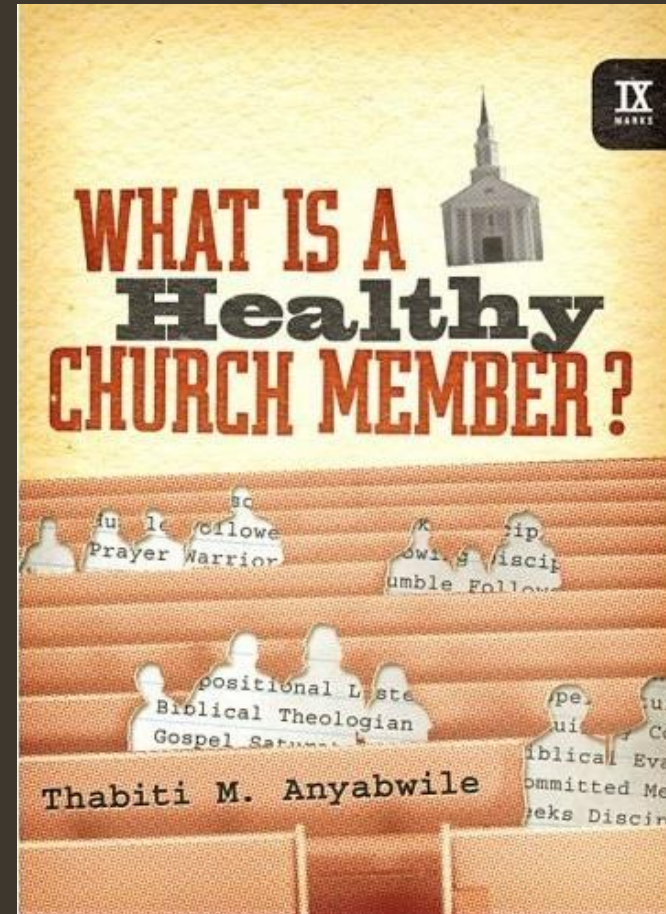
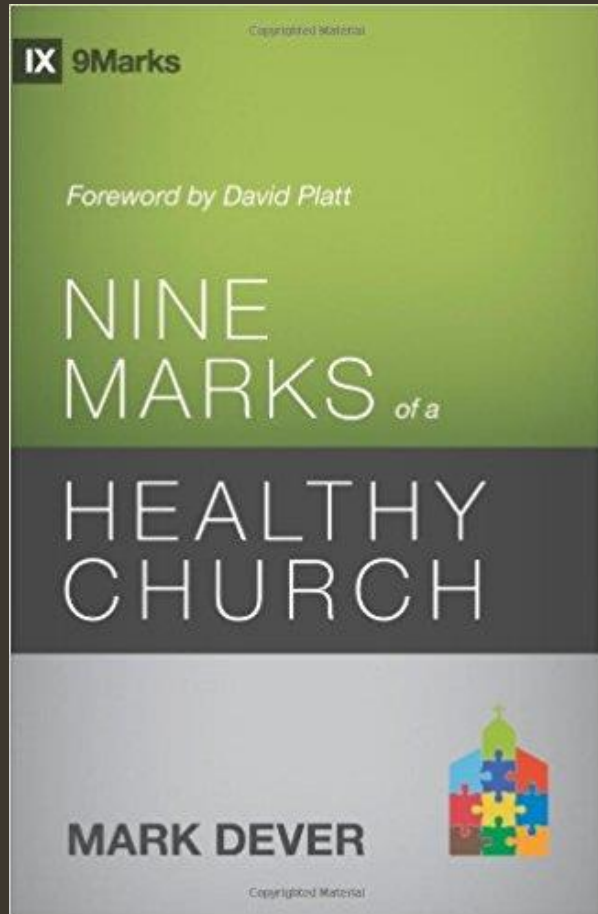


