

THE MEANING OF PAUL'S REFERENCE TO  
"HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE" IN 1 TIMOTHY 3:2

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For Deena, my bride and joy,  
whose faithfulness to God has truly inspired me  
and whose friendship fills my days with matchless beauty.

אֲנִי לְדוֹדַי וְדוֹדַי לִי

“I am my beloved’s and my beloved is mine”

*Song of Solomon 6:3*

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CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION

**Importance of Issue and Need for Study**

The appointment of elders in the church is of paramount importance considering the responsibility which is conferred upon those who serve in that quintessential role. In the Book of Hebrews, the inspired human author encourages the saints in the church to, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls and will give an account for their work” (Heb 13:17 NASB).<sup>1</sup> This passage not only gives insight into the spiritually significant responsibility of the leadership in the protection and guidance of the flock of God, but also to the leader’s accountability to Christ for his work.

In addition to the ominous responsibility of protecting those under their care, elders are to model an abiding Christian walk through exemplary lives. It has been said that those in the church will ascend no higher in their spiritual walk than those who are leading the church. The Apostle Paul offered himself as an example to those under his leadership (Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6, 7; 2 Thess 3:7, 9) and Peter exhorted the πρεσβύτερος to prove themselves, “examples to the flock” (1 Pet 5:3 NASB). How many congregations have been left in spiritual disarray as a result of a deleterious model of Christian leadership? The responsibility incurred and the example which they provide demands that those appointed to leadership be morally qualified to undertake such an important task.

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<sup>1</sup> The abbreviations in this thesis adhere to the SBL Handbook of Style.

The selection of leadership is a significant responsibility and privilege to those in the church who are appointed with that task. Strauch suggests, “Everyone in the church is to know the biblical qualifications for church elders and is obligated to see that the elders meet those qualifications.”<sup>2</sup> Fortunately, the church has not been left without a template by which to measure the qualifications of those who are candidates for local church leadership. The Apostle Paul has provided such a template in his letters to Timothy and Titus, namely, for elders in 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, and for deacons in 1 Tim 3:8-10. It is to these two epistles that the church has primarily turned, and rightly so, for guidance in selecting its leaders. However, the outline which has been provided to the church through the pen of Paul has not provided the clear-cut filter for leadership qualification which many might prefer.

Among the qualifications which have been articulated by Paul in the above passages, perhaps none have proven more tenebrous, nor quarrelsome, than that which is intended by the phrase, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα. The ambiguity of this phrase is clearly demonstrated by the variety of positions which have been taken on its translation. It has been translated commonly as “husband of one wife” by the NASB, GNV, NET and others; as “husband of but one wife” by the NIV; and as “faithful to his wife” by the NLT. While there have been multiple translations, there have also been a plethora of interpretations of the phrase. These various interpretations will be delineated later in this chapter and fully examined in chapter three of this thesis.

Leadership selection in the local church has become increasingly difficult due to the prevalence of divorce and remarriage in the contemporary culture. Unfortunately, the tragedy of divorce has not been quelled at the doors of the church. Instead, it has permeated those doors to the point of seamless equality between Christian and non-

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<sup>2</sup> Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*, rev. and exp. ed. (Colorado Springs: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 2005), 283.

Christian alike. George Barna states, “Among married born again Christians, 35% have experienced a divorce. That figure is identical to the outcome among married adults who are not born again, 35%.”<sup>3</sup> The day may well be advancing when one out of two potential candidates for leadership will have experienced divorce and/or remarriage. Ed Glasscock observes, “With the divorce rate in America approaching nearly 50 percent of all marriages, the church is being forced to deal more frequently with converts who have divorced and remarried.”<sup>4</sup> Buist Fanning asserts, “I receive more phone calls on this subject from pastors in the field than any other subject.”<sup>5</sup>

In most cases, the local church has been empowered with the responsible privilege of choosing and appointing its leadership. These selections are primarily made according to the qualifications which have been expressed in Paul’s Pastoral Epistles. It is of unmitigated importance that only those persons, who meet the qualifications outlined in Scripture, should be selected to fulfill the role of elder and/or deacon. However, it is equally important that no person be excluded or disqualified from service due to an unsubstantiated or uninformed interpretation of the inspired text. Therefore, all diligence should be exerted to facilitate an accurate understanding of Paul’s qualifying prescription for church leadership to be a “husband of one wife.”

### **Parameters and Method of Study**

The qualifications for the selection of church leadership are defined by Paul primarily in the Pastoral Epistles. This thesis will focus on the phrase, μίας γυναικός

<sup>3</sup> George Barna, “Born Again Christians Just As Likely to Divorce As Are Non-Christians,” online: <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=170>, accessed 21 September 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Ed Glasscock, “‘The Husband of One Wife’ Requirement in 1 Timothy 3:2,” *BibSac* 140 (1983): 245.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Fanning is head of the New Testament Department at Dallas Theological Seminary and made this statement to the author during a preliminary discussion regarding the topic of this thesis on 4/5/2006.

ἄνδρα, or what has been often translated as “husband of one wife.” This phrase is found in Paul’s qualifying prescription for local church leadership selection in 1 Tim 3:2, 12 and Titus 1:6. Due to the use of similar terminology, Paul’s instructions for the appointment of eligible widows in 1 Tim 5:9 will be addressed in detail in chapter three of this thesis under the view, “Must Not Be Remarried.”

In chapter two of this thesis, contextual issues regarding the composition of First Timothy will be examined. This will include the perceived purpose for which the book was written and the applicable governmental and pedagogical issues which Paul was seeking to address that pertain to this thesis. It is expected that an understanding of the issues surrounding the purpose of the book will shed light on Paul’s argument for a thorough examination of those who are to be appointed as leaders in the local church. Should the church implement the criteria which Paul prescribes, What effect would it have had regarding the local issues with which the church under Timothy’s influence was dealing?

Lexical issues will then be analyzed in order to provide the variant meanings which may be assigned to Paul’s terminology in the passage in question, and to determine which are most ostensibly inherent due to context. Included in this examination will be an inspection of Paul’s usage of the words γυνή and ἄνθρω in First Timothy and elsewhere in the Pauline corpus. In addition, lexical meanings will be distinguished for δεῖ, ἀνεπίληπτου, and εἶναι in order to provide the immediate context for the primary phrase under question.

Grammatical issues will be assessed regarding the structure of 1 Tim 3:2. This will include an assessment of the substantival use of the infinitive with impersonal verbs such as δεῖ, as well as, attention to the emphatic position associated with New Testament Greek. Further, gnomic identification will be addressed in relation to Paul’s stipulation and its influence on present tense meaning.

Consideration will also be given to the genitive case in hope of a more thorough understanding of its influence on interpretation of the general idea of the phrase. Regarding the interpretive impact of the genitive, Wallace has commented, “It has a great deal of exegetical significance, far more than any of the other cases, because it is so capable of a wide variety of interpretations.”<sup>6</sup>

In chapter three of this thesis, each of the five primary positions regarding the interpretation of μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα will be delineated and evaluated on the basis of argumentative support. This will include an appraisal of early church positions from various church fathers and the bearing of each upon the stated positions. The advantages and disadvantages according to the argument of each individual viewpoint will be deliberated, including an appraisal of early inscriptional evidence which might have bearing upon specific arguments.

In chapter four of this thesis, this author will offer two primary conclusions: (1) the most plausible interpretation of the text based upon the consideration of Paul’s intended meaning of the phrase and (2) the impact of that interpretation on contemporary selection of church leadership.

Some interaction regarding the biblical grounds for divorce will be elucidated in chapter three of this thesis regarding the fourth view because of other texts which are often closely aligned with that view for support. However, it is not the purpose of this thesis to argue for or against the biblical grounds for divorce, but rather to determine Paul’s intended meaning of “husband of one wife” in 1 Tim 3:2.

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<sup>6</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 74.

### **Presentation of Views**

As previously mentioned, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα has proven sufficiently enigmatic to exegetes and church leadership alike in their attempt to abide by the qualifications not according to men, but according to God the Holy Spirit through His revelation in the inspired text. This attempt to remain true to scriptural qualifications has not lessened the options, but rather solidified contradistinctive positions which are difficult, if not impossible, to harmonize. At this point in this thesis, it is not the intent of the author to thoroughly evaluate each position, which will be attempted in chapter three of this thesis, but rather to simply identify each position to the reader. The five positions which will be examined are: (1) the candidate must be married; (2) the candidate must not be a polygamist; (3) the candidate must not be divorced; (4) the candidate must not be remarried; and (5) the candidate must be faithful.

### **Conclusion**

The church's appointment of leadership is immensely important due to the authority, the example, and the responsibility of that leadership. Therefore, it is incumbent upon those who are involved in those appointments to be correctly informed of the biblical parameters of qualification for those selections. The primary qualifications for selection of church leadership have been stipulated by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul in the Books of First Timothy and Titus. Nevertheless, those written qualifications have not always presented themselves to interpreters with crystal clarity. This difficulty of interpretive clarity is not infrequently associated with the exegesis and application of μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα in 1 Tim 3:2.

