wives of the bishop and the deacon. 3) That it is talking about women deacons. 4) That it is talking about all wives or women. Of these 4 views, I do not agree that verse 11 is talking about women deacons. I personally think it is talking about the wives of both the bishop and the deacon.

We must keep in mind as we read about the qualifications of the elder, that he is to be the husband of one wife. His wife is exactly that, a wife. By being an elder's wife she has not inherited an office. She has not inherited some special work. She is not obligated to do special things or to live in a special way apart from other Christian women.

Although God does not set the elder's wife apart from other Christian wives or women, that is not to say she is not set apart by many brothers and sisters in Christ. For example, can you even imagine the reaction the elder's wife would receive if she wore the same type clothes as some of the sisters?

What are some things that many in the congregation expect of the elder's wife? Some believe the elder's wife is to oversee the preacher's wife. It has been suggested by some that the elder's wife must teach a class. Some seem to think she is to oversee the women of the congregation, be in charge of organizing the work of the women (carrying food to the sick and show hospitality to visiting preachers). However, it is God's word, not the brethren that determine the way an elder's wife must conduct herself.

1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3 says she is to be grave, not a slanderer, sober, and faithful in all things. Titus 2:3-5 teaches she is to behave as becomes holiness, not a false accuser, not be given to much wine, a teacher of good things, she is to teach the young women how they are to behave as a wife and mother. She is to be a keeper at home and to manage the home. Proverbs 31 is a good example of how an elder's wife should conduct herself. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning..." (Rom. 15:4).

Ephesians chapter 5 teaches she is to submit herself to her own husband and to reverence him. 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3 teaches she is to be in subjection to her husband, live a chaste manner of life and her adorning is not the outward appearance but the inward of a meek and quiet spirit. 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2 teaches she is to adorn herself, "in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." She is not to usurp authority over the man.

As you have already noticed, the qualifications given in the passages above are passages that apply to all Christian wives. Yes, the elder's wife is to behave in such a manner as becometh holiness, but so are ALL our sisters in Christ.

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## **Preacher Training Writing**

In this series we are breaking down the work of training preachers into segments for consideration and our hope is that some seed for thought might be encouraged in each area.

### **The Work of Writing**

In Galatians 6:11 Paul mentions to the churches of that region that he was writing this letter with his own hand, i.e. personally rather than dictated and transcribed. I believe he was implying his own personal interest in their spiritual welfare by this autographed epistle. In 2 Corinthians 10:10 we find that even the false teachers in Corinth referred to his writings as “weighty and strong”. In 2 Timothy 4:13, Paul’s last written correspondence that we know of, he makes request for his cloak (winter was coming, v21), his books, and his parchments. The latter would have been used for writing had they arrived in time. By these verses as well as the fact that the Holy Spirit made use of Paul’s talents to pen half the books of the New Testament, we might draw the conclusion that writing was a definite part of the apostle’s ministry. His example is a good one for us today.

If there is one complaint that I have heard over the years, echoed and re-echoed, it is that we don’t have enough written materials to assist in our teaching and study. We don’t have enough curriculum material, not enough tracts for teaching, and certainly not enough adult reading and study material. Although I do not wish to broadly paint all the above areas, often what we do have looks like it has dropped out of a time tunnel from the forties. The style of writing, as well as the covers and graphics are simply uninteresting to most folks that have been born since 1960. It is sad. Even the Jehovah’s Witnesses have updated their material. Note that this is not a matter of doctrine. I’m speaking of putting good, effervescent, spiritually uplifting “wine” in new wineskins.

The young man in training needs to be practicing his writing skills. With computers today and gigabytes of memory, there is very little excuse not to write and develop and improve class material, tract materials, and topical studies over time. A few suggestions that might help develop this skill in a young man would be...