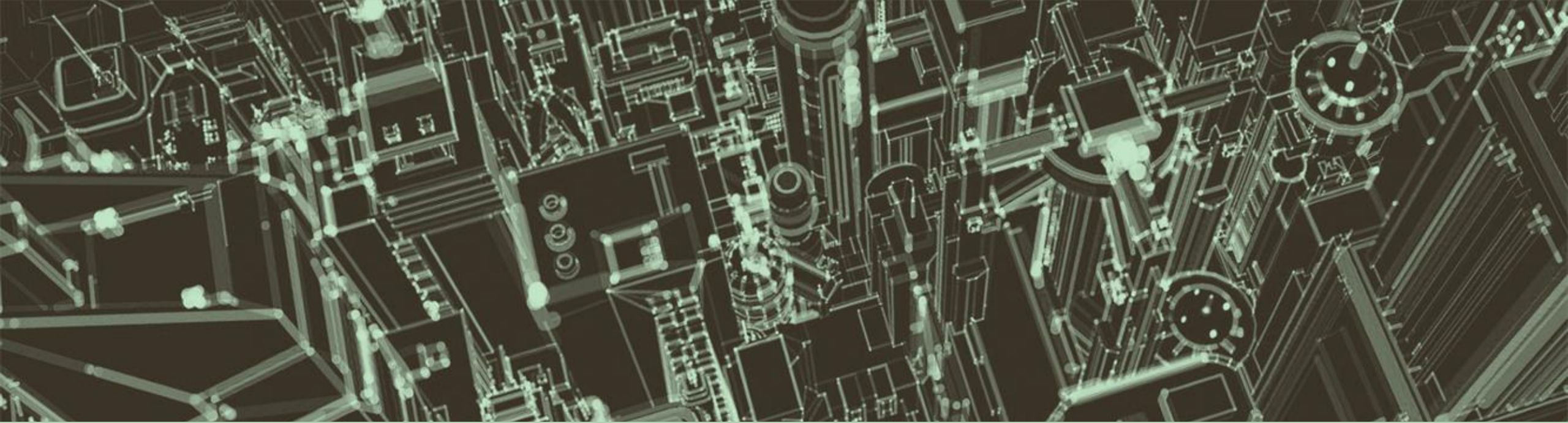
What Is A Healthy Church? Part 5

CITY SESSIONS



SOURCE MATERIAL





9. Concern for Discipleship & Growth



Concern for Discipleship & Growth

- “It is impossible to separate the health of a local church from the health of its members. And it’s impossible to divide the well-being of a church member from his or her spiritual growth and discipleship.”
- What happens if we are not growing?
 - Sometimes, we do, as Christians, hit a temporary rut or plateau.
 - BUT, there is the possibility of a prolonged period of no perceived growth. This should be alarming!
 - We must be open to the Spirit’s conviction and committed to a church of believers who can spur us along.

Concern for Discipleship & Growth

- One might argue that such a strong concern for spiritual growth is a result of progress-driven, results-based American values. However, there is a strong precedent in Scripture for spiritual growth:
 - Genesis 1:22, 28, 9:1
 - Jeremiah 29:6
 - Psalm 92:12-13
 - Proverbs 24:5, 13:20
 - Matthew 13:32
 - Acts 6:1, 7, 12:24, 13:49, 19:20
 - Ephesians 4:15-16
 - Hebrews 6:1, 5:11-13
 - Philippians 3:12-15
 - 2 Peter 3:18

Concern for Discipleship & Growth

Problems in our thinking about growth (Luke 18:9-14):

- The performance trap: thinking spiritual growth and discipleship look like good performance and success
- Judging by the wrong standards: focusing on others in an attempt to justify ourselves before God. This will delude us into thinking we are better than we are.
- Depending on personal strength or effort in spiritual growth: self-effort is not the source of true spiritual growth!

Concern for Discipleship & Growth

- Ultimately, God brings the growth: 2 Thess. 1:3, 1 Thess. 3:11-13, Col. 1:10, 2:19, 1 Cor. 3:6-7, Mark 4:27
- This does not mean we have no part in our growth.
 - We are commanded to grow and cultivate maturity: 2 Peter 1:5-8, 3:18
- It does mean that as we seek to grow, we must rely fully on the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Concern for Discipleship & Growth

What does our spiritual growth look like?

