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[0:00] Probably a passage that you know well and have reflected on at some length.

! The saying is trustworthy. If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.
! Therefore, an overseer, an overseer, an overseer, an overseer, an overseer, an overseer, an overseer, an overseer, an overseer, an overseer, an overseer, an overseer, an overseer, an overseer, an overseer, an overseer. It must be above reproach. The husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, that is someone who welcomes strangers or foreigners into his home, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.
Secondly, he must manage his own household well with all dignity, keeping his children submissive. For if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?
He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.
[1:50] Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.

They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first, then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.
Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves, and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.
I'd like to make seven or eight statements regarding leadership in the church.
[3:01] And the first is to say that leadership in the church of Jesus Christ is essentially about servanthood. Leadership in the church of Jesus Christ is essentially about servanthood.

The Lord's words in Mark 10, 45, I have come not to be served, but to serve, and to give my life a ransom for the many.
Or his very remarkable words in Luke chapter 22, where he effectively rebukes his disciples, who are arguing over who is the greater.
And Jesus says, But not so with you. Rather let the greatest among you become the youngest, and the leader as one who serves.
For who is the greater? One who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as one who serves.
[4:13] Jesus exemplifies for us the counter-cultural expectation of leadership. He has come to serve.

But, and it's a strong adversative. But, I am among you, the Lord of glory. Come down into the midst of his creation.
I am among you as one who serves. And then you remember how in Philippians 2, Paul puts this so movingly, when he urges that the mind of Christ be manifested in the life of the people of Christ.
Let this mind be among you that was also in Christ Jesus. Who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing.
Made himself nothing. Literally, himself he emptied. He outon ekinosin. Himself he emptied, taking the form of a servant. He didn't empty himself by divesting himself of anything that was native to him.
[5:31] He emptied himself by taking to himself the form of a servant. It's subtraction by addition, if you like.

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And he becomes obedient unto death, even the death of a cross. And this is the foundation of Christian leadership.
Self-denying, self-abnegating service for the sake and for the good of others. And this is what the church is looking for in its leaders.
I remember some years ago, a friend of mine returned from the USA and he said to me, you know, Ian, I heard so often in my trip this past time of meeting with fathers in particular, saying we are raising up our children to be leaders.
He said, I just wanted someone to say, I'm raising up my child to be a servant. To be a servant. Because we belong to the servant king.
[6:38] And this is the profoundly cultural, counter-cultural reality that the church is to placard to the world. That the essence of greatness lies in service.

The greatest somebody who ever was became the greatest nobody who ever was. And all for the sake of this world.
Elders and deacons are fundamentally servants. I was speaking a year or so ago at a conference in France and I was struck very, very significantly.
In a way, I knew this passage, I probably know it off by heart actually, the whole chapter. But the verse that I was speaking on had never impacted me as much as it did that day.
2 Corinthians 4, verse 5. Where Paul is explicating his philosophy, if you like, of Christian ministry. And he writes in the fifth verse, for what we proclaim is not ourselves, like these Corinthian eloquent men that you are so enamored with, you Corinthians.
[7:53] We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord. And ourselves as your servants, for Jesus' sake.

So Paul, and the way the Greek's structured, he's saying, I've got two aspects or two bifurcated foci in my preaching. I preach Jesus Christ as Lord.
And myself and those with me as your servants, for Jesus' sake. And I thought to myself, well, Ian, you seek to preach Jesus Christ as Lord.
How well do you proclaim, not just in words, but in reality yourself as their servant for Jesus' sake. You see, our people are kings and priests to God.
And those of us who are set apart to be elders and deacons are to serve them as priests and kings to God. Remember some years ago, Ted Donnelly, some of you know Ted Donnelly.
[8:58] He's one of my dearest friends and just one of the finest of men. If you've not heard him preach, look up the internet. He was telling me that he'd just come back from Canada, I think it was.

He'd been preaching to 1,500 people. He said, the Lord wonderfully blessed my ministry during the four or five days he was with them. And he came back to Newton Abbey and he turned up for the Wednesday midweek prayer meeting.
He was the first there. So he opens up the church and the chairs are set out but the light's not working. And he said to me, Ian, you might have thought, here am I.
I'm just back from preaching to 1,500 people and I've got to start putting in light bulbs. And then he said, I just felt crushed.
Yourself as their servants for Jesus' sake. Now that's a trivial little example. But let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus.
[10:08] And surely when a church is looking to, under God, add to its leadership, it's looking for servant, hearted people. It's looking for people who in little things as well as in bigger things are quick to serve.

