

CAN A MAN BE AN ELDER IF HE IS SINGLE?

NUMBER 198

October 2025

A Biblical Eldership Resources article follows this article which indicates that being married is not a requirement for being an Elder.

The Bible teaches the following specific commands:

“An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife,” NASV 1 Tim. 3:2

“namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe” NASV Titus 1:6

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GOD AS PARENT

“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.” (Gal. 3:26 NIV)

What kind of parent is God our Father?

Throughout the entire Bible we never escape the label of children which means we are always in need of guidance and instruction. Most parents want their children to be just like themselves. God has the same goal, he wants his children to have a godly character. Could we assume that he parents just like he told others to parent?

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CELEBRATE GRACE

What can bring people to their knees as they celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ but the realization of God’s infinite, incomprehensible grace poured out on the Human race. We had drifted so far from God that even His chosen people had been lost to a pagan world, powerless and undeserving elite remaining in darkness. The least of these, lowest and most humble were the first to see the grace of God in the face of the infant Jesus Christ: “The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told them” Luke 2:20.

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CAN A MAN BE AN ELDER IF HE IS SINGLE?, P. 2

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Biblical Eldership Resources teaches:

“If Paul required elders and deacons to be married, he would have contradicted his own teaching in 1 Corinthians 7, where he outlined the distinct advantages of singleness for serving the Lord. He even encouraged singleness for the purpose of more effective, undivided service to Christ (1 Cor. 7:32–35; cf. Matt. 19:12)”

The verses they reference follow:

1 Cor. 7:32-35 But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; 33 but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. 35 This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.

Matthew 19:12 “For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for

the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it.” (NASV)

SPECIFIC COMMANDS VS OPTIONAL OR PARTIAL INSTRUCTIONS

We would suggest that 1 Tim. 3:2 and Titus 1:6 are specific commands. 1 Tim. 3:2 includes the requirement statement “must” and Titus 1:6 includes the requirement statement “if” to be a Elder.

1 Cor. 7:32-35 and Matthew 19:12 are not specific commands, but are optional instructions. 1 Cor. 7:32-35 teaches you may or may not choose to be married whenever it is appropriate. Matthew 19:12 teaches you may or may not choose to be a eunuch.

Partial instructions are like telling someone to start a car today by telling them to push the start button. That is true, but your car will not start unless you press the brake pedal also.

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To Which Church Do YOU Belong?

DATE	PLACE	BUILDER	NAME
33 A.D.	Jerusalem	Jesus Christ	Church of Christ
606 A.D.	Rome	Boniface III	Roman Catholic
1520 A.D.	Germany	Martin Luther	Lutheran
1534 A.D.	England	Henry VIII	Episcopalian
1536 A.D.	Switzerland	John Calvin	Presbyterian
1550 A.D.	Holland	Robert Brown	Congregational
1607 A.D.	England	John Smyth	Baptist
1739 A.D.	America	John Wesley	Methodist
1830 A.D.	America	Joseph Smith	Mormon
1830 A.D.	America	William Miller	7th Day Adventist
1866 A.D.	America	Mary Baker Eddy	Christian Science
1872 A.D.	America	Charles Russell	Jehovah Witnesses
1871 A.D.	America	Stephen Munford	Church of God

CAN A MAN BE AN ELDER IF HE IS SINGLE?, P. 3

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DIRECTION OF INTERPRETATION

What is at stake here might be called direction of interpretation. If there is a better term for this, I cannot locate it.

You can start with optional or partial instructions and then apply specific commands, or start with specific commands and then apply optional or partial instructions. The outcome of these two methods can be very different.

If you start with the specific command that “elders must be the husband of one wife” and then look at the benefits of optional or partial instructions of being unmarried you still end up with married elders.

If you start with the optional or partial instructions of being unmarried and conclude that being unmarried is a deciding criteria, and then go to the specific command that “elders must be the husband of one wife”, you have a serious conflict.

If you start with the optional or partial instructions of being a eunuch and conclude that being eunuch is a deciding criteria and then go to the specific command that “elders must be the husband of one wife”, you can make that work. However, you still have married elders.

The idea of starting with optional or partial instructions and then applying specific commands is filled with potential for abuse. You can take any of the four following verses to teach that baptism is not essential as examples of partial instructions:

Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own do-

ing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast".

Romans 3:28: "For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law".

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life".

Acts 16:31: The apostles tell the jailer, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved".

