

Date: Wednesday, January 27, 2021 Scripture: 1 Timothy 3

Transcript

Alright, 1 Timothy chapter 3.

I looked through job descriptions online for senior pastor jobs today, not because I'm looking for a senior pastor position. I'm here. I'm not going anywhere, but I wanted to look at some of the qualifications that people are putting online. These churches are putting online of what they're looking for in a senior pastor, and here's some of the qualifications that I found.

One of the churches said that their personal characteristics of a pastor that they're looking for would be this.

- They want a team player.
- They want dynamic preaching style.
- They want a man who demonstrates passion for reaching out to the community.
- They want a man who inspires trust and maintains confidence.
- and they want a man who demonstrates initiative and problem-solving skills required to achieve organizational goals.

Sounds good, right? Except another church:

- One who understands cross-generational leadership and relates well to all age groups.
- Possesses a good sense of humor and doesn't take himself too seriously.

This is literally, I'm word for word, what they have on job descriptions for senior pastors that they're looking for. And then I had to throw this in there because I saw this one here. And thought, wow, one of the headings was social media.

- The pastor will ensure that church's social media is up to date to promote the church in the surrounding communities. This includes posting current pictures, calendar, announcements, etc. Initial media to be addressed as the church's website and Facebook.

So that's what they want their pastor to spend this time doing. Focus on the website and focus on Facebook. And these are popular. I mean if you were to go on there, you could go on any, any job-search where churches are looking for pastoral positions. They're looking for pastors out there and you would see all of these qualifications that they're looking for, and these job descriptions, for pastors and leaders within their church.

But we want to know what does God say? Right? **What does God say about leadership in the church?** What does God have to say about those who come to pastor His church and to lead His church?

And tonight, we're going to look at the qualifications of both elders and deacons in the church. These are two offices that God has established in His church. The first office, of elder, is for men in leadership roles within the church. It's the elder, men who are leaders. And the second office we're going to see is deacons -- and those are for men who have a servant role in the church. And so, we're going to take 1 Timothy 3 and we're going to break it down into three sections here.

They're kind of lopsided because that's kind of how the text goes here, but we're going to look

1. First of all, at the **Qualifications of an Elder** In verses 1 through 7,
2. Then we're going to look at the **Qualifications of a Deacon** in verses 8 through 13,
3. And then finally we're going to look at **The Purpose of the Letter** that Paul gives in verses 14 through 16.

1. So let's look at our first qualification or a first point here. The Qualifications of an Elder.

Paul starts off with this statement about elders, in verse 1 he says *"it is a trustworthy statement. If any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do."*

Now Paul starts off here and he uses this phrase *"It is a trustworthy statement."* Basically, all Paul is saying here is this is important. This is something very important for you guys to know, to understand, for you Timothy to know about elders in a church... and he goes on and he says *"if any man aspires to the office of overseer"* -- Aspires --that means to seek to accomplish a specific goal. To aspire to, to strive for, or to desire.

And what is that position that he desires? To be an overseer, the Greek word there is episkopos, which is where you hear -- you've heard of the Episcopalian church, right? That's where they get it from, right? Episkopos -- which means an overseer or a bishop. And it emphasizes the function and the service of an elder.

Robert Thomas says this *"the office in the 1st century involved not so much honor as it did personal sacrifice and a willingness to serve in this office was a sign of dedication."* And if you talk to any elder in any church, they're going to go..."Yeah, there's a lot of time you gotta dedicate to the church." Right, elders? There's a lot of time you have to dedicate to the church, there are sacrifices that you have to make in order to serve your church. And he says any man that has, that aspires to this, he says it is a fine work that he desires to do.

Desire, to have a strong desire to do, or secure something, to long for it, McArthur says this about this phrase here a fine work he desires to do. He says *"the word desire refers to a strong inner compulsion that releases itself in an outward desire. It is not a title that is desired, but the work of ministry. The pastor is a calling to men who have a passionate desire to minister, and that's what elders are to do -- to minister in the church."*

And so he then goes on, Paul continues on and he gives Timothy the qualifications of an elder that an elder must meet in order to be appointed to the office of elder, and even the office of elder here at Faith Bible Church, every elder must meet these in order to be appointed here at Faith Bible Church.

1. **We see first of all, he says that an overseer then must be above reproach.** Above reproach. As the first word in this list of qualities, it identifies an overarching quality -- quality that defines with one word the true candidates in all spheres of his life. That the elder must be as an overarching theme here as an overarching quality. He must be above reproach in his personal life, and his family life, and his religious life, and in his business life. He must be above reproach.