They see a need and they meet the need that is something instinctive. They don't think about it. That's where all our thinking about leadership in the church truly needs to begin.
Because the Lord Jesus Christ is the great servant. Yes, he's God's servant to us. Remember Romans 15, he's also, he calls himself the servant to the circumcised.
He becomes what he was not. So that we, by God's grace, might become what we were not. So brother, elders, deacons, would-be elders, deacons, those who aspire to be, do you have a servant heart?
Are you learning to have a servant heart? Are you happy to do what you do if no one notices you doing it?
[11:32] Does your wife see that you have a servant heart to her or to your children if you have any? Leadership is essentially about servanthood.

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Secondly, look with me now at 1 Timothy 3. All I can do is just touch on a few things here. Let me ask another question.
Why is the office of an overseer, of a bishop, why does Paul call it a noble task? Why does he call it a noble task?
Another non-rhetorical question. Simon, I know you, if I can ask you, why does he call it a noble task? I must have thought about that. What makes it noble?
It's a position of great responsibility. Great, excellent answer. B, another B. See, he won't mind me saying that, but I hope he doesn't. Who else can I ask?
[12:37] Gethin, I know you very well. Why does he call it a noble task? Right? You're Graham, he's Gethin, but you said it's...

It's a precious task, yes, very good, very good. B, G, Gethin? Because of the one we serve? That's a B double plus. Very good. Been to Westminster Theological Seminary and Cambridge Presbyterian Church. It's a noble task.
Now, obviously, in the context, Paul begins to unpack and explicate what he means. But, while it's obviously about caring for the flock of God and shepherding it safely from here to heaven, surely it's a noble task because it was the task our Lord Jesus Christ was appointed to.
It was the task that he epitomized and exemplified. It was the task he gave himself unreservedly to.
[13:54] Now, some of you will know that John Calvin talks about the Holy Spirit's ministry of replication. And what he means by that is that what the Holy Spirit first produced in the holy humanity of Christ, he comes to overlay on the people of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the prototypical man of faith. He lived by faith. He is the prototypical godly man. And the Holy Spirit comes to replicate analogically in our lives the pattern, the principal pattern of Jesus Christ.
And that's true especially, I think, for those set apart, for leadership, that the Holy Spirit comes to replicate in us what he first produced in the Lord Jesus Christ.
It's a noble task because it was the task entrusted by our Father in Heaven to his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
[15:05] and that's an astonishing privilege and responsibility that we are to mirror in our lives the shepherding of the chief shepherd of the flock, Jesus Christ.

In that context, there's a third thing I want to say. I've touched on it earlier, but I'd like to just slightly develop it a little now. shepherds are sheep before they are shepherds.
Now that's very obvious, isn't it? We're not born shepherds, we're not born again shepherds. I make that point because the way we go about leading the people of God is absolutely paramount.
You know the old song, it's not what you say, it's the way that you say it. You find this in a different sense in the Lord Jesus Christ.
Now he wasn't a sheep before he was a shepherd. But the point I think, Stan, maybe in John chapter 4, Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman at the well.
[16:28] The disciples go off to get food and whatever. And Jesus breaks all these cultural taboos. A man talking to a woman without a chaperone.

A Jewish man talking to a Jewish woman. A Jewish man talking to such a Samaritan woman. And then Jesus says to her, give me a drink.
It's a verb in the imperative mood. He says, Doth pain. Give me, I command you to give me a drink. She replies, why do you, a Jew, ask me for a drink?
Jesus didn't ask her. He commanded her. But she heard the command like a request. the command was so full of grace that it appeared like a request.
It's not what you say, it's the way that you say it. Now, that's not absolutely true, but you get the point. How we go about ministering, serving, is absolutely imperative.
[17:45] people need to know that like our Savior in heaven, we are not unacquainted with the feelings of their infirmities, that we have the same struggles, that we open our hearts in measure, wisely, not foolishly.

Some Christians are stupid. they share far too much. There's a wisdom about sharing, but people need to see our humanity.
They need to understand that we are serving them and shepherding them and ruling them and guiding them and feeding them as men who have a humanity that's as real, as vulnerable, as frail as theirs.

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You know, Peter talks in 1 Peter 5 about not lording it or domineering, not lording over the flock, domineering over the sheep.
At the heart of that is this deep conviction that I am at heart a blood-redeemed sinner.
[19:06] And Peter writes about domineering because he knows the tendency there is in fallen humanity when given positions of responsibility to become inflated with ourselves.