The use of those partial instructions only ignores the more specific instructions in Acts 2:38 where Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

That being said, it is our conclusion that

It is appropriate to start with specific commands and then apply optional or partial instructions, and

An elder must have a wife to be scripturally qualified.

This article has been sent to Biblical Eldership Resources at admin@biblicaleldership.com.

We will publish any responses from them or anyone else.

Benton F. Baugh, PhD. P.E.

The Biblical Eldership article starts on the next page.

CAN A MAN BE AN ELDER IF HE IS SINGLE?, P. 4

Answering Questions About Eldership

This Week's Question:

"Can a Man Be an Elder If He is Single or Has No Kids?"

For the next couple of weeks, we're inviting you to share your questions with us. Our core team of experienced elders—both current and former—will prayerfully work to answer the questions that matter most to you, and we will share these answers on our blog (while keeping your name and any identifying details private). We hope this will be a blessing to your ministry.

Here's this week's question:

I appreciate and agree with your response to the question in the previous blog about an elder's wife being a believer. Does it also follow, then, that an elder must be married? Must he have children? I believe the answer to that is yes on both counts. His children can be adults (who grew up and moved out), but he had to have had children. Your thoughts?

Alexander Strauch answers this question in *Biblical Eldership: Restoring the Eldership to Its Rightful Place in the Local Church*:

Some people insist that an elder must be a married man because Scripture says an elder must be "the husband of one wife." But this is not an interpretation required by the text.

Paul didn't say, "an elder must be a married man."

He says an elder must be a one-wife kind of man.

This qualification applies only to married men: it

requires that the husband's relationship with his wife be "above reproach," both before the believing congregation and the unbelieving world. As previously stated, the emphasis is on the elder's character as it relates to his marriage. If an elder is not married, this qualification does not apply.

If Paul required elders and deacons to be married, he would have contradicted his own teaching in 1 Corinthians 7, where he outlined the distinct advantages of singleness for serving the Lord. He even encouraged singleness for the purpose of more effective, undivided service to Christ (1 Cor. 7:32–35; cf. Matt. 19:12).

But if an elder or deacon is required to be married, then Paul would have qualified his statements in 1 Corinthians 7 about the advantages of singleness for serving the Lord, because singleness would turn out to be a disadvantage and disqualifier for any unmarried man aspiring to be an elder or deacon.

We conclude that Paul does not make marriage (or having children) a requirement for eldership or deaconship. Based on the teaching of 1 Corinthians 7, we can encourage single men, if they are led by the Spirit, to pursue pastoral leadership in the church.

Obviously, a single man must also be above reproach in his relationships with women. He must not be flirtatious, lead women on emotionally, or engage in any kind of inappropriate relationship. To Timothy, who was a single man, Paul tells him to treat "younger women as sisters, in all purity" (1 Tim. 5:2). (*Biblical Eldership*, 138-139, emphasis added)

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CAN A MAN BE AN ELDER IF HE IS SINGLE?, P. 5

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In his article "Must an Elder be Married?" on BiblicalEldership.com, Bob Deffinbaugh echoes Alexander's view that "the husband of one wife" is better translated as "a one-woman man," which is a simple rendering of the Greek text. Bob points out that this is essentially a way of saying an elder must exhibit sexual purity, seeing that it is the only phrase within the the elder qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 that explicitly addresses a man's sexual conduct. Given the prevalence and destructiveness of sexual immorality in the church throughout history and today, as well as the fact that false teachers are often characterized by sexual sin, we would certainly expect the elder qualifications to address it—and Bob believes that is why the "one-woman man" phrase is there.

Additionally, Bob notes that having but one wife does not truly reveal the character of a man. Very immoral men have had but one wife, yet they may be flirtatious or adulterers. This is actually a rather easy standard to meet, and does not prove anything about one's character.

Bob agrees with Alexander Strauch's point above regarding 1 Corinthians 7. Bob writes that **"while marriage and children are certainly gifts from God, there were times when remaining single was the high road (and not marriage) . . . Would you not have to say that at least at certain times, the high road for a man or woman would be to remain single? So why would a man be prohibited from serving as an elder if he chose to remain single, to serve God with undistracted devotion?** Incidentally, single men would include Jesus, Paul and Barnabas (1 Cor. 9:1-6), and surely a number of others, like Timothy and perhaps Titus. Would it not have been somewhat strange for Timothy or Titus to appoint elders in the churches when they would be disqualified, simply for being single? And what of Paul and Barnabas who were called apostles?"