The rest of the qualities that come after this are qualities that define then what it means to be above reproach. So he starts off first and he says “you must be above reproach, Elders.” Now, let me tell you what that looks like. That's what he's going to go on to do as he lists out the rest of the qualifications. This word *above reproach* simply means to be blameless. Blameless is the goal or blamelessness is the goal of Christian sanctification -- that we strive to be blameless. Now the elder is not a strange or unique or separate man. But he's one who already serves as an effective model of the Christian life, but it's not as if an elder is way up on this high level that no one else can get to because he's so far above everyone else.

No, everybody must be striving to be above reproach, right? All of us should be striving to be blameless. There is no second-class Christianity, a second track of Christianity. There's not “serious Christians” and then “non-serious Christians.” No, all of us are to be striving to be blameless Christians. We're to model Christ in our life. That's what we should be after.

#2. Then he goes on, and he continues in the qualifications and **he says qualification #2 is that he must be the husband of one wife.** That is that the elder is to emulate to the rest of the church the kind of marriage relationship that God desires. This is what God desires for marriage to be and to look like. Another way to say this is he must be the husband of one wife. Or you could say a one woman man. The elder must be a one woman man. The elder must be pure in his marriage, upholding the sanctity of marriage.

Hebrews 13:4. *“Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”* Right? Elders are to model that to the people. Husband of one wife.

#3. He's to be temperate or self-controlled.

By Paul's day, the term was used, metaphorically, to refer to one not given to intoxication in any fleshly appetites. The elder has control of his flesh. He has self-control, or constant sobriety in all bodily appetites and desires. He is a man who possesses self-control, tempers it.

4, He says, is prudent, or another way your translations might say wisdom -- must be a man of wisdom. The focus of the term is on the elder's control of his mind. He must be able to exercise control of his mind, that's in harmony with the mind of Christ. As we think, that's how Christ thinks. That's how the elder is to be. The elder must be prudent in what they are there to be sound of mind. Displaying wisdom in the accurate and balanced use of their mental abilities.

This is the kind of wisdom that's spoken of in Proverbs, right? Proverbs is full of wisdom. It's a book about wisdom and the elder is to be living out the book of Proverbs in his life, to be practicing wisdom, to be prudent.

#5 He is to be respectable. Very simply, the elder must have a lifestyle that garners respect from those who know him. Do they have respect for him? The elder must have integrity, a consistency, orderliness and character that is inherently attractive in a splintered world. People should be attracted to the elder because they look at the elder and they see “that is a respectable man.” That is someone that I respect, that I look up to because they are living in a God-honoring way and I desire to do that as well, to be respectable.

#6 They are to be hospitable. The word for this is constructed from two Greek words. The first one is the Greek word *philos*. Which means love, and the next one is *xenos*, which means strangers. So it's simply the love of strangers they're to be hospitable. Love strangers, love other people, care for them, be hospitable towards them, welcome them into their life. Have a love for strangers.

#7 They are to be able to teach. Able to teach. Now this is not required of deacons. As you went through your worksheet, that was one of your questions on there, right? What separates elders from deacons? Elders must be able to teach. Deacons are not required to be able to teach. This is the distinguishing mark between a deacon and an elder.

Now, what's interesting too is *this is the only qualification that relates to an elder's function*. This is the function of the elder. All other qualifications relate to the elder's character. It's all character traits. If you look through all of those, all has to do with their character, but this is specifically the function of an elder. Literally, it means to be skillful in teaching. From it we get the word *didactic*.

The other occurrence is in 2 Timothy 2:24, where it says *"the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome but be kind to all, able to teach..."* He must be able to teach. Titus 1:9 it says *"holding fast, the faithful Word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able to both exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."* Must be able to exhort and refute. They must be able to teach.

#8. They must not be addicted to wine. Now this is the first description in the list of what an elder *cannot* be. The other ones are what an elder should be, right? This is one of what an elder cannot be. He cannot be addicted to wine. This deals with the elder's relationship to alcohol. This is a specific application of qualification number two that he is to be temperate. The elder is not marked by a thirst for alcohol. He must not be a man who is marked by a thirst for alcohol and definitely does not cross into the line of excess.

Now here's what I hold to with elders... that elders of churches should practice abstinence. I practice abstinence. Why? Because there are many benefits of abstinence, not just for elders, but for all believers. What are the benefits of it?