We think ourselves to be something, oh, the church recognizes something in me, it doesn't recognize another's. I must be something. And the devil will fan that and however much we seek to subdue it with evangelical piety, if it's there, it needs to be mortified and put to death.
Elders and deacons are to engage in their work, exhibiting wisely and sensibly the frailty of their humanity.
I think that's one of the ways by which God gives us access into people's lives. Even when we haven't gone through some of the traumas that some of the people we pastor have gone through, when people can sense, and I think it's to do with sensing more than hearing, when people can sense that our hearts are as frail and fragile as theirs, albeit the church has set us apart to shepherd them and rule them, obey your leaders.
I think it's one of the ways in which God gives us access into their lives. Well, more particularly, just look with me at 1 Timothy 3, 1 to 13, and also the parallel passage, Titus 1, 5 through 9.
[21:05] The New Testament is unambiguous about who should and who should not be elders and deacons. Who can tell me how many indispensable qualities that Paul highlights in say verses 1 through 7?

Someone just count. Shout out. How many indispensable, non-negotiable qualities that there must be don't be shy.
Who's going to shout out first? 15. That's the number I got. 15. Well done, Steve. 15. Of the 15, how many relate to theological orthodoxy?
There are two answers, I think. 15. 15. Well done. Obviously, none, principally the whole 15.
They are the overflow of a life that's been united to Jesus Christ. Union with Christ is the foundation of what we read here.
[22:34] And what Paul is highlighting to Timothy is that union with Jesus Christ in lives that God is raising up for service and leadership in his church, and we lead by serving.

love serve. That that union with Jesus Christ will manifest itself in personal qualities, in familial characteristics, and in relationship with those outside the church.
And you can read how wide-ranging these qualities and characteristics are. And seven times in verses 1 through 11, he uses the word must.
Must. And overseer must be above reproach. Now, of course, the word he uses doesn't mean he's without fault.
The word in its classical Greek meaning has the idea his life is all over peace. There's nothing glaringly wrong about his life.
[23:44] There's no excrescences to his life. There are no carbuncles to his life. There is an integratedness. What he says is what he is.

What he is at home, he is in the public sphere. What he is in the public sphere, he is at home and in the life of the church. And it's so wide-ranging, isn't it?
it's in this regard I've written in the notes, I think Bible-faithful Christians are too much focused on men and not women being elders. The danger is in churches like ours that we so want to be faithful to who it is that God would have serve and lead his church.
and because of the cultural pressures of the day, we can accent far more strongly what the Bible doesn't accent and play down a little, not consciously but subconsciously, what the Bible does accent.
What I mean by that is I don't think the Bible goes out of its way to accent that women shouldn't be elders. That's a given. I think the Bible teaches that.
[25:14] I think it's a given. You may disagree, well that's fine, we can talk about that. Paul is far more concerned not to say women shouldn't have rule and authority in the church, he's far more concerned to say here are the qualities that the good of the flock of Jesus Christ bought with his blood requires for its up building, its establishing, its strengthening, its equipping, character.

We are far too beguiled in reformed churches with gifts. We are far too beguiled with gifts.

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I don't mean we're to downplay gifts, God gives gifts, gifts, but the scriptures are far more concerned about character.
Now I know you can't juxtapose the two, I'm just trying to make the point. Character, character, character, grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. And where these qualities are absent, it's not a matter of saying well he's got 11 of the 15, so that's pretty good.
Or he's got 14 of the 15. If he hasn't got the 15, he's disqualified. You say well, that's raising the bar pretty high, don't blame me, blame God.
[26:56] Now, you think, well, who is sufficient for these things? You're thinking, is that really Paul?

Is that Graham? Is that James and Lys? Paul is writing realistically. He's got to encourage Timothy not to be faint-hearted.
David. He's got to tell him at one point, 2 Timothy, don't become pusillanimous. Paul knows that we all have weaknesses and frailties and failings, but is our life all of a piece?
When you look at that, do you say, yeah, this fellow that the elders have brought to the church, that's him.
He's not perfect, I can tell you that, his wife can tell you better than anyone, but that's what he is. He's able to teach. His home is open to strangers, open to foreigners, literally hospitable.
[28:10] So, these are not negotiables. These are non-negotiables, but let me focus particularly number five on one of them.