Due to the diversity of views concerning μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα and the consistent lack of consensus on the appropriate interpretation, those who shoulder the responsibility of appointing leaders in the church today need to be well prepared to cogently and rationally defend their position. They must not allow familiar tradition to be

their only guide as they seek to recognize the qualifications of prospective leaders, nor should they simply base their decision on the interpretation which has the least resistance in their contemporary culture. Instead, they are obligated to determine, with all diligence, what specifics the Spirit has suggested through the Word of God. This thesis will seek to provide a framework for that selection by a thorough examination of the context of the passage, the grammatical and lexical details, and the comparative support for each view in order to facilitate the glory of God through the appointment of qualified servants for the leadership of the church and the edification of the saints.

CHAPTER 2  
CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, AND LEXICAL ISSUES

**Context and Nature of First Timothy**

Each book in the Bible was written to a specific audience. It is tremendously useful for the interpreter of Scripture to familiarize himself with the audience to whom a particular book was written, as well as, the *sitz im leben* or “setting in life context” surrounding that audience. Armed with a thorough knowledge of a particular audience’s situation, the interpreter may gain insight into various difficult or problematic passages in the text.

In the case of the Pastoral Epistles, it is generally agreed that all three books were written in opposition to some form of false teaching which was present in the church in Paul’s day. Carson and Moo have commented, “There is also a warning against ‘what is falsely called knowledge’ (1 Tim. 6:20), which, along with references to ‘myths and endless genealogies’ (1 Tim. 1:4; cf. 4:7; Titus 3:9), is often taken to refer to Gnostic systems. This is supported by passages mentioning ascetic practices (e.g., 1 Tim. 4:3).”<sup>1</sup> Since full-blown Gnosticism was not evident until well into the second century, the issues which Paul was confronting would likely have been pre-Gnostic influences which later developed into more definable Gnostic convictions. Referring to First Timothy, Guthrie states, “Through the Spirit the apostle sees a time of approaching apostasy, which will be

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<sup>1</sup> D. A. Carson & Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 563.

marked by deceitful teaching and ascetic practices (4:1-5).<sup>2</sup> Not only was the church in Ephesus in danger of turning away from apostolic truth, but also of being confronted with the unbiblical practices and ascetic tendencies of various false teachers who were advancing an eclectic mix of Judaistic and pre-Gnostic beliefs. Earle asserts, “There also seems to be a combination of Gnosticism and Judaism in those who “forbid people to marry, and order them to abstain from certain foods” (4:3). The first of these prohibitions arose from a false asceticism, based on the Gnostic idea that all matter is evil.”<sup>3</sup>

Regarding 1 Tim 4:3, Mounce explains, “The Ephesian heresy had to do with the law, myths, and genealogies (1 Tim. 1:3-11). This verse gives the next clear indication of the content of the heresy. The opponents’ desire to force all to obey the law includes the enforcement of asceticism (as also in Titus 1:15), specifically, dietary restrictions and a forbidding of marriage (cf. Col. 2:16-23 for a similar situation). The restrictions on marriage probably included everything associated with marriage...”<sup>4</sup>

Certainly, the confrontation with false teaching was of no small consequence, as Paul clearly states in 1 Tim 1: 3 that he “urged” Timothy to stay on at Ephesus in order to “instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines.” It was an urgent matter to squelch the false teaching which had arisen in the church at Ephesus to which Timothy was given charge. Fee postulates, “The reason for the great urgency in 1 Timothy, and for Paul’s concern over Timothy’s own reception and well-being, lies in the probability that the false teachers in that letter were some elders who had themselves strayed from Paul’s gospel and were in the process of taking the church, or many within the church, with

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<sup>2</sup> Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, 4th ed., rev. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 653.

<sup>3</sup> Ralph Earle, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 11, *Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1, 2 Thessalonians, 1, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 346.

<sup>4</sup> William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, ed. Bruce M. Metzger, vol. 46 (Dallas: Word Books, 2000), 238.

them into error.<sup>5</sup> Timothy was to teach sound doctrine and appoint solid teachers in order to quell the problems caused by aberrant teachers and their false teachings. In addition, throughout the epistle, Paul offers numerous exhortations and warnings to Timothy to maintain truth and proper conduct in the church (1:18; 3:15; 4:1, 6, 10, 11, 13-16; 5:7, 21; 6:13-14, 17-18, 20). From Paul's exhortations to Timothy, one may conclude that the primary defenses against false teaching in the body of Christ are for the Word of God to be consistently and boldly proclaimed without equivocation and that those who are appointed to teach and lead the body of Christ be of sound character.

### **Lexical and Grammatical Details**

The qualifications which Paul distinguishes in 1 Tim 3:2 are applicable to any person aspiring to be an ἐπίσκοπος, translated “overseer” and meaning, “one who has the responsibility of safeguarding or seeing to it that something is done in the correct way, *guardian*.”<sup>6</sup> Similar qualifications are found in 1 Tim 3:8-10 in regards to those who would be appointed as διάκονος, translated “deacon” and defined as, “one who gets something done at the behest of a superior, assistant.”<sup>7</sup> Deacon is found in general usage meaning “servant,” and specifically as the, “... fixed designation for the bearer of a specific office’... in the developing constitution of the church.”<sup>8</sup> In Titus 1:6-9, Paul provides a similar list of qualifications for those who would be appointed as πρεσβύτερος,

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<sup>5</sup> Gordon D. Fee, “Reflections on Church Order in the Pastoral in the Pastoral Epistles, With Further Reflection on the Hermeneutics of *Ad Hoc* Documents,” *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 28 (June 1985):129.

<sup>6</sup> Fredrick W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (BDAG), 3d ed., s.v. “ἐπίσκοπος”, 379.

<sup>7</sup> BDAG, s.v. “διάκονος”, 230-31.

<sup>8</sup> Herman W. Beyer, “διάκονος,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT), vol. 2 Δ–H, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. & ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964; reprint, 1983), 88-89 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

translated “elder” and meaning, “an official, elder, presbyter.”<sup>9</sup> The terms ἐπίσκοπος and πρεσβύτερος seem to be used interchangeably in Titus 1:5 and 1:7, referring to both “elder” and “overseer” as one and the same office.

Of this office, Paul exhorts Timothy and Titus to appoint only those who meet the stated qualifications. He uses the present indicative form of the impersonal verb δεῖ to indicate the importance of the quality prescriptions which follow. Δεῖ is defined as a word which, “expresses the character of necessity or compulsion” in an event.<sup>10</sup> When used in conjunction with the present active infinitive “to be” verb εἶναι, it is typically translated as “must be” (KJV, NASB, NET, NLT, etc.). The use of the present tense verbs indicates a current and ongoing state in relation to the associated action. Lenski’s comments serve to succinctly provide something close to the original Greek when he translates 1 Tim. 3:2a as, “It is necessary, then, that an overseer be ...”<sup>11</sup>

Paul goes on to say that those aspiring to the office of overseer are to necessarily be ἀνεπίληπτος, meaning “irreproachable” in regard to moral conduct.<sup>12</sup> Louw-Nida offers the additional description of “pertaining to what cannot be criticized.”<sup>13</sup> This gives the idea that the one who is appointed to the office of elder is to be presently not able to be criticized according to the moral standards which Paul seeks to delineate. Paul’s limited proposal of moral standards should by no means be assumed to be an exhaustive list of all traits required. Lea and Griffin propose, “Some have criticized

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<sup>9</sup> BDAG, s.v. “πρεσβύτερος”, 862-63.

<sup>10</sup> Walter Grundmann, “Δεῖ,” *TDNT*, vol. 2 Δ–H, 21.

<sup>11</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 579.

<sup>12</sup> BDAG, s.v. “ἀνεπίληπτος”, 77.

<sup>13</sup> Johannes Petrus Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, vol. 1 (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988), 33.415.

Paul's list as containing nothing specifically Christian ... Paul may have assumed the presence of more avowedly Christian traits (e.g., Eph. 5:18b-21) without specifically calling for them. Here he may have emphasized particularly those traits that were highly valued by the pagan world."<sup>14</sup>

Paul then presents seven requirements which help to particularize the general term, "irreproachable." The first of these particular emphases, which those who are given the charge of selecting elders are to discern, is the phrase under examination in this thesis; *μἰᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα*, translated "husband of one wife." Its first position in the list of specified moral requirements is illustrative of its importance among the list (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6).

The phrase, translated "husband of one wife," is composed of three Greek words. The Greek word *μἰᾶς* is the genitive, feminine singular form of *εἷς*, the cardinal number "one," and is defined as, "single, only one."<sup>15</sup> It is important to note the emphatic position of the word *μἰᾶς*, which brings the singular notion to prominence within the structure of the phrase. Strauch says, regarding the emphasis placed on *μἰᾶς*, "The phrase 'of one wife' is placed first in an emphatic position to stress the idea of 'one wife.'"<sup>16</sup>

The second word in the phrase, *γυναικὸς*, is commonly translated as "wife," although it may also be translated as "woman." Oepke notes, "In general Gk. from the time of Homer, as also in the LXX and the NT, *γυνή* denotes a. the "female" as distinct from the male...; b. the "wife"..."<sup>17</sup> Danker offers three possible definitions: (1) an adult

<sup>14</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, vol. 34, *The New American Commentary*, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 108.

