

1 Timothy 3:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

Analysis

Not a novice (μὴ νεόφυτον, mē neophyton)—literally 'not newly planted,' a recent convert. The danger: **lest being lifted up with pride** (τυφωθεὶς, typhōtheis)—'being puffed up with conceit,' from *typhoō* (to wrap in smoke, to cloud with pride). Rapid elevation to leadership can produce spiritual intoxication.

He fall into the condemnation of the devil—not Satan's condemnation of the proud elder, but the same judgment Satan himself received. The Greek τοῦ διαβόλου (tou diabolou) is a genitive—the elder would fall into the same condemnation that befell Lucifer through pride (Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:17).

Pride is the original sin, the root of Satan's fall. New believers need time for character formation before public leadership. Spiritual maturity, not mere knowledge or gifting, qualifies one for oversight.

Historical Context

The Ephesian church faced the constant influx of new converts from paganism. Some were educated, wealthy, or socially prominent—natural candidates for leadership in Greco-Roman culture. Paul insists Christian leadership requires proven character over time. The church is not a meritocracy but a family where maturity develops through testing and discipleship.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does our culture's emphasis on youthful leadership conflict with Paul's 'not a novice' requirement?
2. What specific dangers does rapid elevation to ministry create in a person's spiritual life?
3. How long is enough time for a convert to mature before eldership consideration?

Interlinear Text

μὴ νεόφυτον ἵνα μὴ τυφωθεὶς εἰς κρίμα
Not a novice G2443 Not being lifted up with pride G5187 into the condemnation G2917

ἐμπέσῃ τοῦ διαβόλου
he fall G3588 of the devil G1228

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 6:4 (Evil): He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

1 Peter 5:5 (Parallel theme): Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

1 Peter 2:2 (Parallel theme): As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Isaiah 2:12 (Parallel theme): For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

1 Corinthians 3:1 (Parallel theme): And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

1 Corinthians 8:1 (Parallel theme): Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.

2 Corinthians 12:7 (Parallel theme): And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.