- “Working to promote Christian discipleship and growth is working to bring glory not to ourselves but to God. This is how God will make himself known in the world.”
- There are several passages of Scripture that give us an idea:
 - Galatians 5:22-25 – The Fruit of the Spirit
 - 2 Peter 3:18 – “grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord...”
 - Ephesians 4:11-13 – “for building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Concern for Discipleship & Growth

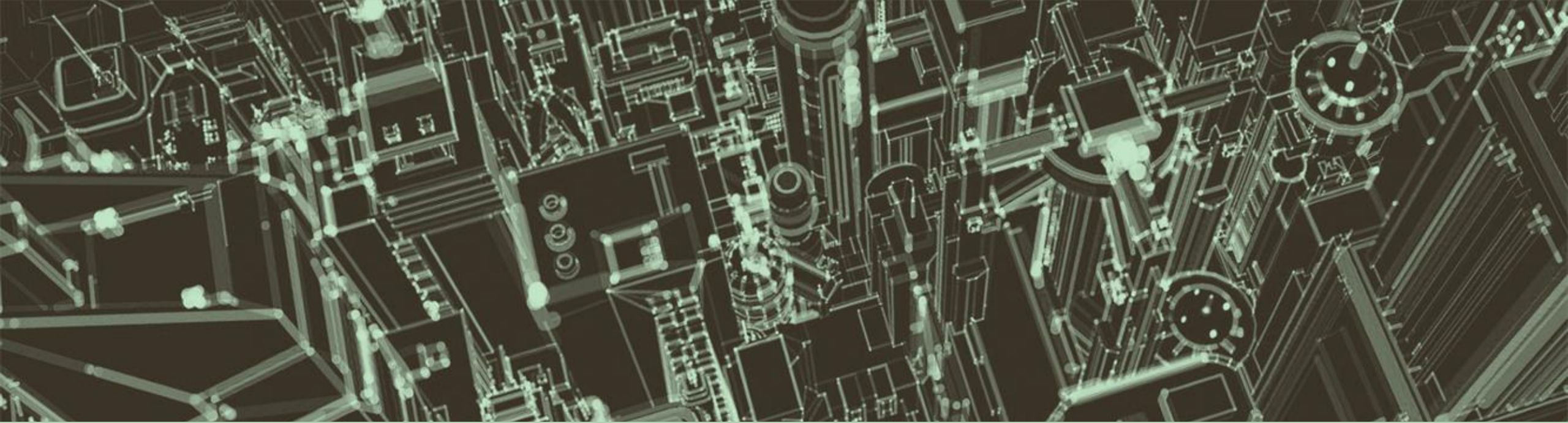
What does our spiritual growth look like?

- We can sum all these up with the term “godliness” or “holiness.”
- “A growing church member is someone who looks more and more like Jesus in attitude of heart, thought, speech, and action.”
- To do this we must sit under God’s Word and pray for the Holy Spirit to work.
- “...spiritual growth indicates life. Things that are truly alive, grow.”

Concern for Discipleship & Growth

How can we grow to be like Jesus?

- Abide in Christ!: John 15:5-8
- Use the Ordinary Means of Grace: study of the Word, participation in the ordinances (baptism, communion), and prayer
- Participate in the Local Church: Heb. 10:25, Eph. 4:11-16
- Look to Jesus' Coming: Matt. 25-26, Titus 2:13-14, 1 John 3:2-3



10. Biblical Church Leadership



Biblical Church Leadership

Who leads in the church?

- The Congregation & Leadership
 - Several passages suggest that the congregation of believers itself has authoritative power in things such as church discipline (Matt. 18:15-17, 1 Cor. 5:4-5), selection of its leaders (Acts 6:2-5), and even for the teaching they heard (Galatians 1:6-9)
 - While God certainly puts people with certain giftings over a local church, we must recognize the great authority and responsibility given to the congregation itself in Scripture.

Biblical Church Leadership

Who leads in the church?

- Elders
 - The 2 most common NT names for this office are *episcopos* (overseer) and *presbuteros* (elder).
 - When the NT speaks of elders in the local church, it clearly models a plurality of elders: Acts 14:23, 16:4, 20:17, 21:18, Titus 1:5, James 5:14
 - The main preacher/pastor is one of these elders, but distinct from them.
 - We see hints of this in several places: Acts 18:5, 1 Cor. 9:14, 1 Tim. 4:13, 5:17, Rom 10:14-15, Titus 1:5

Biblical Church Leadership

Who leads in the church?