<sup>15</sup> BDAG, s.v. "εἷς, μία, ἕν", 291-293.

<sup>16</sup> Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*, rev. and exp. ed. (Colorado Springs: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 2005), 190.

<sup>17</sup> Albrecht Oepke, "γυνή," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, vol. 1 A-Γ, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. & ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964; reprint, 1983), 776.

female person, *woman* (2) a married woman, *wife* and (3) a newly married woman, *bride*.<sup>18</sup> Based on the variety of possible definitions, an accurate translation of the term must be discerned according to its immediate context in which it is found. The contextual usage of *γυνή* in 1 Tim 3:2 will be examined further in chapter three of this thesis.

The third word in the phrase, *ἄνδρα*, is similar to *γυνή*, except it is opposite in gender. The term *ἄνδρα* is defined as: (1) an adult human male, *man, husband* (2) equivalent to *τις, someone, a person* and (3) a transcendent figure.<sup>19</sup> Again, further discussion regarding the proper translation according to contextual usage will be covered in chapter three of this thesis.

Grammatically, *δεῖ* is in the present tense and should be classified as a gnomic present.<sup>20</sup> In this classification, one would understand it to be making a statement, "...that is timeless in reality, true of all time."<sup>21</sup> Therefore, Paul's prescriptive filter for leadership qualification is not bound by time or circumstance and continues to be applicable without time limits. There are two relevant questions which one must ask regarding the gnomic nature of Paul's comment: (1) does the idea of timelessness mean that the potential candidate has always manifested those particular qualities in his life or (2) does the idea of timelessness mean that the qualities are appropriate for selection regardless of culture? These questions will be addressed in chapter three of this thesis.

The word *εἶνα* is a substantival infinitive and should be understood to be the subject of the impersonal verb *δεῖ*. Wallace interjects, "An infinitive or an infinitive phrase frequently functions as the subject of a finite verb. This category especially

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<sup>18</sup> BDAG, s.v. "γυνή" 208-209.

<sup>19</sup> BDAG, s.v. "ἄνθρωπος, ἄνδρός, ὄ", 79-80.

<sup>20</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 523-524.

<sup>21</sup> A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), 866.

includes instances in which the infinitive occurs with *impersonal verbs* such as δεῖ...<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the infinite phrase, “to be μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα,” should be considered the subject of the construction. This analysis may be reflected in the interpretation “to be a one-wife husband is necessary” or “to be a one-woman man is necessary.”

The term ἄνδρα is a predicate accusative. Wallace states, “...there is the predicate accusative in which one accusative is the subject of the *infinitive* and the second makes an assertion about the first. Thus it is similar to the nominative subject and the predicate nominative construction...<sup>23</sup> In this case, ἄνδρα is asserting a specific quality of one who is seeking the position of elder. The limitation of kind, which the accusative offers, is the limitation of the kind of person who is seeking eldership. In 1 Tim 3:2, it is a “man” or “husband.”

The terms μιᾶς and γυναικὸς are both in the genitive case. The genitive case is a case which is similar to the accusative case in that there is a limitation imposed upon the term or terms which the genitive is modifying. The genitive limits as to kind where the accusative limits as to extent.<sup>24</sup> Wallace adds, “Another way to put this is that the genitive limits as to *quality* while the accusative limits as to *quantity*.<sup>25</sup> Given the previously mentioned lexical definitions of the terms, one might conclude that the person seeking eldership is to exhibit the quality of being a “husband of one wife” or a “man of one woman.” There are at least two classifications of genitive of which γυναικὸς might be specifying regarding ἄνδρα; a possessive genitive (this is a case in which the head noun is

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<sup>22</sup> Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 600.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 191-193.

<sup>24</sup> H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1957), 73.

<sup>25</sup> Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 76.

owned by the genitive noun in some sense)<sup>26</sup> which would be interpreted, “a man possessed by one woman,” or an attributive genitive (the genitive noun specifies an attribute or innate quality of the head noun)<sup>27</sup> which would read, “a one woman kind of man.”

Obviously, the inherent ambiguity of μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα in 1 Tim 3:2 appeals to the need for further examination of the phrase outside of this specific reference alone. Possible options for examination include other usage of the phrase within the canon of Scripture, as well as usage in extra-biblical material.

### Other Usage

The phrase which this study is seeking to clarify, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα, would be more easily interpreted through the examination of parallel usage in extra-biblical texts. Unfortunately, this is not a luxury which exists. Page claims, “It is not found in any earlier literature.”<sup>28</sup> Marshall concurs when he says regarding the correlative phrase in Titus 1:6, “μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ ... expresses a requirement not found elsewhere in ancient sources.”<sup>29</sup> This author was unable to locate any extra-biblical sources which provided an example of this phrase and, therefore, concurs with the previous statements that the extent of available sources for examination is limited to the Pauline corpus within the canon of Scripture.

As mentioned above, Paul uses μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα in his list of qualifications for elders in 1 Tim 3:2 and Titus 1:6. The phrase is used of deacons in 1

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>28</sup> Sydney Page, “Marital Expectations of Church Leaders in the Pastoral Epistles,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 50 (1993): 106. Page credits Moisés Silva of Westminster Theological Seminary for discovering this through a search done using the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* data bank.

<sup>29</sup> I. Howard Marshall in coll. with Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 155.

Tim 3:12 and a similar phrase, ἐνδὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή, is used in 1 Tim 5:9 referring to widows in the church seeking admittance to the so-called, “widow list.” Concerning this latter example, Page states:

...the correlative expression, ἐνδὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή occurs as one of the qualifications for being enrolled as a widow in 1 Tim. 5:9. The appearance of such a striking parallel in another list of qualifications in the pastoral epistles is highly significant. There can be little doubt that the two phrases should be interpreted similarly. That being the case, one of the essential criteria for evaluating any interpretation of μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ will be whether it allows for a satisfactory explanation of ἐνδὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή in 1 Tim. 5:9.<sup>30</sup>

The point is, due to the infrequent usage of the phrase and the absence of any examples external to Paul’s usage in the New Testament, that the phrase should be interpreted to have the same meaning or to be portraying the same idea in all instances. Consequently, the overarching idea of the phrase should be understandable and applicable regarding the men under examination in 1 Tim 3:2 and Titus 1:6, as well as to the widows under examination in 1 Tim 5:9. Special attention will be given to 1 Tim 5:9 in chapter three of this thesis under the view, “The candidate must not be remarried.”

The lexical issues involving the interpretation of words with dual meanings, such as the two terms γυναικὸς and ἄνδρα, may be influenced by an appraisal of the usage of those terms elsewhere in the Pauline corpus. In an examination of the translation of the word γυναικὸς among Paul’s letters in the New Testament, this author observed sixty-eight occurrences of γυναικὸς or one of its derivatives. Out of those occurrences, thirty-eight were translated as “wife” and twenty-seven as “woman.” An analysis of the term, limited to Paul’s in the Pastoral Epistles, yielded sixteen occasions of which eleven were referring to the general class, “woman” and five referring to the specific class, “wife.” Of the five occasions referring specifically to “wife,” four of those examples were contained in the passages which included the phrase under discussion in this thesis.

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<sup>30</sup> Page, “Marital Expectations,” 106.

In an examination of the translation of the word ἄνδρα or one of its derivatives among all of Paul's letters in the New Testament, this author observed sixty-seven occurrences excluding the passages under discussion. Out of those occurrences, twenty-eight were translated as "man" and thirty-nine as "husband." An analysis of the term, limited to the usage by Paul in the Pastoral Epistles and excluding the passages under discussion in this thesis, yielded two instances which were translated, "man" and one translated, "husband." In the passages examined, both terms were readily interpreted according to the context in which they were found.

In order for a proper interpretation of γυναικὸς and ἄνδρα to be made, one must attempt to define the context of the passage. In the context of 1 Tim 3:2, Paul does address the issue of the candidate's household management which could imply, but does not necessarily mandate, that the candidate was married. In addition, Paul addresses the candidate's relationship with his children which would indicate that the man was married. However, the remaining qualifications are non-specific as to the marital status of the candidate and do not command the specific definitions of "husband" and "wife." Moreover, the bulk of the qualifications outlined by Paul are more closely associated with the character of the candidate rather than his marital status.

### **Conclusion**

The Pastoral Epistles were written with a specific audience in mind. They were not written so much in order to specify church order as to lay out a filter by which the church might be protected from the fatal flaws of erroneous teaching and doctrine. Much of this wayward doctrine was not only being manifested in the church of Timothy's day, but would come against the church in future days. Primary issues, based on the Epistles themselves, seem to be issues regarding marriage, issues pertaining to the Law, and the importance of keeping the leadership pure.