- 1) Discipline. One should set aside some time to write on a daily, or at least a weekly basis. Creativity CAN be learned. There are any number of art instruction books that demonstrate this in the visual field. Creativity in this area also is developed over time as this practice of regular writing is followed.
- 2) Assignments. One develops his talents in different areas by practicing difficult moves, not just repeating the easy things over and over. The young man should be assigned topics to write on that will make him be concise, well studied, and accurate.
- 3) Limits. There needs to be a word limit to the articles that are written. Rather than rambling page after page, one should practice boiling down the points and getting to the subject. Just as in public speaking, repeating a point over and over does not make it more true. There is a place for long, detailed, studies. There is also a place for one page presentations. Don’t confuse the two and don’t get tied up in one or the other. The same author that wrote Romans wrote Philemon.
- 4) Reading. The young man needs to develop his vocabulary as well as broaden his base of knowledge. A regular practice of reading good, uplifting literature will assist one in both these areas.

Years ago, a preacher told me that he perceived a great need for more written material and he would have liked to work more in that area, but, in his words, “There are just too many wolves out there.” Sadly, he may have spoken the truth and care does indeed need to be given to what is put in print. Some who write on internet email lists they thought were “private” are now finding this to be so. Nevertheless, if you’re going to preach it, you should be willing to write it. If it is not worth teaching in print, perhaps it is not worth teaching from the pulpit.

Young men need training and experience to get past the “fear factor” in writing to a place where they are Biblical in their studies, interesting in their examination, and concise in their presentation. Like everything else, it just takes time and practice. Overseers of training programs... go to work on these men and help present the church family with more accurate study materials and tools for outreach.

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## Erroneous Concepts Of The Church

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, "...I will build my church..." According to Acts chapter two, that promise was fulfilled on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ. What is your concept of the church revealed in the New Testament? Let us consider some concepts of the New Testament church which are NOT set forth in the inspired scriptures.

One modern concept of the Church of Christ is that it is made up of all churches. Why reject this concept as a false view of the church?

1. Many of these churches wear names which you cannot read in your Bible.
2. Many of these churches teach doctrines which are not taught in the word of God, for example:
  - a. some churches teach there is one person in the Godhood
  - b. some teach a child of God cannot fall from grace
  - c. many teach mechanical instruments of music in worship are pleasing to God
  - d. many also teach the Lord's Supper does not have to be observed every Lord's Day
  - e. many other such teachings.
3. Many of these churches have forms of government, or organization, which do not come from the word of God.
4. They foster a state of religious division which is not pleasing to God.

Another modern concept of the church of Christ is that it is made up of congregations, there being no universal body which is made up of all saved people -- no church universal, only local churches. One of the arguments made in an effort to sustain this concept is that in America we have one flag -- the stars and stripes -- but there are many flags. Why reject this concept of the church? Jesus said, "...I will build my church..." and the church is called the body of Christ (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22,23). There is just one body (Eph. 4:4,5), therefore there is just one church. According to Paul, men are baptized into that one body (church universal): "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body..." (I Cor. 12:13). When the eunuch was baptized by Philip (Acts 8:36-40) he was not baptized into a local church for they were in a place "...which is desert" (Acts 8:26), an uninhabited place. The eunuch was baptized into the universal body of Christ, but not into a local church.

When the apostle Paul "...assayed to join himself to the disciples..." in Jerusalem, "...they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple" (Acts 9:26). Saul had already been baptized (Acts 9:18), so the way into a local church is NOT through baptism, but through the acceptance of the church. When Apollos "...was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him..." (Acts 18:27).

In Acts 20:28, Paul said, Jesus purchased the church with His own blood. In Eph. 5:25-27 he said, Jesus "...loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle,...but that it should be holy and without blemish." These verses refer to the church universal and include all the saved. The units making up the church universal are individuals who have been baptized into Christ, not local churches. Note that some did not hold the head (Christ) (Col. 2:19). They did not maintain their relationship with Jesus Christ in the church universal.

What is your concept of the church? Can you find it in the New Testament?

## Coming “In the Clouds”

*BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.* (Rev. 1:7) The term coming “with the clouds” or “in the clouds” is used throughout the Bible as a **symbol** of the judgment of God. For example:

It is used in Isa. 19:1; Ezek. 30:3; 32:7 as those writers describe God’s judgment against Egypt.

It is used in Ezek. 34:12 to describe God’s judgment against Israel.