The key to an elder or deacon's usefulness in a congregation lies foundationally in his relationship with his wife. Look how Paul begins, if anyone desires the office of a bishop, an overseer, he desires a noble task, therefore, notice Paul's connectives, therefore, an overseer must be above reproach, number one, the husband of one wife, or more literally, a man of one woman.
That's very significant in the culture we live in today. I was at a conference in the States a couple of years ago, and I was sitting, very happily listening to the fellow. He was speaking well.
He'd written a number of books on sexuality, and I've read very few, but it was very helpful. And he said, in my research, in my travels, I think at least 50% of men in conservative evangelical churches are engaging in internet pornography, it was like an arrow hitting me in the forehead.
I thought, he's serious. I turned to Joan, and then he said, and probably 40% of women, and my first thought was this, if he's remotely right, if he is remotely right, I've been living in a fool's paradise for 35 years or so as a minister.
[29:56] an elder is to be a one-woman man, not just obviously, but in his private life.

If you're someone here today who's engaging in internet pornography, you should disqualify yourself immediately from any position of rulership in the church, oversight, office, go immediately, seek the counsel, the encouragement, the restoration of your brothers in the Lord.
Recent months in Scotland have highlighted the great sadness and tragedy of reformed ministers in the plural falling horribly.
I had a friend who committed suicide earlier this year when his hidden life began to unravel and be unmasked.
Paul is writing transgenerationally here, transculturally. the Lord knows how prone we are to fail.
[31:24] You ever wonder why so much space is given to David's adultery and everything else that goes with it? You almost want to say at times, Lord, do we need to know about that in such detail? Yes, you do.

Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. Well, and I have little doubt Paul was thinking about himself.
That's why it's so vital in the work of pastoral ministry that elders have, you can't expect every elder to have the same relationship to every other elder.
There were those you would be closer to than others. That's natural and right the Lord Jesus Christ exemplifies that. We need to be so accountable to some that we feel able to open our hearts to them.
It was Oscar Wilde who said, the mark of a good friend is that he stabs you in the stomach. And we need those kind of friends.
[32:35] I need them. And so when Paul says here, an overseer, a bishop, elder bishop speaks of the manner or character of the elder's work.

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The elder speaks more of the office. He must be a one-man woman, a one-woman man. He will go on, for example, in Ephesians 5 to spell out what that will mean.
Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. Now, I believe in male headship. But we're to lead our wives by serving them. Serving them in life and serving them unto death.
We're to serve them. That's what love does. You know, whenever, maybe you're here and you're thinking, you know, I've got it really hard. I have to submit to my husband and everything.
Ephesians 5, 21, 22. If you knew the kind of husband I had, you would think, boy, that's a bit of a stretch. You think of your poor husband.
[33:53] He has to love you as Jesus Christ loved the church. He's to bleed and die for you. He's to so cherish your good above his own that if it will cost him his very life, he'll lay it down for you.

You think you've got it hard? But we've also to leave our wives by following them. Now, unless you're a man who thinks he's some sort of superman and knows more than his wife, more spiritually than his wife, and all the rest of it, well, you're disregarded.
You shouldn't be doing anything in the church. Many women are more able than their husbands, more spiritually able, more naturally gifted, and husbands will often lead their wives by learning to follow them, to say, yeah, I think you've got a better handle on this, that's the way we'll go.
You talk about it and you say, I think, and your wife says, well, you thought of this and you thought of that. You say, well, I didn't really think about that. Because you're not a partnership, you're a union.
It seems to me, this need to an elder beacon's usefulness in the church lies foundation in relationship with life. It's absolutely imperative that we take this seriously.
[35:23] I can never understand a church that EPU is guilty of this. I'm so proud of EPU. C of S is guilty of it. Free church is guilty of it. I don't know about IPC.

I can never understand a church that calls a minister or sets someone apart to be an elder and hasn't spent time getting to know their wives.
In a local congregation it's maybe a little bit different. You see people face to face day and day out. hopefully that counts. But churches will call men and I think you've never spent time with his wife. Oh, we're not calling his wife. You're calling a union, not a partnership. Of course you're not calling his wife, but they're together. And her life will immeasurably bless his ministry or blight it.
I want to leave time for questions. Just let me as quickly mention the last two or three church leaders are to be examples to the flock. 1 Peter 5 3 And it's significant that in the context Paul is talking about humility.
[36:35] And humility is the disposition of honest recognition. Humility isn't a natural character trait. Humility is acknowledging God to be who he is and acknowledging me to be who I am.