The more literal and natural rendering, "a one-woman man," is a far higher standard that encompasses the whole spectrum of potential sexual immorality and is far more pertinent to an elder's character than merely remaining married to one wife:

A man cannot commit adultery and be a "one-woman man."

A man cannot lust after other women and flirt with them and be a "one-woman man."

You can read the entirety of Bob's response in the article "Must an Elder be Married?" on BiblicalEldership.com.

admin@biblicaleldership.com

10 Places you should stay silent at all cost:

1. Be silent if you don't know the full story.
2. Be silent if you feel unable to control your emotions.
3. Be silent in the the heat of anger.
4. Be silent if your words can destroy an amazing friendship or relationship.
5. Be silent if you are unsure about the topic or lack knowledge.
6. Be silent when someone is sharing their struggles and vulnerability.
7. Be silent if you can't talk without yelling.
8. Be silent if your silence can save your bonds.
9. Be silent if speaking will only serve to boost your ego or seek validation.
10. Be silent if your words can betray someone's trust.

Continued from page 1

GOD AS PARENT

Instruction in godliness: God instructed his children to commit themselves wholeheartedly to his words. "Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up." (Deut. 11:18, 19 NLT) This includes teaching children to obey their parents. Obedience is the foundation for our relationship with our heavenly Father.

A daily dose of discipline: When we love our children we discipline them. Discipline is providing instruction and guidance until the child develops self discipline. "Those who spare the rod of discipline hate their children. Those who love their children care enough to discipline them." (Proverbs 13:24 NLT) How does God handle this as a parent? "For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child." (Heb. 12:6f NLT)

The goal of a parent: God has such high aspirations for his children. He asks that we be holy as he is holy, love as he loves and grow in knowledge and wisdom. Our parent wants us to develop our skills so we can serve others. It will take a lifetime to become everything our parent, God, wants us to be. Make it your goal to, "Find out what pleases the Lord." (Eph. 5:10 NIV)

Elizabeth Brown, Texarkana, TX

Continued from page 1

CELEBRATE GRACE

What can bring people to their knees as they celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ but the realization of God's infinite, incomprehensible grace poured out on the Human race. We had drifted so far from God that even His chosen people had been lost to a pagan world, powerless and undeserving elite remaining in darkness. The least of these, lowest and most humble were the first to see the grace of God in the face of the infant Jesus Christ: "The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, as it was told them" Luke 2:20.

Jesus required His Father's protection by living in anonymity in a foreign land during early childhood, but would return under grace to begin His mission by refreshing the focus on the work of the Father as He began to discuss the Scriptures with teachers in the temple at the age of twelve.

Even today, the message of Christmas is often overshadowed by ancient pagan customs until unveiled by those under the grace of God. Praise be to God for His grace to reveal the face of Jesus through His word. As people come to the House of the Lord today, let us worship Him in spirit and truth with all our heart, mind and soul, in gratitude for His love, mercy and grace that endures forever: "'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit' says the Lord of hosts" Zechariah 4:6. "Babylon the great is fallen" Revelation 18:2.

Let us join in prayer: "Lord, help me to do my work each day with a sense of special blessing and renewal, because of Christmas! In Jesus' Name. Amen."

Larry S. Grubbs, Harrison, Ohio

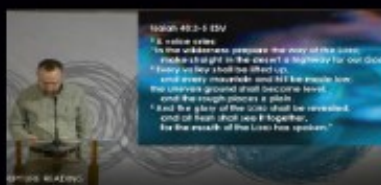


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IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION #152: BIOFLUORESCENT

The photograph of the decorated woman shows painting which does not show up in natural light but shows up like this in black light.

The biofluorescent paint absorbs short UV wavelengths (200–400 nm) of light and re-emits longer wavelength visible light (500–600 nm).

The duckbill platypus is a strange looking animal from Australia and Tasmania with a strange set of characteristics. It has a duck-like bill, webbed feet, a flat tail like a beaver, has reptile like venom, lays eggs, and has a sense of electrolocation. Most animals which



The complexity of biofluorescence is not something a platypus could accidentally develop. I would tell you how complex that would be, but as near as I can tell science today does not know how it works.

That the characteristic is spread across an eclectic array of animals says that it is not a characteristic spread by inheritance or evolution.