It is used in Matthew 24:24-30 and Mark 13:24-30 to describe God’s judgment against Jerusalem. Jesus would ride in on a “cloud of judgment” against Jerusalem as they (the Jews) had long rejected Him. Mark Stauffer has written, *When Jerusalem fell, as prophesied by Jesus, the disciples saw in this desolation Jesus coming in the clouds, riding “upon a swift cloud” against Israel, as God had done in Egypt. The great power and glory of Jesus’ heavenly rule from God’s right hand with the rod of His strength and the rod of iron were seen and understood by the disciples.* (Commentary of Mark, p. 323-324)

Here in Revelation, John is saying Jesus would come in judgment against the Romans & **ultimately He will come to judge all.**

All judgment has been given to the Son (John 5:22). In one sense, the expression in Rev. 1:7 points to Jesus’ coming against the enemies of the Christians in that time. Those who were persecuting Christians; subjecting them to prison, torture, and death would receive judgment from God. The message John received was intended to give Christians of His day hope! God would not allow the evil actions of their oppressors to go unpunished. I believe this passage also points to His final coming & judgment as evidenced by the rest of the verse. Note:

***Every Eye Shall See.*** There is a cross reference pointing to this phrase: Zech. 12:10. John refers back to this passage here in Revelation 1 and also in John 19:37. Those who pierced Him would see Him come in judgment. (Some say this was fulfilled with the destruction of Jerusalem, which may be a possibility.) In the final judgment, all who have rejected Christ, persecuted His church, and turned their backs on Him will see Him. Remember, ***every knee will bow.*** (Phil. 2:9-11) Some will bow to Him for His glory; and the majority will bow before Him *to their own damnation.* (Hailey, p. 103).

This passage also presents a dilemma for the premillennialist who insists of a “secret return” of Jesus. Nothing is indicated in this passage that His return will be secret! ALL WILL KNOW—which parallels 2 Thess. 4:16-17; Acts 1:9-11.

***Who are the tribes?*** Could this be Jews; Greeks; and Romans who shared in His rejection & crucifixion? Could it not encompass all who have stood in opposition to His cause?

***There will be some who mourn His return!*** To “mourn” indicates the “beating of the head or breast in lamentation, suggesting a condition of utter hopelessness.” (Hailey, p. 103). Not everyone will be joyous when the Lord returns! John has said: *Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.* (1 John 2:28)

Are you prepared for His return? In Rev. 2:16; 3:11; 22:7; 22:12; 22:30 Jesus said *I am coming quickly!* At a time ripe for judgment He will come to judge the forces of evil and to defend His own people. Where will you stand on judgment? Obey the gospel today!

## **“Home” Needs A “Real” Woman**

This month our study continues with a look at woman, the counterpart of man. It is difficult to know how to approach this subject, since, being a man, I cannot speak from experience. However, through the influence of a godly mother and godly wife (*forty years last month*) as well as an appeal to Scripture, hopefully we can share some beneficial thoughts with you about the woman as a part of the home.

The second greatest breakdown in the home and family, I believe, is the abdication of the woman from her God given role. Remember, there is a difference in male and female, God made them different (Gen 1:27) and all of man’s (or woman’s) rhetoric will not change this.

However, just being “female” is no guarantee that a woman is the kind of woman God wants. To illustrate the kind of woman God wants, notice the contrast between two women from Proverbs.

Proverbs 7:5-27 describes a “strange woman” (v. 5). The “strange” woman has the attire of a harlot; is subtle (crafty or deceptive) of heart; loud, stubborn – won’t stay at home; and only interested in the gratification of the flesh. The writer concludes her house is the way to hell.

Proverbs 31:10-31 describes a “virtuous” woman. This woman can be trusted; is not lazy; works diligently in various endeavors; is charitable, helps the poor and needy; prepares well for her household; supports her husband behind the scenes; is wise and kind. Her concern is for inner strength and beauty not outward show demonstrated by the “strange” woman. The virtuous woman’s primary concern is the needs of her husband and household.