It has been demonstrated that those seeking to be appointed as elders, deacons, or overseers must necessarily be of certain character quality. They must currently be, that is, at least at the time of their consideration for appointment, above reproach. The irreproachable character of those under consideration is defined by Paul with first emphasis by the phrase, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα. This phrase can be interpreted as “a one-wife husband” or “a one-woman man.” The determination between the two suggested interpretations is difficult to ascertain due the relative infrequency of the phrase, and the balance of interpretation of the individual words in the phrase among the Pauline corpus. However, the abundance of evidence in the Pastoral Epistles, including the context of the passage, points to the general interpretation of “man” and “woman.” That interpretation, however, does not necessarily rule out the possibility that the marital status is being addressed.

In order to hasten discovery of the intended meaning of the phrase, additional benefit may be realized through an assessment of the individual interpretive possibilities and the respective advantages and disadvantages of each. These matters will be examined in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### DISCUSSION OF VIEWS

#### **The Candidate Must Be Married**

The interpretation that the candidate “must be married,” is based in part on the translation of the terms, “γυνή” and “ἀνὴρ” as “wife” and “husband” respectively. This interpretation would prescribe that the candidate for leadership must be married at the time of his service. Also taken into account is an emphasis on the term “δεῖ” in order to show the importance of the necessary marital position. Therefore, those supporting this interpretation would translate the text, “One who aspires to the office of overseer *must be a husband* of one wife,” emphasizing that the candidate be a husband at the time of his selection.

Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-216) seems to support this position regarding 1 Tim 3:2 when he says, “...Paul also lays down that leadership in the Church should rest with ‘a bishop who presides successfully over his household’ and that ‘marriage to one wife’ constitutes a household with the Lord’s blessing.”<sup>1</sup> Maurice asserts, “...the Apostle does not merely permit, but commands, that the Overseers should be taken from those who are already husbands and fathers.”<sup>2</sup> Ironside seems to concur with this position with his statement that, “Then he is to be ‘the husband of one wife.’ It is amazing to think that in one of our great religious systems they hold that a clergyman of any character must

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<sup>1</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Stomateis: Books One to Three* (trans. John Ferguson, vol. 85 in *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 325.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Denison Maurice, *The Unity of the New Testament: A Synopsis of the First Three Gospels and of the Epistles of St. James, St. Jude, St. Peter, St. Paul* (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1879), 443.

have no wife. Scripture distinctly states that a bishop is to be ‘the husband of one wife’...”<sup>3</sup>

The difficulties associated with this interpretation are numerous. First, the translation of the Greek terms “γυνή” and “ἀνὴρ” as “wife” and “husband” is not the only possible translation. The terms could certainly be translated as “woman” and “man” based upon the other possible definitions as previously stated in chapter two of this thesis.

Second, if one were required to be married at the time of his service, both Paul and Timothy would have been disqualified to serve as elders. Paul states in 1 Cor 7:7; 32-35, that he would prefer that all believers, like him, were able to remain single. Paul points out in these verses that those who are single are able to devote themselves completely to the Lord and His service, rather than having their pursuits divided between serving the Lord and serving the spouse. Paul also rhetorically suggests in 1 Cor 9:5 that he has every right to be married, just as the other apostles, should he so choose.

Third, the marital state does not appear to be the primary motive of this requirement since the Greek text does not emphasize it. Instead, the emphasis of the Greek construction is on the word *μὶς*. Kelly states, regarding the likelihood of this interpretation, that this “... is most unlikely in itself, and in any case makes the emphatic ‘one’ in the Greek meaningless.”<sup>4</sup>

Fourth, in the Greco-Roman culture to which Paul was writing, it was a presupposition that most people would be married.<sup>5</sup> Marriage was compulsory for a Jew

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<sup>3</sup> H. A. Ironside, *Timothy, Titus and Philemon* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1947), 78.

<sup>4</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles: I Timothy II Timothy Titus* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1963), 75.

<sup>5</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, A Good News Commentary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 43.

and “it was unthinkable that a pious young man would remain single.”<sup>6</sup> Marriage was also compulsory in Roman law as a result of a law enacted by Augustus in 18 B.C. which was meant to strengthen the Roman family unit.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, as a general rule, most men in the culture to which Paul was writing, and in which Timothy was ministering, would have already been married making this point of meaning doubtful.

Fifth, consistency of interpretation is at issue. It has been suggested in chapter two of this thesis that due to the rarity of the phrase, it is extremely likely that it conveys a parallel meaning in its usage elsewhere in the New Testament, namely in 1 Timothy 5. If one interprets this phrase to mean that the overseer must be married, then the parallel passage should reflect the same interpretation concerning the qualification for the women under discussion in the widow list of 1 Timothy 5. However, it is nonsensical to say that Paul is requiring that they be previously married considering the fact that the candidates were widows. This would automatically render this meaning doubtful.

### **The Candidate Must Not Be a Polygamist**

This view understands the phrase, *μἰᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα*, to refer to the candidate as one who has only one wife at a time. With *μἰᾶς* being in the emphatic position of the structure of the phrase, this understanding would reflect a natural reading of the text. Chrysostom (ca. 349-407) was a proponent of this view, as was John Calvin and more recently, A. T. Robertson.<sup>8</sup> Calvin states in his commentary, “Chrysostom’s

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<sup>6</sup> David Instone-Brewer, *Divorce & Remarriage in the Church: Biblical Solutions for Pastoral Realities* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2003), 60.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>8</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 4, *The Epistles of Paul* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931), 572.

interpretation is the only correct one ... Paul is commanding bishops not to indulge in polygamy, as an example to men who are unfaithful in their marriages.”<sup>9</sup>

Evidence exists to demonstrate that polygamy was extant among the Jews in Greco-Roman society. Support is offered by the Jewish historian Josephus when he writes, “... it is the ancient practice among us to have many wives at the same time.”<sup>10</sup> Chrysostom, in his commentary of this phrase, adds, “‘A Bishop then,’ he says, ‘must be blameless, the husband of one wife.’ This he does not lay down as a rule, as if he must not be without one, but as prohibiting his having more than one. For even the Jews were allowed to contract second marriages, and even to have two wives at one time.”<sup>11</sup> Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165) is critical of Judaism in his *Dialogue with Trypho* as he writes, “... it would be better for you to obey God rather than your stupid, blind teachers, who even now permit each of you to have four or five wives ...”<sup>12</sup>

Although polygamy was extant in Judaism in the first century, this understanding of Paul’s meaning in 1 Tim 3:2 does not seem to be the most probable. First, while there may have been some among the Jewish population that engaged in polygamous marriages, monogamy was seen as the normal and only legitimate form of marriage in the Greco-Roman world and “... it is reasonable to suppose that, in general, Jews conformed to the pattern of the larger society.”<sup>13</sup> Although polygamy was still

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<sup>9</sup> John Calvin, *1, 2 Timothy and Titus*, The Crossway Classic Commentaries, ed. Alister McGrath and J. I. Packer (Wheaton: Good News Publishers, 1998), 54.

<sup>10</sup> *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, trans. William Whiston, vol. 3, *Antiquities of the Jews* 17.1.2 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), 471.

<sup>11</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilies on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, ed. Philip Schaff, vol. 13, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1914), 438.

<sup>12</sup> St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 134.1, ed. Michael Slusser, vol. 3, *Selections from the Fathers of the Church* (Washington, D. C., 2003), 201.

<sup>13</sup> Sydney Page, “Marital Expectations of Church Leaders in the Pastoral Epistles,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 50 (1993): 108.

officially legal in Palestinian Judaism, the fact that polygamy was not practiced by the Jewish people in Asia or by the Greeks there suggests that Paul would have not had ample reason to address this specifically as an issue among the prospective leadership.<sup>14</sup> In addition, Mounce states that evidence is lacking that polygamy was practiced among Christians and therefore, “Christian polygamy” is most likely not at issue here.<sup>15</sup>

Second, admitting that there were some instances of polygamy among the Jewish population, there is difficulty in attributing this same interpretation to the parallel passage in 1 Tim 5:9 in which Paul addresses widows. Again, concerning the widows up for selection for the church list, a parallel meaning is likely due to the rarity of the phrase. However, it is difficult to assume that the phrase should be interpreted as referring to polyandry (a wife having more than one husband simultaneously) since polyandry was virtually “... unknown in Greco-Roman society ...”<sup>16</sup> Marshall strongly suggests, “Moreover, and decisively, this theory would require that polyandry is meant in 1 Tim. 5:9, which is not known to have been a practice in that culture and therefore would not have needed to be addressed.”<sup>17</sup> This author could not locate any scholarly disagreement pertaining to this cultural representation of the absence of polyandry. Paul would not have had to specify an issue that was virtually non-existent in society at the time.

### **The Candidate Must Not Be Divorced**

Some have interpreted the phrase, *μῶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα*, to mean that the prospective leader in the church cannot have been divorced. This interpretation is usually

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<sup>14</sup> Craig S. Keener, *...And Marries Another* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 88.

<sup>15</sup> William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, ed. Bruce M. Metzger, vol. 46 (Dallas: Word Books, 2000), 171.

<sup>16</sup> Page, “Marital Expectations,” 108.