Humility puts God where he belongs and puts self where it belongs. And we have to model that to the flock. And then finally, let me go back to where actually I began.
Why did God give the church elders and deacons? Well, we highlighted Timothy chapter 1 verse 5. This is why I left you in preach so that you might put what remained into order and appoint elders to the child. But there is a deeper given to that.
God gives the church elders and deacons to make the church a bride fit for its king. To make the church beautiful.
[37:47] The church isn't an end in itself. Our professed aim in all we do in public worship, in all we're about as a church, should be the glory of our God and Saviour.

And that's why it's such a weighty thing to set someone apart to be an elder or a deacon.
You're saying we're setting you apart to be a beautifier of the bride. We're setting you apart to be someone we believe will help us to rise to our calling to be a bride for its king.
So we've just skated over what Paul is. It's absolutely striking, isn't it?
I'll just close with this. It's striking that he should mention these 15 characteristics and Titus has another couple. And you've little doubt as to what he's saying to the bride.
[39:05] Character gives credibility. Character matters. And that's why he says to men who are married and who have children, marriage isn't a sine qua non.

if he's not ruling, loving, leading, shepherding his own little flock, do you think he's fit to shepherd God's flock?
Go and get a life. No. God will test us in the microcosmic that he might equip us for the microcosmic.

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And I actually think myself, you could disagree, that's absolutely fine. In Titus 1, I think Paul is saying the children should be believers.
They should profess the faith. There's dispute and debate over that, I understand that. But whatever else, look at how a man treats his wife.
[40:14] I love hearing men speak well of their wife. And I love them administering discipline to their children when needed, gently, but firmly.

I saw a boy talking recently and they were laughing and guffawing. I said, what are you laughing about? Oh, they said, we just were remembering when we were children how you would discipline us.
I said, oh. They said, Dad, did you ever realise that we didn't know what retributive judgment meant? We didn't know it was sore.
Because I would say to them, boys, retributive judgment. They said, we hadn't a clue. But we did know it was sore.
So, thank you for your patience. I think there is some time for questions. I'm sure there will be others who can respond to the questions.
[41:19] I might deflect any questions I'm given and say, James can answer that or Simon or David or whoever. Thank you. Okay, well, yes, any questions?

Thank you so much, Ian. Questions on anything we've heard this morning? You might say that the list of qualifications are really what we tend to see in any Christian.
What's the significance of that? Yeah, I meant to actually say that. Excellent. An elder or a deacon, they're not super people.
They are ordinary Christians whose lives betray extraordinary grace. And I think what Paul is saying is that these qualities which God looks for in every believer will be markedly seen, and I think that's the word I want to use, they will be markedly seen in the servant heartedness of those that God is raising up and bringing to the attention of the church.
But it's absolutely imperative, which is why I've tried to stress that we're sheep before we're shepherds. And it's not that 12 of these characteristics are for everyone and an extra three.
[42:56] The only one I think that is somewhat unique, and I use the word somewhat or qualified, is able to teach.

All elders should be able to teach either one-to-one, some are very gifted at that, or in groups, or in home groups, or in preaching, or in lunchtime meetings, all elders should be able to teach.
In that context, I think that distinguishes elders, but in another sense, of course, all Christians should be able to give a reason for the hope that's within them, and that's a teaching, confessional, evangelistic ministry.
So, yeah, thank you. Thank you.
pastoral visitation. About 15 years ago, I spoke at a Banner of Truth ministers conference.
[44:21] He and Murray said speak about pastoral visitation. Must have been more than 15. I was still in the Church of Scotland, so it would be about 18 years ago. And I began by saying, I visit about 16 families in a week, and the gasps.

And I thought, oh, I said, I visit less than any other minister I know. The expectation in the Church of Scotland was you had one service on Sunday, and you would spend four afternoons and four evenings a week as a minister.
Elders would visit four times a year in the district. church. So I wasn't doing anything, you know, super spiritual, at least 300.
But I then went on to say that God gives us a pattern, I think, in Acts 20, 20, when Paul preaches publicly and from house to house.
And Calvin in his commentary says, they be no true Christians who do not welcome their pastors into their homes. And the Westminster Director of Public Worship, it's a great document, talks about elders visiting to seek the fruit of the word as the people have listened to it.
[45:50] Now I think pastoral visitation is various. Some people are high maintenance in a church, some people are low maintenance. Paul mentioned two older sisters, both 90 and 91 now, 89 and 90 in Cambridge.

They've never had a negative thing to say about me in 17 years. They love coming. If I came once a year to visit them, that would be wonderful.

