

6. **The Autonomy Of The Church** (a) We mean the exercise and right of each local congregation to be self-governing, subject only to Christ. (b) In the first century no one church had the right to dictate to another church. Each congregation of God's people was *independent* from any other. (c) There is no scriptural system of church government larger or smaller than the congregation. Do you know of religious bodies that do not allow their local churches to be wholly independent? \_\_\_\_\_ Have you ever heard of some "board" deciding what preacher to send to preach for some local church? \_\_\_\_\_ Have you ever heard of "liberals" and "conservatives" arguing at a religious convention about what by-laws to pass, or what policy to bind on the local churches? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you know of any NT reference that allows one church to dictate or dominate another? \_\_\_\_\_
7. **Elders In Every City – In Every Church** Paul wrote Titus to (1:5) "*ordain \_\_\_\_\_ in every city.*" There is nothing new about elders overseeing God's people. It was that way under Patriarchy and Moses, and remains so under Christ. "*Elder*" is from the GK word that basically means *older person*. Different GK words mean *shepherd or pastor, overseer, and bishop*. All of these words describe those whose qualifications are listed in (1 Tim 3; Titus 1). On the first evangelistic tour, Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:23), "*ordained them \_\_\_\_\_ in every church.*"
8. **The God Given Duty Of Elders** (Acts 20:28) "*Take heed therefore unto*" (a) "*\_\_\_\_\_*," (b) "*and to all the \_\_\_\_\_*," (c) "*over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you \_\_\_\_\_*," (d) "*to \_\_\_\_\_ the church of God.*" (Acts 20:35) (a) "*\_\_\_\_\_ the weak*" (Tit 1:9), (b) "*\_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_ the gainsayers.*" (1 Thess 5:14) (a) "*\_\_\_\_\_ them that are unruly,*" (b) "*\_\_\_\_\_ the feebleminded,*" (c) "*\_\_\_\_\_ the weak,*" (d) "*\_\_\_\_\_ toward all.*" (1 Pet 5:2-3) (a) "*\_\_\_\_\_ the oversight thereof,* (b) *not by \_\_\_\_\_, but \_\_\_\_\_,* (c) *not for filthy lucre, but of a \_\_\_\_\_ mind, \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ over God's heritage, but being \_\_\_\_\_ to the flock.*"
9. **The Character Of The Elder** The qualification of the "*bishop*" (1 Tim 3:1): "*A bishop then must be blameless.*" There are numerous qualities listed but being *blameless* is the key. We must understand that to be blameless does not mean to be sinless. Sinless means without sin attached. Blameless means without blame attached (ie: inculpable, without guilt). A blameless man does not quit God. He always repents. He makes restitution whenever possible. He rights his wrongs. Paul wrote the Corinthians exhorting them to (1 Cor 1:7) "*come behind in no \_\_\_\_\_*" in order that (V8) "*ye may be \_\_\_\_\_ in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"
10. **More On Elder Qualifications** These qualities must be readily apparent. He either possesses them, or he doesn't. His reputation must be unsullied. This must be recognized not only by his brethren, but he (1 Tim 1:7) "*must have a \_\_\_\_\_ of them which are without.*" Who are those "*which are without?*" \_\_\_\_\_ Unique qualities such as (V6) "*not a \_\_\_\_\_*" and (V2) "*apt to \_\_\_\_\_*" combined with the physical thrust of the word "*elder*" give us a clear picture that this is an older, experienced, capable Christian man.
11. **The Plurality** Never did one man, single-handedly *shepherd* (pastor) a church in NT times. It was always a plurality. (1 Thess 5:12) "*Know them which \_\_\_\_\_ among you, and \_\_\_\_\_ in the Lord.*" *Them* is plural meaning more than one elder. The church is commanded (V13), "*\_\_\_\_\_ them \_\_\_\_\_ in love for their work's sake.*" Paul said, "*If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.*" The eldership is more than today's designation of an *office* – it is a work. Desire to do this work is the first qualification.

**Read All Choices And Circle The Best Answer**

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| 12. Shepherd?  | <b>overseer</b> | <b>bishop</b>         | <b>cardinal</b>    | <b>pastor</b>        |
| 13. Autonomy?  | <b>unknown</b>  | <b>self-governing</b> | <b>constricted</b> | <b>uncooperative</b> |
| 14. Blameless? | <b>sinless</b>  | <b>unaccountable</b>  | <b>inculpable</b>  | <b>feebleminded</b>  |