<sup>17</sup> I. Howard Marshall in coll. with Philip H. Towner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 155.

closely tied to Jesus' teaching on divorce during His confrontation with the Pharisees in Matthew 19. "This restriction is usually extended to prohibit a man who, though he has never been previously married, is married to a woman who is divorced from a previous husband."<sup>18</sup> A. T. Hanson suggests that the translation of the phrase as "not being divorced" is supported because the similar phrase regarding widows in 1 Tim 5:9, "... must mean that she had not been divorced and therefore changed her husband."<sup>19</sup>

This interpretation may be commended for the desire to adhere to the Lord's command regarding divorce and to guard against a poor testimony among the leadership of the church. Also, as stated in chapter one of this thesis, the statistics regarding divorce within the church are rapidly approaching those of the world. This offers a poor example to the world of the Lord's desire concerning marriage. Additionally, if the leader demonstrates questionable commitment toward his own marriage, how can he encourage those under his care to remain steadfastly committed to their marriages during difficult circumstances?

These are all commendable reasons for ensuring model leadership in the church, but the task of the exegete is to understand what is articulated in the text, rather than to superimpose positions which are not inherent to the text under study. There are several reasons why "no divorce" is not the most desirable interpretation of  $\mu\iota\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$   $\gamma\upsilon\upsilon\alpha\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$   $\acute{\alpha}\nu\delta\rho\alpha$  in 1 Tim 3:2.

First, the ambiguity of the phrase makes it extremely difficult to extract this interpretation from the text. "Had Paul clearly meant to prohibit divorce, he could have

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<sup>18</sup> Ed Glasscock, "The Husband of One Wife' Requirement in 1 Timothy 3:2," *BibSac* 140 (1983): 249.

<sup>19</sup> Anthony Tyrell Hanson, *The Pastoral Letters*, The Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: University Press, 1966), 41.

said it unmistakably by using the Greek word for divorce (*apolyō*, cf. Matt 1:19).<sup>20</sup> It is difficult to assume that, had Paul intended to disqualify divorcées from serving as leaders in the church, he would not have stated it more clearly.

Second, the New Testament seems to clarify at least two situations which allow for valid divorce: (1) in the case of immorality and (2) in the case of abandonment by a non-believer. First, in Matt 19:9 when confronted by the Pharisees with a question on divorce, Jesus corrects their misinterpretation of Deut 24:1 with the clarification that a valid divorce may be sought as a result of immorality (πορνεία).<sup>21</sup> Garland states that this question by the Pharisees stemmed from a false premise that, "... husbands had an inalienable right to put away their wives, although they may have differed over the permissible grounds for doing this."<sup>22</sup> Second, in 1 Cor 7:15, Paul seems to indicate that a valid divorce may be sought in the case of abandonment by a non-believing spouse. 1 Cor 7:15 suggests that the abandoned spouse is no longer bound to the one who has departed and tragically broken the marriage covenant. Instead, that spouse who has been abandoned is free to marry another. This would have been the natural understanding of the statement to the first century reader since separation was the only requirement for one to be legally divorced according to Greco-Roman law.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, "all Jewish divorce

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, vol. 34, *The New American Commentary*, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 108.

<sup>21</sup> David Instone-Brewer, *Divorce & Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 85ff. In the altercation with the Pharisees in Matthew 19 regarding divorce, Instone-Brewer holds that Jesus is responding to a question by the Pharisees on whether the "any cause" divorce is valid. This "any cause" divorce was a misinterpretation of the word גִּבּוֹר in Deut 24:1 by the Hillelites which resulted in almost all divorces during Jesus' ministry being for "any cause." Jesus' clarification in Matthew 19 is that Deut 24:1 validates divorce only for immorality and not also for "any cause."

<sup>22</sup> David E Garland, "A Biblical View of Divorce," *Review and Expositor* 89:3 (Summer 1987): 422.

<sup>23</sup> Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible*, 202.

certificates and most Greco-Roman ones contained the words ‘you are free to marry any man you wish,’ or something very similar.”<sup>24</sup>

Certainly, it is difficult for one looking from the outside of a marriage to be aware of all of the circumstances which contributed to the breaking of another’s marriage covenant. However, in these particular cases, one individual is the offending and culpable party and the other is the victim. The Old Testament Law prescribed death for the adulterer and his partner, not also for the innocent spouse who suffered as a result of the other’s unfaithfulness (Lev 20:10). Should one who is innocent regarding the breaking of the marriage covenant be punished for the sin of the offending spouse?

This author suggests that Paul would not have offered the freedom of remarriage, which would naturally have been expected in the first-century context of separation, to the victim of abandonment had it resulted in the commission of adultery. Therefore, the evidence for valid divorce in the New Testament suggests that Paul would not have precluded those who had experienced it from serving in the church.

Regardless of one’s position regarding the arguments for valid divorce, the phrase under examination in 1 Tim 3:2 does not clearly express divorce as its meaning. The interpretation “not divorced” does not properly accentuate the emphatic position of  $\mu\iota\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$  within the Greek construction. With “one wife/woman” being in the emphatic position, the phrase may well be stipulating that a candidate be married only once, but it does not specify whether or not that candidate has been divorced. For example, the candidate could have been divorced and yet still have fulfilled the requirement of having had only one wife, as long as he had not remarried.

In addition, if this was Paul’s intended meaning, it does nothing to preclude terrible examples from being installed as leaders. For instance, the candidate could be an

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<sup>24</sup> Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Church*, 66.

emotionally or physically abusive person in the marital relationship and yet be admitted to candidacy as long as he remains married to the wife to whom he is abusive. Or, he could be involved in an immoral relationship with other women than his wife and still fulfill the requirement of not having been divorced.

To understand the phrase, *μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα*, to be referring to a person who is not divorced is simply to force a meaning onto the phrase which is neither supported by the lexical construction nor the logic of Jesus and Paul's statements concerning what seems to be grounds for a valid divorce. It is too great a leap to develop this meaning from the wording which Paul chose to communicate the parameters of leadership qualities. The actual wording, if one is to do justice to the emphatic force of the phrase, implies something much closer to the candidate having only been married one time in life, regardless of one's position on divorce. This is discussed in the following view.

### **The Candidate Must Not Be Remarried**

This interpretation of the phrase, *μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα*, states that the candidate for eldership may only be married once in his life. Whether the candidate's marriage ended in the death of the spouse or divorce, he may not marry a second time. This perspective does not necessarily address divorce as part of the issue, but simply the "one wife" descriptor of the man up for selection.

This interpretation does excellent justice to the lexical construction of the Greek text by highlighting the emphatic focus of *μιᾶς γυναικὸς*. It certainly makes very clear that the candidate is, or has been, the husband of only one wife. This is perhaps the easiest and most natural reading of the text.

This explanation also enjoys a great deal of support from the early church. Dodd writes, "There seems, then, to be no doubt that the dominant view in early times

was that the intention of 1 Tim 3:2, Titus 1:6 was to exclude from the episcopate any person who had contracted a second marriage after the death of his first wife.”<sup>25</sup>

Among those in the early church who held this position, Saint Basil (d. 379) writes, “The canon absolutely excludes from the ministry those who are twice married.”<sup>26</sup> An unknown writer, in *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, asserts “We have already said, that a bishop, a presbyter, and a deacon, when they are constituted, must be but once married ...”<sup>27</sup> Chrysostom says that Paul was “... reproving the wanton, and not permitting their admission into this high office who contracted a second marriage.”<sup>28</sup> Tertullian (ca. 155-230), one of the strongest proponents of this view, states, “If the dulling (of the spiritual faculties), even when the carnal nature is allowed room for exercise in first marriage, averts the Holy Spirit; how much more when it is brought into play in second marriage! For (in that case) the shame is double; inasmuch as, in second marriage, two wives beset the same husband – one in spirit, one in flesh.”<sup>29</sup> Tertullian viewed second marriage as shameful to any person, and especially to a Christian. If second marriage is shameful to the Christian, then certainly it is a matter which would render the elder candidate worthy of reproach. Tertullian argues, regarding Romans 7, that the Christian woman is dead to the law which allowed her to marry after the death of

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<sup>25</sup> C. H. Dodd, “New Testament Translation Problems 2,” *The Bible Translator*, vol. 28 (January 1977): 114.

<sup>26</sup> Saint Basil, *Letters*, trans. Sister Agnes Clare Way, vol. 2, *Fathers of the Church* (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1955), 23.

<sup>27</sup> Unknown, *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles: Canon 17*, vol. 7, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Fathers down to A. D. 325*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 457.

<sup>28</sup> Chrysostom, *Homily 2*, vol. 13, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1914), 524.

<sup>29</sup> Tertullian, *On Exhortation to Chastity*, vol. 4, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Fathers down to A. D. 325*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 56.

her first husband and now "... he *does* prejudge you (guilty) of adultery if, after the death of your husband, you do marry another: inasmuch as you have now been made dead to the law, it cannot be lawful for you, now that you have withdrawn from that (law) in the eye of which it *was* lawful for you."<sup>30</sup> It is also Tertullian's contention that even if Paul had given permission to marry a second time after the death of the previous spouse, it was similar to the Mosaic permission of divorce; in that there was some hard-heartedness responsible.<sup>31</sup> Once again, this would be a cause for reproach upon the candidate and disqualify him from selection.