It had to be created multiple times. It is a characteristic that a designer would use repeatedly in the creation process. That this ability is used repeatedly in non-related animals is not a disproof of God, It is a proof of God.

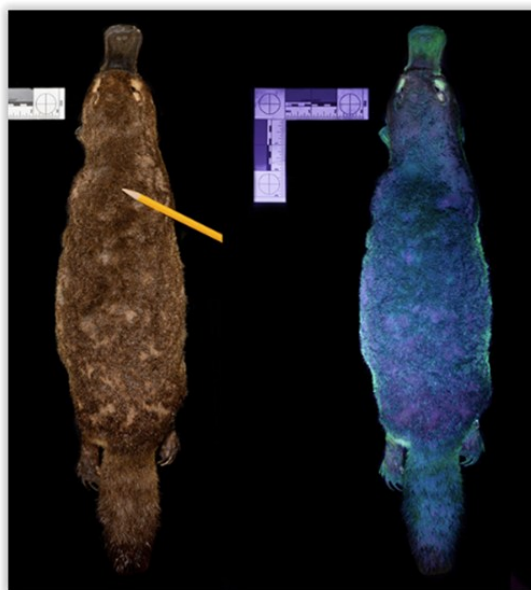


have such a strange collection of parts are mythical and are called a chimera. A male grows up to 25" long and weights up to 6.6 lbs.

The platypus, which appear uniformly brown under visible light, are green to cyan under UV light. The fur of the platypus was biofluorescent: absorbing short UV wavelengths (200–400 nm) and re-emitting visible light (500–600 nm).

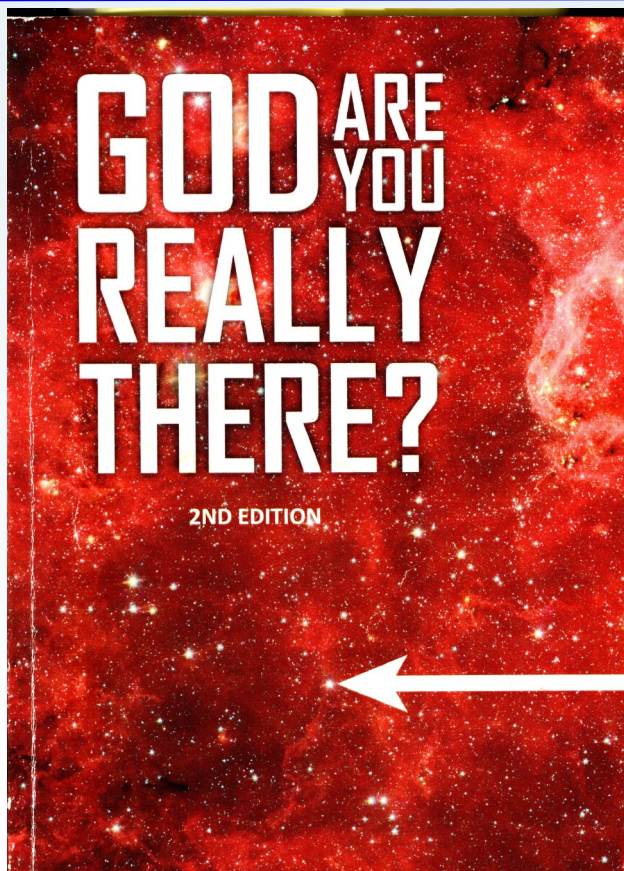
Biofluorescence has also been observed in flying squirrels, opossums, scorpions, Tasmanian devils, polar bears, and squid, among other things.

Scientists today do not know why the platypus has biofluorescence. That would mean that it is not a survival of the fittest solution to some problem or it would have been identified.

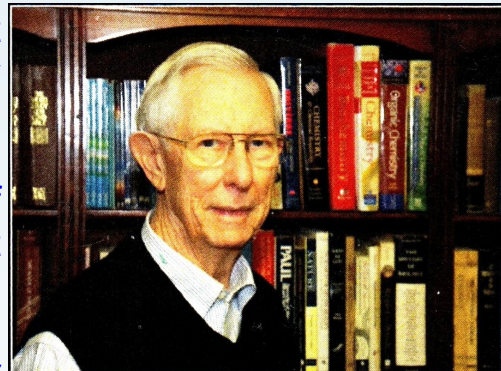


Platypus colors in natural and black light.

Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E.
From Creation.com and Wikipedia



An excellent book to read by Don England. Don is an Emeritus Professor of Chemistry at Harding University where he has taught for 45 years.