- Elders
 - Since the church is to have a plurality of leaders, the decisions to be made for the church not requiring all members falls not just on the pastor but on the elder board.
 - How do we find leaders to be elders?
 - We pray for wisdom
 - We study God's Word, especially the qualifications found in 1 Timothy and Titus
 - We see who meets those qualifications
 - We make sure not to confuse the biblical qualifications with secular qualifications

Biblical Church Leadership

What is church leadership and gifting for?

- Any passages we read on the spiritual gifts and on church leadership show that God's intention for church leadership and gifting is always to encourage and build one another up. They are always for the benefit of *others*.
 - Romans 12:6-8, 1:11-12, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 14:26, 1 Peter 4:10
- “When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God, he is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth.” 2 Samuel 23:3-4

Biblical Church Leadership

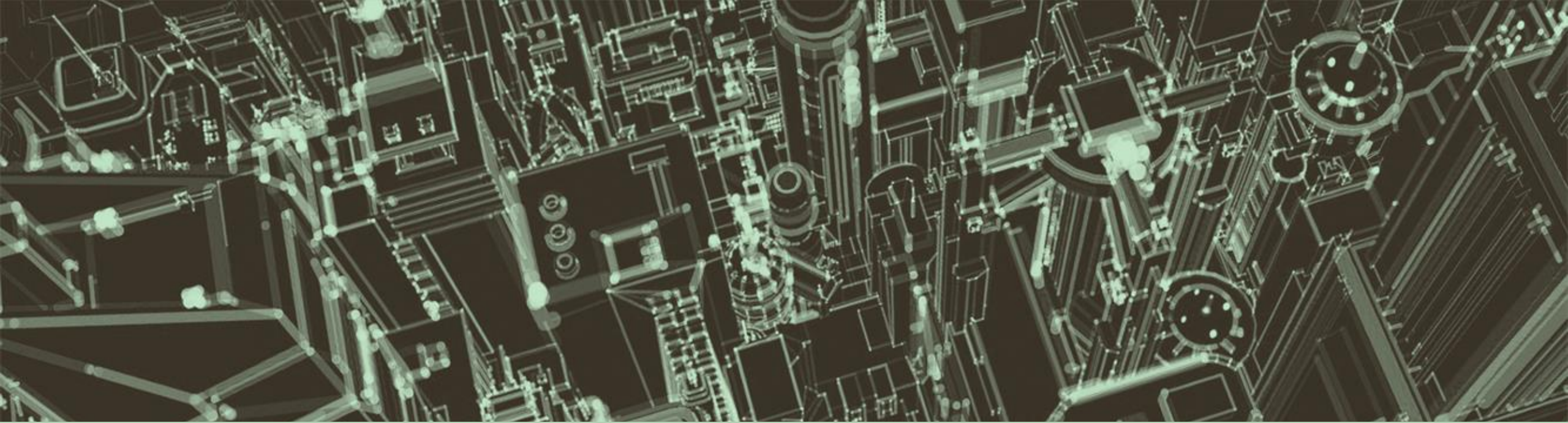
What should be our attitude toward leadership?

- 1. Honor the elders.
 - 1 Timothy 5:17-19, 2 Corinthians 1:14
- 2. Show open-hearted love to the leaders.
 - 2 Corinthians 6:11-13, 7:2-3, 8:5, 12:15, Philemon 20
- 3. Be teachable.
 - 2 Timothy 2:24-26

Biblical Church Leadership

What should be our actions toward leadership?

- Patiently participate in the selection of leaders. (Acts 6:1-6, 1 Tim. 3, 5:22a)
- Obey and submit to leaders. (Heb. 13:17)
- Follow the leaders' example. (1 Tim. 4:12, 1 Pet. 5:3, Phil. 3:17, Titus 2:7)
- Pray for leaders. (Col. 4:2-4, Eph. 6:19-20, Luke 18:1)
- Support outside ministry and interaction of leaders. (2 Cor. 9:13, 10:15-16)



QUESTIONS?