Along the same grounds as remarriage bringing reproach upon a man is the difficulty of one who is remarried in providing a proper example to the flock which he leads. Living an exemplary life as an elder is of mountainous importance and this is certainly inherent in Paul's list of qualifications and in his purpose for giving them. Mounce says, "There is ample evidence that both society and the early church viewed celibacy after the death of a spouse to be a meritorious choice."<sup>32</sup> There are frequent expressions on Roman epitaphs that marriage to one husband was the ideal.<sup>33</sup> The *univira* funerary inscriptions of Roman society support the virtue of this choice in history. These are inscriptions found on some tombstones which extol the virtue of women who were "married only once ..."<sup>34</sup> What was esteemed even in the pagan circles of Roman society was found to be in accordance with Christian beliefs and the term *univira* was adopted

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<sup>30</sup> Tertullian, *On Monogamy*, vol. 4, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Fathers down to A. D. 325*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 70.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 172.

<sup>33</sup> Gordon Williams, "Some Aspects of Roman Marriage Ceremonies and Ideals," *The Journal of Roman Studies*, vol. 48 (1958): 23.

<sup>34</sup> Marjorie Lightman and William Zeisel, "Univira: An Example of Continuity and Change in Roman Society," *Church History*, vol. 46 (March, 1977): 19.

into Christian circles. These “once married” women were held in high honor by their surviving husbands and by many church fathers such as Tertullian.<sup>35</sup>

Another reason which may support the idea that remarriage is unacceptable among candidates for leadership is the belief that marriage is a covenant that cannot be broken, even by death, and therefore any remarriage amounts to successive polygamy. This argument may be founded upon Jesus’ reference to the mystical union of the marriage relationship in Matt 19:6, “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (NASB). This view is articulated by Oepke when he says, pertaining to the parallel verse in 1 Tim 5:9 regarding widows, “We may thus conclude that the phrase ἐνὸς ἀνδρὸς γυνή, in addition to excluding common licentiousness, is aimed specifically against successive polyandry ...”<sup>36</sup> Here, it is suggested that “successive polyandry” results from remarriage after the death of the husband.

The interpretation of “no remarriage” is very commendable in that it seeks to protect the sanctity of the marriage relationship, the leadership of the church from the stain of sin and reproach, and to retain the tradition of what seems to be the primary understanding of those of the early church. It is also rightly concerned with protecting marriage partners from the commission of the act of adultery if that is in fact what is taking place in remarriage. However, there are several reasons why this author would argue that this estimable view does not provide the most probable understanding of Paul’s intended meaning.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>36</sup> Albrecht Oepke, “γυνή,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT), vol. 1 A–Γ, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. & ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964; reprint, 1983), 788.

First, while the “no remarriage” position compliments the lexical force of the Greek construction, it inflates the descriptor to encompass the man’s entire lifetime instead of recognizing the contemporary aspect of the infinitive present ἐῖναι. This should be understood to indicate that the candidate should “at the present time” be one in whom the following qualities, outlined in 1 Tim 3:2-7, are found. This is probably an example of the “continuous present” which could be translated, “... he must presently be one who exhibits the ongoing quality of being a one-wife husband or one-woman man.” In other words, it must be the consistent manner of his current life. Glasscock reiterates, “... here Paul was concerned with a positive character, not with a prohibition.”<sup>37</sup> The present tense aspect of the specified qualification must necessarily be applied to all of the qualifications which follow, which makes the “no remarriage” interpretation suspect. It does not seem accurate to disqualify a candidate who has, at some time in the past, not been a peaceable fellow or been inhospitable. In addition, any or all of these characteristics could well have described the manner of life of an excellent candidate prior to his conversion. If one were characteristically belligerent prior to conversion, but offered an excellent testimony after his conversion, would his prior life disqualify him from possible leadership? This author would argue that it is not that the candidate has never previously exhibited the negative side of the qualities mentioned, but that his current manner exhibits the positive side of the qualities.

Second, the testimony of the early church to a particular interpretation lends great credibility, as it should, to that interpretation and should be thoughtfully examined. However, early church testimony is not unified on the subject. Consequently, it is not beyond the possibility that an alternate meaning is the correct meaning. Dodd comments on the view of Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350-428) regarding the disqualification of a

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<sup>37</sup> Glasscock, “The Husband of One Wife,” 252.

man for remarriage after the death of his first wife, “This, Theodore says, is absurd ..., for it may well lead to the ordination of persons whose life has been anything but exemplary, but who have qualified by contracting no second marriage ..., and the rejection of persons of good character who happen to have contracted such a marriage ..., although the apostle expressly sanctions second marriages (in Rom 7:3, 1 Cor 7:9).”<sup>38</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 315-386) adds that those who have contracted a second should not be set aside by those who have not.<sup>39</sup>

Along the same lines, many in the early church, especially Tertullian, tended toward Monasticism. Monastic influence frequently inclined toward false asceticism, often escalating to the point that even marriage in general and the sexual relationship within marriage was looked upon as a lack of self restraint.<sup>40</sup> Mounce states that this Monastic influence went beyond the biblical mandate even by making the forbidding of a second marriage an article of the faith.<sup>41</sup> Stott elucidates on Tertullian’s false asceticism, “He argued that ... those who re-marry are setting themselves against God’s will to be demanding what he has decided to take away ...”<sup>42</sup> This seems also to be the inherent root of the attacks of the false teachers to whom Paul was seeking to thwart in his letter to Timothy in the first place, and also in the questions which we find him addressing in First Corinthians (1 Cor 7:1 ff; 1 Tim 4:3). “The Fathers, giving to the Pastoral Epistles the authority of Paul, first interpreted 1 Cor 7:8, 9 as a concession to infirmity, and then 1 Tim 3:2, 12, as showing it to be degrading infirmity, disqualifying for office in the

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<sup>38</sup> Dodd, “New Testament Translation Problems 2,” 112.

<sup>39</sup> Cyril, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, vol. 4, *The Library of Christian Classics*, ed. William Telfer (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955), 113.

<sup>40</sup> Tertullian, *On Chastity*, 53-54.

<sup>41</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 172.

<sup>42</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Truth: the Message of 1 Timothy and Titus*, (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1996), 94.

Church. The argument based on these texts has been that one who marries twice must be taken thereby to plead incontinence, and cannot therefore be revered by the people of the Church.”<sup>43</sup> If incontinence was sufficient to disqualify for official capacity based on the second marriage, so also the incontinence which resulted in the first marriage should disqualify the candidate. However, while Paul considered the single life to be preferable, nowhere does he impugn the marriage relationship as being something which was sinful or a reflection of questionable character.

The virtuous example of the women to whom the *univira* inscriptions refer should certainly be held in high esteem. However, it was greatly the exception in Roman society that this applied to men. The husband very exceptionally claims credit for faithfulness to one wife and the normal view was that this was virtuous in women, not men. In Greco-Roman society, there is a definite one-sidedness in that the eternal nature of the marriage-bond applies normally only to the wife.<sup>44</sup> Although the *univira* example is creditable, one wonders whether that virtuous pattern is to be demanded of all who seek to aspire to the office of elder. Those men who are up for candidacy who choose to remain unmarried after the death of their first wife are to be commended. However, this meritorious choice is not one that should be forced upon all men up for candidacy without the clear evidence of biblical warrant.

Finally, regarding the issue of the marriage relationship as being one which mystically cannot be broken, there is evidence that Paul’s first century readers would not have concurred with this idea. Divorce was very common among the wealthy classes in society in the Greco-Roman world and that was likely a reflection of the practices of all

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<sup>43</sup> Cyril, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 113.

<sup>44</sup> Williams, “Some Aspects of Roman Marriage Ceremonies and Ideals,” 23.

strata of society.<sup>45</sup> The divorce certificate provided a means of protection for the woman which automatically gave her the privilege of remarriage, meaning her need for protection and provision would be met.<sup>46</sup> Instone-Brewer argues that first-century Jews would have understood that one who was previously married was free to remarry whether their single state was the result of the death of the spouse or from divorce. He adds, that Paul's statement in 1 Cor 7:39, "she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord," was adapted from a standard Jewish divorce certificate.<sup>47</sup> It is Instone-Brewer's contention that Paul's use of the wording from a standard divorce certificate was an *a fortiori* statement implying, "If a divorcée is free from the obligations of her marriage contract when her husband is still alive, a widow is certainly free from these same obligations."<sup>48</sup> Freedom from the contractual obligations of marriage would have been the conventional presumption regarding those who had experienced a valid divorce and certainly those who had suffered the death of a spouse.

"The Scriptures nowhere forbid or even suggest as morally questionable remarriage after the death of a spouse."<sup>49</sup> Paul clearly states in Scripture that a widow is not bound to her deceased husband, but that she is free to marry again as long as the person she marries is a believer (1 Cor 7:39). Accordingly, Paul encourages the younger widows in 1 Tim 5:14 to remarry. Even though Paul's suggestion is based upon the temptations which the younger widows were facing, it does not seem likely that Paul would have encouraged this action had it brought reproach upon the character of the widows, or if it would have disqualified them from future selection for the widow list.