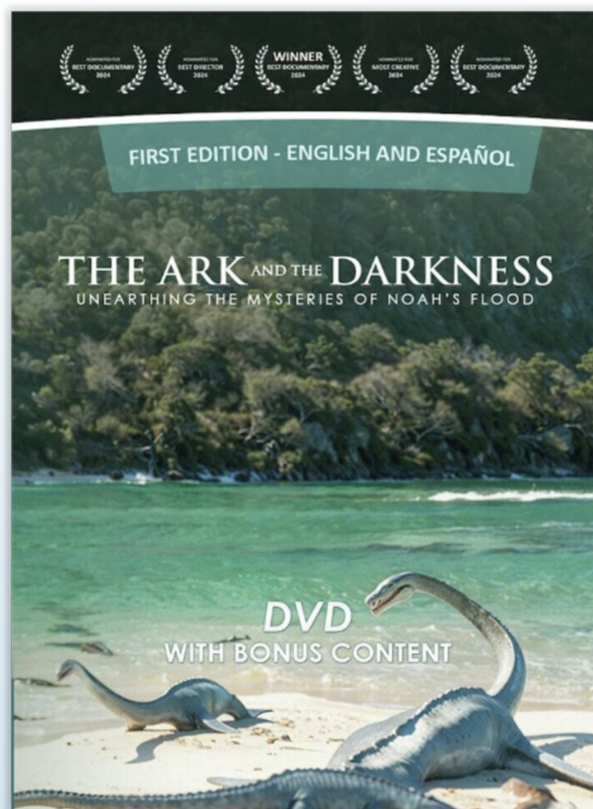
My recommendation is that I bought a copy for each of my children and grandchildren. Don eloquently answers a lot of the questions about God which they will have from time to time. Yours children and grandchildren will also have questions. **As a further recommendation, I now have also bought Christmas books for my siblings, nieces, and nephews. It is well received by all. My sister is now using it to teach a ladies class.** Benton Baugh

Available on Amazon.

THE ARK AND THE DARKNESS

A friend loaned this DVD to me. After watching it twice, I bought my own copy to loan to my kids and grandkids.

Several speakers give fresh insights into the nature of the Ark and the flood which you will find intriguing. In addition to an excellent presentation, it provides many facts and figures which will be interesting to you. This should be shown in every high school class, and adult classes as well.



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Gerry Taylor, Executive Vice President, Prosperity Bank



Bob directs the Sunset Academy of Leadership Training. He is a coach, consultant, and full-time speaker, conducting workshops in leadership development. He is dedicated to helping leaders implement positive, transformational change and creating a vision to prepare the next generation of leaders. He lives in Virginia Beach, VA and holds a Doctorate in Intercultural Studies with an emphasis in adult leadership development from the Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA.



ZONE LEADER
7 Tactics for Leading in the Zones

ZONE LEADER: 7 Tactics for Leading in the Zones

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ZONE LEADER

7 Tactics for Leading in the Zones

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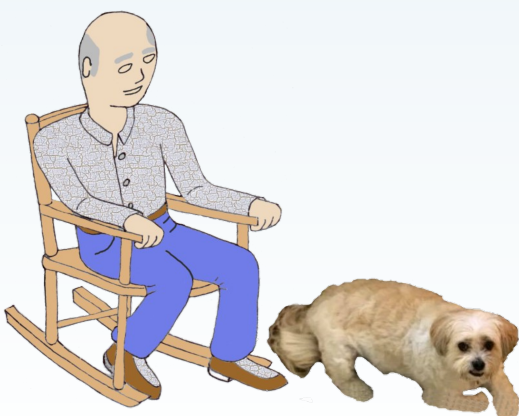
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GLOSSARY OF ENGINEERING TERMS:

PERCUSSIVE MAINTENANCE

Hit it with a hammer

HIGH IMPEDENCE AIR GAP

It's not plugged in

CYCLE POWER TO THE PANEL

Turn off then turn on again

THERMALLY RECONFIGURED

It melted

KINETIC DISASSEMBLY

It blew up

Nancy Habermacher

10h · 🗨️

4 generation fade

1)parents don't make church a high
priority for their kids

2)kids grow up & make it less of a
priority for their kids

3)those kids grow up & make it no
priority for their kids

4)those kids grow up w/ no concept of
God

priorities today, impact generations!

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