These two passages show there is more to being a “real” woman, the kind God wants, than just being female. Just as masculinity is more than just being a male, so femininity is more than just being a female. The “real” woman is not the one who can assert and present herself in such a way as to attract and seduce a man through her physical attractiveness. The “real” woman is the one who has “inner beauty”: *“the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”* (1Pet 3:4). She is a godly woman. Certainly there is nothing inherently sinful about being physically attractive. However, 1Pet 3:3,4 indicates one who is only motivated to be physically attractive is not the kind of woman God wants. Woman was made as a help “meet” (*suitable or appropriate*) for man (Gen 2:18). She is his helper or his counterpart, that which makes him complete. Consequently, no matter how hard she tries she cannot be a man. Woman was given a different “role” or different “function” than man. “. . . *in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee*” (Gen 3:16). *“I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house. . .* (1Tim 5:14). *“To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands. . .”* (Titus 2:5). The woman was given domestic responsibility: bearing children; being in subjection to her husband and being a keeper at home.

God created woman for a purpose, to fill a special need; not as a competitor, but as a “helper” suited to the man. Woman was placed by God, in submission to man: *“thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”* Gen 3:16. God placed within man and woman qualities and characteristics that will, if used properly, bring out the best in each other as they function in their God given roles.

Just as the supreme quality of manhood is strength of a noble character and the foundation of a noble character is self-mastery, so it is with the woman. The “real” woman must master her inner self and her femininity in such a way that fulfills the “role” or function for which God designed her in the beginning.

The great and crying need today in the church, our families, and countries around the world is for WOMEN who have the courage of their convictions and the strength of character to be “real” women, godly women; taking their place as a “help meet” for their husbands. Until women accept their God given responsibilities, the church and our country will suffer, because the family will not be what God designed it to be and remember as the family goes, so goes the church and the country. “Take your place with confidence and pride. Be a first class woman and not a second rate man!” (from *The Challenge of Being a Wife* by Ruth E. Hazelwood)

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## Passing The Sword

In our study in this issue, we will be considering 1 Timothy Chapters 5 & 6.

### Chapter Five

Paul tells Timothy how to conduct himself with regard to certain people. 5:1,2.

1. He tells him how to deal with older men, exhort them as fathers.
2. Younger men should be dealt with as brothers.
3. Older women as mothers.
4. Younger women as sisters in all purity.

There are certain women (widows indeed) that should be given great honor, even to the point of them being cared for by the church. 5:3-10. But even these widows should first be cared for by their own relatives if possible vs. 16. There are other widows (those that are young) that should marry again and have their own home. 5:11-15. They were not to become wards of the church on a permanent basis.

Those elders who rule well and especially those who give themselves over to teaching and preaching the word of God should be counted worthy of double honor (they should be supported financially). 5:17,18. Accusations against an elder should not be accepted except at the mouth of two or three witnesses. 5:19-22. Actually, at least in our day and time, these accusations should be presented to the other elders of the congregation and they should deal with it. But if it falls finally at the feet of the preacher, he should be very careful how he deals with it. He should not hastily accept or reject the accusations, nor should he be partial toward the elder accused or the accusers.

Timothy was to use a little **wine** for medicinal purpose. 5:23. That does not justify **OUR** use of any amount as a beverage. Well taught Timothy (See 2 Timothy 3:14,15) would not even do that until he was instructed by the apostle to do so. So, short of a personal apostolic prescription (which none of us have or can get) we will do well to take the good advice we have in Scripture, (Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35)

### Chapter Six

Paul tells Timothy how to deal with masters and slaves. 6:1,2.

He then warns about those that do not consent to the sound teaching of the gospel. 6:3-5. Such a one is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with the exuberance of his own verbosity and is intoxicated therewith. Timothy was to withdraw himself from such a one.

Paul then talks about godliness and contentment being a great gain. 6:7,8. Such represents true riches.

Paul warns about those who desire to be rich in worldly goods. 6:9,10.

He tells Timothy to flee such desires and to fight the good fight of faith. 6:11-16. He urged him to keep this commandment, without spot, and blameless until the coming of the Lord.

Paul tells Timothy to tell those who are rich in this world's goods how they should use them. 6:17-19.

Then he warns Timothy to guard certain things and to avoid other things. 6:20,21.

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## What About The Rapture?