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<sup>45</sup> Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible*, 74.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 122-123.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>49</sup> Robert L Saucy, "The Husband of One Wife," *BibSac* 131 (1974): 231.

Instead, had remarriage brought reproach upon the younger widows, it seems more likely that Paul would have simply commanded them to flee from their current temptations.

### **The Candidate Must Be Faithful**

This interpretation argues that the leadership candidate must be faithful to his wife. This position would allow for the possibility of the candidate being remarried after the death of his previous wife, a valid divorce, or a possible case of adultery if it was committed in the distant past. Not permitted with this position would be the present circumstance of polygamous marriage or characteristic sexual immorality on behalf of the candidate.

This position, as with the last, validates the lexical characteristics of μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα. It underscores the emphatic position of μιᾶς γυναικὸς which is expressed in the translation of the text as, “a ‘one-woman’ man.” This translation provides for a literal meaning of the words in the phrase and offers the equivalent meaning as the previous occurrences of γυνή found in First Timothy 2. Translation of the phrase in this manner would suggest that Paul’s intended meaning prescribed that the man must not have a flirtatious manner about him and if involved in a relationship, whether married or single, he would exhibit an exclusive relationship with one woman.<sup>50</sup>

This translation adequately addresses the problematic issue of marital infidelity in Roman society in the first century. Marriage contracts, evident through extant papyri, indicate that the wife was expected to be sexually active only with her husband, but that the husband could have extramarital sex as long as it didn’t infringe upon his ability to provide financially for his wife.<sup>51</sup> Due to the preceding quality of

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<sup>50</sup> Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: An Urgent Call to Restore Biblical Church Leadership*, rev. and exp. ed. (Colorado Springs: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 2005), 192.

<sup>51</sup> G. W. Peterman, “Marriage and Sexual Fidelity in the Papyri, Plutarch and Paul,” *Tyndale Bulletin*, vol. 50 (1999): 167, 172.

“blameless” in the context, the phrase points to the avoidance of immorality.<sup>52</sup> In addition, with the exception of “able to teach,” all of the other qualifications in the list “have to do with Christian *character*.”<sup>53</sup> The “one-woman man” interpretation qualifies a positive character trait of the candidate which fits well with the positive nature of the remaining character traits in the list. Mounce comments, “Marital faithfulness also has the advantage of being a positive way of stating the requirement (as opposed to the negative, not divorced/remarried) that parallels the rest of the positive statements in the verse.”<sup>54</sup> Paul’s list of qualifications seeks to narrow the “kind” of man that should be elevated to the office of overseer, rather than the “status” of the man. The argument of the passage is not how often one can be married, nor precisely what constitutes a legitimate marriage (which is assumed), but rather how the candidate conducts himself in his marriage.<sup>55</sup> It is the overall proposition of a passage which should inform the reader who seeks to determine the intent of ambiguous phrases within that particular passage. According to the context of 1 Timothy 3, it is the conduct of the candidate which is being measured in the qualifying list. While there are New Testament verses which should be consulted in the questions of remarriage, this particular verse does not appear to be one of the best from which to choose based on the context of the passage.

This author has not been able to provide substantiation for this interpretation by the church fathers, except possibly indirectly through those Fathers who taught against the exclusion and vilification of those who had contracted second marriages. It may also

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<sup>52</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *Letters to Paul's Delegates: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New Testament in Context (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996), 143.

<sup>53</sup> David J. Vallesky, “The Pastor Must Be ‘Above Reproach’: An Examination of ἀνεπίλημπος (1 Timothy 3:2) and ἀνέγκλητος (Titus 1:6) with Application to the Public Ministry of the Gospel,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 96 (1999): 198.

<sup>54</sup> Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 172.

<sup>55</sup> Philip H. Towner, *1 – 2 Timothy & Titus*, The IVP New Testament Series, ed. Grant R. Osborne (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 85.

be the case that the Monastic influence upon many of the Fathers toward a critical analysis of marriage, based on the underlying cause of incontinence, skewed their positions in a certain direction. Lock mentions, "... the later writers are influenced by a growing love for celibacy ... which is certainly alien to this passage, and by the denunciation of second marriages in all cases, which is also alien to the epistle ..."<sup>56</sup> In addition, the absence of this specific interpretation among the early church fathers does not negate the possibility of it being the correct interpretation.

Interpreting μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα as "a one-woman man" allows for a sufficient interpretation of ἕνδος ἀνδρὸς γυνή, the parallel phrase regarding widows in 1 Tim 5:9. It appears that Paul's desire was that the widows appointed to the church list set an exemplary model of conduct in their marriage by having been faithful wives; once again, a positive character trait rather than a negative comment on marital status. This interpretation supports Paul's suggestion of remarriage for the younger widows in 1 Tim 5:14. According to this interpretation, Paul's suggestion would not put those younger widows at risk in the future should they be considered for the church list under the same circumstances at a future date. If one accepts the position of remarriage as being a disqualifying trait for men in 1 Tim 3:2, then it must be assumed that the remarriage of the younger widows in 1 Tim 5:14 would result in their disqualification for the widow list of 1 Tim 5:9.

The "one-woman man" interpretation also evades the plethora of issues associated with understanding Paul's statement as a qualification of the individual's marital status. It is concerned that the candidate's life be characterized by the fruit of faithfulness and fidelity in his current relationships and does not render automatic disqualification of the man based on his pre-conversion life or distant past. It does not

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<sup>56</sup> Walter Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Pastoral Epistles: 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1966), 38.

require the assembly of all parties to a previously broken marriage, which in many cases may be impossible, in order to determine who was at fault and who, if any, was the victim.

This position, however, is not without its difficulties. First, while it highlights the emphatic position of the one-woman aspect of the Greek phrase, so does the position of “no polygamy” and “no remarriage.” Remaining faithful to the emphasis of the Greek construction narrows down the choices which should be given the most weight of consideration, but it does not point to one clear option.

Second, the translation of the words *γυνή* and *ἀνὴρ* can be just as easily taken to mean “wife” and “husband,” respectively. Paul uses both terms with both meanings in his letters and a hard case cannot be made for either outside of the context of the passage under examination. In this case, 1 Tim 3:4 illustrates the possibility of the married state and therefore, “wife” and “husband” would be appropriate.

Third, character is certainly the primary concern in this list of qualifications as Paul seeks to facilitate the identification of those who would be adequate examples to the flock. The character of the man could well be inherent in the “once married” understanding of the phrase to the first-century Gentile reader in Ephesus.

Fourth, the lack of support in tradition as seen in the views of the Church Fathers is a significant issue. The Fathers overwhelmingly support the position denying remarriage as a legitimate leader’s experience.<sup>57</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Based on the foregoing data, one can only narrow down the interpretations to the best-case scenario. This must be done through the analysis of positive and negative aspects of each position and then a decision must finally be made as to the most

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<sup>57</sup> Dodd, “New Testament Translation Problems 2,” 112-116.

satisfying. This final decision, while it may have many positive arguments, will no doubt be confronted with a measure of sound evidence which speaks to the contrary. For this reason, a firm and dogmatic position on any interpretation is difficult to attain.

The argument that the candidate must be married makes no sense if the same meaning is given to Paul's requirement for widows in 1 Tim 5:9. In addition, not only was Paul single, but he suggested that being single enabled greater devotion to God. Therefore, this position lacks adequate support to be what Paul intended to convey in the passage.

The argument that the candidate must not be a polygamist does not demonstrate sufficient application in relation to the parallel usage in the widow list of 1 Tim 5:9 since polyandry was virtually nonexistent during the time of the early church. Additionally, polygamy does not seem to be a major issue in the culture based on what is found in early marriage contract language and practice. Therefore, this position lacks adequate support to be what Paul intended in the passage.

The argument that the candidate must not be divorced is utterly difficult because there is nothing in the phrase which indicates that divorce is under discussion. If divorce had been Paul's primary objective, he could have clearly stated such an important subject. In addition, Jesus and Paul both appear to provide at least two grounds for valid divorce in the New Testament. While divorce may well be satisfactory grounds for denial of leadership selection, it must be determined whether that subject was Paul's intended meaning in the phrase under examination. Based on the lack of evidential support in the text and the first-century context, this position does not present a passable translation of the phrase.

The argument that the candidate must not be remarried has enjoyed adequate support throughout church history and also appeals to the "one wife" emphasis in the lexical structure of the phrase. However, the freedom for remarriage was specified and

even expected in both, Jewish and Gentile contexts. Remarriage was inherently understood in the divorce certificates of the first century and would not have been something which, in itself, was necessarily looked upon negatively by the culture. The exception to this is the attitude of some of the Church Fathers, such as Tertullian. However the influence of Montanism and false asceticism makes questionable the presence of objective interpretation of μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα in some instances. In addition, Paul allows for remarriage specifically in the case of one whose spouse has died (1 Cor 7:39, 1 Tim 5:14) and seemingly in cases of abandonment (1 Cor 7:15). Remarriage was neither problematic nor sinful for the person whose spouse had died. Due to these reasons, this position is relatively questionable as to whether it was Paul's intended meaning. Therefore, this author accepts the following position as that which was most likely Paul's intended meaning in μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα.

