

## Paul's Epistles to Individuals

### Lesson 6 – 1 Timothy 3:1-7

#### I. Further Discussions of Roles and Responsibilities

In v. 8 of Chapter 2, Paul begins to differentiate roles and responsibilities based on gender. Discussed have been the requirements for all men to pray, women to fulfill the roles unique to them and now the man's responsibilities to lead and serve are discussed. Here the discussion centers on elders and deacons as a part of how Christians are to conduct themselves in the household of God (**3:15**).

#### II. Qualities of Elders (v. 1-7)

The work of an elder is a good (**v. 1**) and necessary (**Titus 1:5**) work and those who do it are charged with ruling or leading a local church (**1 Tim. 5:17, Heb. 13:7, 17**) without "Lording" over them (**1 Pet. 5:1-3**). Therefore, elders are to have certain proven qualities that prepare them and guide them in this fine work. These qualities are enumerated here in **1 Timothy 3** and in **Titus 1**. For ease of consideration, the qualities have been grouped together when comparable or related to each other. See the following chart:

QUALITY	1 TIMOTHY 3	TITUS 1
A. DESIRE	v. 1	-
B. ABOVE REPROACH/GOOD REPUTATION WITHOUT	v. 2, 7	v. 6, 7
C. HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE	v. 2	v. 6
D. FAITHFUL/WELL CONTROLLED CHILDREN	v. 4	v. 6
E. PRUDENT/RESPECTABLE/SENSIBLE	v. 2	v. 8
F. TEMPERATE/SELF-CONTROLLED	v. 2	v. 8
G. HOSPITABLE	v. 2	v. 8
H. ABLE TO TEACH/REFUTE/EXHORT/HOLD FAST TO WORD	v. 2	v. 9
I. NOT ADDICTED TO WINE	v. 3	v. 7
J. NOT PUGNACIOUS, SELF-WILLED, QUICK TEMPERED	v. 3	v. 7
K. GENTLE, UNCONTENTIOUS, JUST, LOVING WHAT IS GOOD	v. 3	v. 8
L. NO NOVICE, DEVOUT	v. 6	v. 8
M. NO LOVER OF MONEY, NOT FOND OF SORDID GAIN	v.3	v.7

#### III. Qualities Defined (Overview)

##### A. *Desire*

Although some do not consider this a qualification, it is certainly necessary to desire the work. One cannot successfully do this work if he is reluctant or hesitant to do it. It is interesting to note that the twice used word "desires" in verse 1 of the KJV is translated from two separate Greek words that are used in the original text, "Oregetai" and "epithumei" respectively. The first means "to stretch one's self out in order to touch or grasp something; to reach after or desire something". The second means "desire, craving, longing" according to Thayer, while Vine adds, "to desire earnestly, stressing the inward impulse rather than the object desired". One centers on the goal while the other centers on the desire for the goal. Men should begin early desiring and preparing for this good work. The "office of a bishop" (KJV) or "overseer" (NASB) is from the Greek "episcopos", which refers to the position held by the overseer (Gr. "episcopos"). That "position" may rightly be considered an "office" even if some resist the term.

*B. Above Reproach, Good Reputation*

“Blameless” (KJV), does not mean one who has never sinned because all have (**Rom. 3:23**) but it does indicate one who is rightly forgiven through the Blood of Christ (**1 John 1:9-2:2**). It does however indicate that the overseer has a reputation for righteousness within (brethren) and a good report from without (non-Christians) (**1 Pet. 2:18-25**).

*C. Husband of One Wife*

Long a controversy, some have argued a number of “what ifs” regarding this qualification. Undeniably, one must be a husband, therefore married according to God’s laws. Since polygamy is sin for all (**Matt. 19, Rom. 7**) it is hard to accept that this is simply a prohibition against polygamy. Not intending an in-depth study here, a man would certainly be disqualified if he had not obeyed God’s law on marriage. A safe view is currently married and only once.

*D. Faithful/Well-Controlled Children*

Children are most certainly not to be accused of riot or unruliness. The Greek word “pista” is elsewhere translated in its various forms as “believe, believers, believing, believeth”, indicating those who have obeyed the gospel (**Acts 2:44; 5:14; 1 Tim. 4:12; 5:16**). Therefore, children, regardless of age should most likely be faithful Christians.

*E, F, J & K. Prudent/Respectful/Sensible/Temporate/Self-Controlled/Not Pugnacious/Self-Willed/Gentle/Uncontentious/Just/Loving What is Good*

To be sober, vigilant and of good behavior (KJV) indicates being dignified. Rude, boorish, sour, sullen or disrespectful men should not rule over the Lord’s people. Vigilant in their efforts to guard the security of the church from within or without (**Acts 20:28-31; Heb. 13:17**).

*G. Hospitable*

“Philoxenon” is the Greek word here meaning “a liking or fondness of strangers”. This is one who sincerely cares for others, friend or stranger. Gaius was host to whole church (**Rom. 16:23; 3 John 3-8**). The Good Samaritan is worth considering (**Luke 10:25ff**).

*H & L. Apt to Teach/Refute/Exhort/Hold Fast the Word/Not a Novice/Devout*

Considering these together, an overseer must have the knowledge and maturity to hold fast to the truth (**1 Cor. 15:2; 1 Thes. 5:21; 2 Thes. 2:15; Acts 20:28-31; Heb. 13:17**) so as to defend the church against apostasy.

*I. Not Addicted to Wine*

Some have tried to use this an excuse to justify moderate drinking of alcoholic beverages in the modern world. This position ignores the fact that in ancient times, fermented and unfermented “fruit of the vine” was called wine. One cannot be addicted to unfermented wine so obviously this is referring to fermented wine. Just as the prohibition against being “slaves of sin” (**Rom. 6:6**) is not license to participate in moderate sin, this prohibition does not authorize moderate use of Wine. Paul said he would not be mastered by anything (**1 Cor. 6:12**). One who refuses to give up the “moderate” use of alcohol may not be a drunkard but he is enslaved by his pride. An elder cannot use alcoholic beverages to any degree and lead God’s people any more than any Christian can use alcohol and expect to have a Godly influence on others.

*M. No Lover of Money/Not Fond of Sordid Gain*

Covetousness has no place in this service. An overseer cannot view this role as an opportunity for personal benefit. Considering that some elders may be financially supported in the role (**1 Tim. 5:17-18**), this command is fitting. Simon thought the gifts of the Holy Spirit would be personally beneficial to him (**Acts 8:9-24**) and Peter told him his heart was “not right before God” and he was instructed to repent of his “wickedness”. Anyone who has served as an elder knows it is a work of service and it is not physically beneficial. It is however a great spiritual blessing to do the work which the Holy Spirit said served to “set in order” what remained (**Tit. 1:5**).