*"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thess. 4:13-18).*

Is the above text descriptive of what some call the rapture? We believe it is not. The word "rapture" is not found in the word of God, but that is not all, the doctrine concerning a future rapture of the church is not found in the word of God. The doctrine concerning a future rapture of the church is part of a system of teaching called Premillennialism, which teaches that Christ will rapture the church for seven years then return to set up His kingdom on earth and reign one thousand years on the throne of David.

Let us note several things about this system of teaching which are contrary to New Testament teaching.

1. **Premillennialism teaches that Jesus came into the world the first time to offer a physical, earthly kingdom to Israel which Israel rejected.** Jesus did not come the first time to offer an earthly kingdom to the Jews, but rather to "...seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). The angel told Joseph that Jesus would "...save his people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21).

2. **Premillennialism teaches that upon the rejection of the kingdom Jesus postponed the kingdom and established the church.** The Bible teaches that the church was not an afterthought with God for "...unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10,11). Also, we must remember that the kingdom and church are one and the same (Mt. 16:19).

3. **Premillennialism teaches that Jesus will rapture the church.** According to this doctrine there would two or three resurrections. The NT teaches there will be one resurrection: "...the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28,29). The NT does not teach that Jesus will rapture the church.

Glenn Melton - Pathfinder - January, 1997

## Will The Last Trip Be A Round Trip?

Some believe that those who make up the righteous dead at the second coming of Christ will be brought back to earth with Jesus, at which time Jesus will begin an earthly reign. Thus concerning the righteous dead it is thought that their last trip will be a "round trip": they have gone to be with Christ and He will bring them back at His second coming. Does the Bible teach that the righteous dead go to be with Christ and that He will bring them back to earth again, at which time He will begin an earthly reign?

Read and carefully consider the following passages regarding the return of our Lord:

Acts 1:9-11; I Thessalonians 4:13-17; John 5:28; I Corinthians 15:24-28; II Peter 3:10-12; John 14:1-3

Do these passages sound as if Jesus will bring the righteous dead back to earth and reign? Absolutely not. Death is a "one way trip," not a "round trip."

Glenn Melton - Pathfinder - April, 1997

## “Take Heed”

*“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” 1 Timothy 4:16*

Paul tells the young preacher Timothy that he must take heed to himself **and** the doctrine. What is involved in taking heed to the doctrine? Is it simply applying what can be found in your first few readings of Scripture? Or does it involve study of Scripture to fully understand what is contained in a passage?

The Greek word *epecho* (ep-ekh'-o) is what has been translated “take heed” in this verse. From Strong's Greek Bible Dictionary we find the definition – to hold upon, i.e. (by implication) to retain; (by extension) to detain; to pay attention to: - give (take) heed unto, hold forth, mark, stay.

Webster defines take - to get into one's hands or into one's possession, power, or control; grasp, grip; to receive into one's body; to expose oneself to for pleasure or physical benefit; to partake of

Heed is defined by Webster as - to pay attention; to give consideration or attention to

Do these definitions indicate the idea of just a quick read through? I am reminded of a few times in my youth when a teacher or my parent told me to “Pay attention!” I knew they expected me to focus completely upon what they were presenting with all of my attention. I also knew they would expect me to be able to explain what they said if they were to ask later. This required thought and consideration on my part. To retain an idea or object we must first understand or grasp it. This is not a cursory glance, but discerning of the thoughts and principles involved.

This is what Paul requested of Timothy. He expected Timothy to give his undivided attention to the doctrine that he had been given. Paul expected Timothy to dig into the message presented with the desire to fully understand what was required. This can only come to one that has given full attention to that which has been delivered.

Notice Timothy was to take heed to **the doctrine**. He was not instructed to keep himself morally upright. He was not instructed to concern himself with the teachings of popular religious speakers of the day. He was specifically told to follow the teachings he had received by inspiration. These were important if Timothy was to save himself. Only continuing in the doctrine could bring Timothy and those he taught salvation.

This passage also impresses us with the need to first care for self. For Timothy to be effective in helping others find and keep salvation, he would first have to “take heed” to himself. We cannot expect to save others if our own life is not in order. Paul told the Corinthian brethren to *“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” 2Cor 13:5* Pay attention to the words of the apostle!

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