The meaning of Paul's reference to "husband of one wife" in 1 Tim 3:2 is best understood as, "faithful in character." This interpretation provides for a literal interpretation of μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα as "a one-woman man." It also gives satisfactory weight to the emphatic position of the word μιᾶς by accentuating the fact that the man is a "one-woman" kind of man. "Faithful in character" addresses the character of the man, rather than his status, which corresponds to the majority of the remaining qualifications in the list and the primary intent of the context. "Faithful in character" automatically disqualifies those who were involved in polygamous marriages and those who were involved in extra-marital relationships. Additionally, it demonstrates compatibility with Paul's statements encouraging remarriage without impunity in 1 Cor 7:39 and 1 Tim 5:14. This interpretation qualifies a man based upon the evidence demonstrated in his Christian life which correlates to the manner in which he may be anticipated to lead the flock of God.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSION AND CONTEMPORARY APPLICATION

It should be the practice of every Christian to examine the Scriptures and to obediently submit to the propositions of the text. Frequently, this is not a readily accessible task, but rather one which must be accomplished through the prayerful and diligent study of the text. Furthermore, there is the recurrent possibility that a solid and unchallenged position is simply not attainable regardless of the available evidence. In those instances, one must formulate a conclusion based on reasonable arguments. When this is the case, it is expedient to hold one's position with care, humility, and grace.

Commonly, such is not the case with the text under study in this thesis. Positions are often held with stoic conviction, not through the careful and assiduous study of the text and its possible interpretations, but through rigid adherence to a tradition with which one is accustomed, or through preconceived notions that serve to provide emotional satisfaction. As a result, love, grace, and forgiveness are often overshadowed by strict assumptions which have been constructed externally to the evidence provided in Scripture. Many capable and possibly qualified men have been excluded from leadership in the church due to inflexible interpretations of 1 Tim 3:2 which are supported not from the text, but often from unfounded personal convictions.

Certainly, one should not minimize the importance of selecting qualified men to the leadership of the church. As Christ's body on earth, the church is the organism through which the work of God is being advanced in the world by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is of supreme importance that the church represents Christ to the world in such a way as to bring glory to His name through a pure and consistent

testimony. This testimony must begin with the leadership. It is incumbent upon that leadership to present a model for the flock to follow and a witness for the world see. Therefore, since one's actions naturally flow out from the character which lies within, the leadership of the church must be held to the highest standards of character. The conduct expected of church leadership must reflect that which the flock should follow and not the adverse. It is essential that the leadership be able to unequivocally proclaim, "Follow my example."

Should the demand be placed upon church leadership to have set the kind of Christian example in their lives prior to their conversion to Christ which Paul is intending here in 1 Tim 3:1-7? Certainly, it must be conceded that no person was ever able to live a life which was glorifying to the Lord prior to their conversion. It may very well be that all manner of sins had been committed prior to one's regeneration and, if there was one specific sin which had not been committed, one would still be guilty of having broken all points of the Law (Jas 2:10). Should the church, as is often the case, forgive all sins prior to salvation except for the sin of divorce? Is it forgivable that one should join himself to a harlot prior to salvation, but not forgivable that he should be divorced? And, if the sin of divorce should be forgiven, is the penalty still to be levied? Should an innocent party in the breaking of the matrimonial vows and the subsequent dissolution of the marriage be prosecuted as the offender and be forced to live with the consequences of another's actions which were outside of the victim's control? These hard issues seem to be too overwhelming to force an interpretation of 1 Tim 3:2 which does not enjoy explicit textual and contextual evidence.

Along the same vein, is it proper for the church to disqualify a person who has experienced a situation that is completely acceptable and even recommended by Paul in Scripture; namely remarriage? Remarriage after the death of a spouse should not be automatically construed to be evidence of a lack of restraint or a depiction of

questionable character in any way. While one who is unmarried may have the opportunity for plenary devotion to the Lord, there is the wonderful and valuable example of the married couple who present themselves devotedly to God as one flesh. It would be extremely difficult to affirm that a candidate for church leadership whose twenty year old wife died tragically after two years of marriage would be ruled unacceptable to lead if he were to remarry. While this example may seem implausible, it is exactly the case of a young man with whom this author is acquainted. Undoubtedly there are instances, such as his, which would make the case for all remarriage to be a primary means for disqualification highly questionable. If this is so, then can Paul's intended meaning of  $\mu\iota\acute{\alpha}\varsigma \gamma\upsilon\upsilon\alpha\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\nu\delta\rho\alpha$  truly be that the man who aspires to the office of elder, "must not be remarried"? This is obviously a difficult position to hold.

On the other hand, the faithful character of the leadership of the church is prodigiously important. Its significance is applicable to all leadership regardless of their marital status; allowing both single and married to serve. It also serves to help define the "type" of man who is sufficient to set the example, not only for the flock, but also for those outside the fellowship of the saints. Faithful character positively addresses not only the marital relationship of the person, but also the lifestyle of the person. It is also in agreement with the quality of character which is reflected accordingly with the further descriptions of conduct in the context of 1 Timothy 3.

A person's faithful character should be assessed according to the manner of life which he exhibits at the time of his presentation to candidacy for leadership. One's character should be altogether different in his present life as a Christian in comparison to his past life before regeneration. This does not mean that the person's life is not evaluated over an extended period of time, for any man up for selection as an elder or overseer of the church should have a track record of having demonstrated the kind of character qualities and life that is suggested in Scripture and personified in mature Christian

conduct. However, this time-frame should extend for an acceptable period according to wisdom. To look beyond the period of the man's Christian life is neither proper, nor gracious.

The necessity of faithful character in the leadership of the church was extremely important in first-century culture. There was demonstrable evidence of a double standard in societal marriage contracts which made provision for the husband's unfaithfulness as long as the financial sustenance for the wife was not interrupted. In addition, there was the establishment of the "any cause" divorce by the Hillelites which lowered the standard of marriage and made a mockery of the commitment that Jesus and Paul both expected and advocated in the marital relationship. The qualifications, which Paul expressed in 1 Tim 3:2, brought to the forefront the kind of character qualities that were to be evident in the current lives of the leadership. These character qualities would enable them to provide godly leadership to the flock and a commendable example to the culture. What better place to start than with the important characteristic of faithfulness in relationships and especially, the marriage relationship and the commitment which it embodies.

Faithfulness of character is equally as important in the culture of today as it was in Paul's day. The contemporary culture has been highly influenced by the postmodern mindset and, as a result, has embraced situation ethics and an intolerance of objective morality. The "any cause" divorce of the first century has been reconstituted in the "no-fault" divorce of today. As mentioned in chapter one of this thesis, the evidence indicates that the divorce rate in the church is shockingly similar to that of the culture as the lines between church and culture continue to blur. Therefore, the refulgent example of the church must shine consistently in the culture today.

The church is the light-bearer to the culture in which the people of God reside on this side of heaven. She should represent and proclaim from the mountaintops the

cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ to all who humbly fall upon the grace through which that cleansing is offered. The grace which is exhibited through the witness of the church must model the grace which is lavishly furnished from the hand and heart of God. It is the suggestion of this author that the church does an ambassadorial injustice to the forgiven saint, and to the culture which she impacts, when she deprives a candidate for leadership of the opportunity for service based on his pre-conversion life. The church should evaluate the leadership potential of its members based upon their lives as new creations and it should do so as the embodiment of grace, truth and forgiveness.

The selection of leadership in the contemporary church, according to the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3; 5 and Titus 1, is equally as important as was the selection of qualified leadership in the first-century church. Properly qualified leadership provides a hopeful layer of protection to the church from a damaged testimony to the culture, which is consistently relevant. Because Paul's intended meaning of  $\mu\iota\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$   $\gamma\upsilon\nu\alpha\iota\kappa\acute{o}\varsigma$   $\acute{\alpha}\nu\delta\rho\alpha$  is directed to qualify the character of the leader, it surpasses varying issues with which every church may deal in its given cultural context. With this in mind, it applies to the man, not the situation which the culture presents to the church at a particular time in history.

Properly qualified leadership is also a means of added protection for the flock of God. Too many trusting sheep have been led astray by unqualified leaders whose character and motive have been deficient. Paul's list of qualifications was directed not only at preserving the standard among those already in leadership, but also among those who would be chosen for future positions.

Properly qualified leadership is also a means of protection on behalf of those who are unqualified according to Scripture and thereby restrained from serving in certain capacities. The responsibility of those who are to lead the church is portentously great and each will be held accountable to God for their stewardship of such office. To install

one who is lacking in character is to place that person, and those under his care, in a position of dangerous vulnerability.

Those aspiring to lead the church as overseer, elder, pastor, or deacon should certainly be measured by the qualities which the church is fortunate to have received through the pen of Paul. It is the responsibility of the church to appraise the candidate based on those qualities to which Scripture attests, not on the presuppositions or nescient assumptions of a denomination or other particular group. It is hoped that, through the prayerfully sought wisdom and direction of the Holy Spirit and a better understanding of the kind of character reflected in Paul's reference to "husband of one wife" in 1 Tim 3:2, many capable and qualified servants may be added to the leadership of God's church.

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