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I used to go every month. But I came, you know, they're so low maintenance, so low maintenance. That wasn't true for everyone in Cambridge Church.
There were some I thought, I've got to visit you regularly. Some people love you to come and open the scriptures. Some people love you to come and just tell you about their day.
You become pastorally send, you develop antennae. I would read and pray in every home, but for some visits I might not get beyond Celtic smashed Rangers last week.
[46:55] Scotland lost again to Wales at rugby. That's always the point being that life, that people's lives matter in all their compartments.

And I've always wanted people to know that I'm interested in whether they're doing the ironing or not. I can't stand ironing. I'd do anything rather. I'm a shirt. I'd rather write a treatise on the offer ad extra trinitatis than ironing a shirt.
But I'm interested in that because that's what people do. What are you up to today? I'm two moser. One couple came to church for the first time doing converted. people and I'd seen them before. I'd asked them where they were from and asked them a few questions. As I walked away for the service, the fellow turned to somebody and said, who is that musicism?
He said, that was the minister. The minister? I thought he was going to ask me for my bank account number. I think people need to know that they matter for who they are.
[48:14] They matter to God for what they are. The details of their life are not insignificant. I would always hope, you know, we might get, you know, someone might say to me, what's the extra Calvinist vacuum or something like that.

But developing relationships, people hear you differently through a different psychological grid when they know you're interested in them.
The two things that have made people listen to me better are one, that I would visit regularly, and two, that I'm married to the woman that I'm married to.
She, I know, helps people to listen to me better than they would otherwise. So I would visit every week, well in New Mills, four aftermoons and three evenings would be visiting, and Cambridge was a bit different, I had to, I never made an appointment, I made one appointment 20 years in New Mills, I just turned up, that was expected, can't do that in the South East.
Often, my son David's not home till, well he's moved back to London, till maybe 9.30 at night. so in Cambridge, I'd visit three afternoons and two evenings, but make appointments.
[49:39] Can I ask on the tension then between sometimes responsibilities in church and your responsibilities to family, when there's tensions with your children, with your wife, if you're not married, when you've got responsibilities at work or with other relatives, how can we go about balancing that or how do we go about thinking in primary?

No idea. I have a woman's wife, who missed me every time I went out and who never begrudged me once going out.
I had that vast privilege, which probably to my shame, I abused not intentionally.
I remember about maybe ten years ago, Fiona knows Joan very well, probably better than Fiona and Beth both know Joan very well, but ten years ago, this is so unlike my Joan, she said to me one day, would you mind if we didn't have visitors for a couple of weeks?
I just felt like crying. I thought we would always have people in the house as well, I thought, you've been neglecting your wife, and so for two or three weeks we didn't have any visitors, and she just was so grateful.
[51:17] You have to know your own wife, not just listen to her words, but sense the vibes that come out of her life.

She says, oh, I'm happy that you go out. yeah, that's good, but try to see behind the words, because, you know, some wives are, they love the Lord, they want you to be your best for the Lord, but they ache that you just maybe will sit with them, spend the night holding hands, watching the West Wing or something.
My wife watched the West Wing about seven times, and she still hasn't a clue what's going on. Who's that again? That's why we never go to the cinema.
It's a huge question. Just pray the Lord would make you sensitive. Some of us are more sensitive naturally than others. Temperament comes into that, and for those of us who are maybe more outgoing, more go ahead, we need other brothers.

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sisters, too, to say, maybe you need to spend a bit more time at home. That can be hard to hear, but necessary.
[52:42] So, sorry, no silver bullet, but pray that you'll not neglect your wife or children, because he who does that is worse than an infidel. So, the Bible. Okay, last chance.

very good, very good.
I'm persuaded myself, and almost every expositor would be persuaded that when Paul says, husband of one wife, he's not saying that people who are not married shouldn't have positions of responsibility.
otherwise, the Lord Jesus Christ and Paul himself would be disqualified. I think one of the most moving sites in a church, and I'm thinking of one of the people I know very well, one of those moving sites is seeing single people, single folk who are not married, open their homes and exercise a wonderful ministry of hospitality, and conversely, seeing just the younger married folk share their home with people who are not married.
And it's that reciprocity, I think, that adorns the life of a church. But when people are single, they have maybe fewer opportunities, but they are to use those opportunities not to dwell, on their singleness that may change, it may not, God may have granted them the grace of singleness, but to ask, and I think it's great when people go to their elders and say, how can I better serve the church?
[55:00] And I think the most under valued gift is the gift of willingness. The thing's worth doing, it's worth doing badly.

Um... Um... Um... Thank you.

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