1. Well, alcohol is potentially addictive and dangerous, right? Lot of people addicted to alcohol and they fall into sin, time and time and time again because of alcohol. Just stay away and you won't fall into it.
2. Alcohol is unnecessary today. Its primary function is recreational. It's not necessary. We have clean water. You can turn on the tap and drink water. We got it, they didn't have it back then, but we've got that today. But you see how alcohol is used today, it's primarily recreational. That's what all the commercials are all about. Right? Recreation, party, have fun. All this kind of stuff.
3. #3 the line between sobriety and drunkenness is ambiguous. Where is that line? No one knows that line.
4. #4 drunkenness is strongly condemned by scripture, strongly condemned, it is a sin, and so, why play there? Why walk on that fence? Just stay away from it and you won't fall into that sin. It's pretty simple.
5. #5, Timothy, Paul's disciple, abstained from it. That's why Paul has to say, take *"a little wine for the sake of your stomach."* Timothy, abstained. Paul "it's OK. Just take *"a little wine for*

- the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.” (1 Tim 5:23) It'll help you to heal you. Timothy, you can have a little bit. Right? That's what he's saying there. But again, for medicinal purposes, not for recreation, not “go out with the guys Timothy and have a good time.” That's not what he's saying to him. It's for medicinal purposes.*
6. #6 consumption of alcohol can be a stumbling block. It can be a stumbling block. If I'm out at a bar or at a restaurant and somebody walks by and I've got an alcoholic drink in my hand, somebody could walk by and bring accusations against me. Or they could say look if the pastor is doing it, or the elder of the church is doing it. If they're doing it well, then I could do it. And then they fall. They stumble and they fall into sin. I don't want that on my shoulders. So what do we do? Pretty simple, just abstain from it.
 7. #7 abstinence provides an opportunity for witness. Why don't you do it? Well, let me tell you about my savior, right? What a great way to witness to somebody. No thanks. I'm not. I'll just have some water why? Why don't you drink? Well, let me tell you. I'm going to share my faith with you asked a question I'm going to answer it. An opportunity to witness to unbelievers.
 8. #8 abstinence safeguards the family and its next generation. Guards and protects the family. Right? Then you don't have kids that are watching their fathers, the elders, the people within the church that are doing this and them falling into it.
 9. #9 abstinence allows you to preach, pray, counsel, comfort, make a decision or lead a meeting at any time. For an elder to go and do this, there are times where elders are going to get calls in the middle of the night. And if they've got alcohol all over their breath...do they really want to go see that person in the hospital? Probably not. But if you just abstain, then you can go at anytime. Called at anytime and I'm ready to go. 2:00 o'clock in the morning, I might not have the best breath, but at least it won't smell like alcohol, right?
 10. And #10 abstinence provides consistency for other moral grey areas, right? All of a sudden, use gray areas like tobacco, right? Smoking tobacco, even marijuana is become a gray area for many people because it's legal, right? It's legalized. And so it becomes a gray area. But if we just abstain from it and we can say no, we don't go there with any of those things. Why? Because we want to be able to think rightly all the time. We have the mind of Christ and I want to be able to think rightly at all times and never be led into a position where I'm no longer thinking soberly, or I'm not sober minded or I'm not thinking straight, and so Paul tells him. Don't be addicted to wine, but be sober.

#9. Number nine, he goes on, he says, not pugnacious. That is not combative.

This is the second description in the list of what a candidate cannot be -- literally not violent, not a striker, not a bully, the candidate cannot be one who is always ready to fight, who creates a culture of fear and intimidation. Can't be a bully. They're not supposed to be that way.

#10 They are to be gentle. The word in Greek implies “not insisting on every rite or letter of law or custom, yielding, gentle, kind, courteous, tolerant. That's what that word means there. Think about it. Jesus was gentle, right? He was a gentle man. Being gentle is not a sign of weakness, but gentleness is actually a sign of strength. A gentle man is a strong man. He's a strong man.

Matthew 11:28-29 *"come to Me all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS."* If Jesus is gentle, we must be gentle as well as elders of the church.

A wise man is a gentle man. We must be gentle in our witness to the world as well, because the world is always watching us, right? And if we're just going around like a bunch of bullies, bullying people all the time, what are they going to think? What is the world going to think? Are we going to attract them to Christ or not, so we must be gentle.

#11. Number 11 an elder must be peaceable.

Adverse, that is adverse to fighting. The Greek terms means a negation from fighting, quarrel, strife, or disputes. The same general concept is advanced in text like Romans 12:18 *"if possible, so far as it depends on you be at peace with all men"*, right? All of us, we should be at peace with all men specifically, the elder must be a man who is peaceful. Peace is a component of the fruit of the spirit, right? He's practicing the fruit of the spirit in his life.

#12. Number 12. He must be free from the love of money.

The problem with the love of money -- it is the root of all sorts of evil, right? It is the mark of degradation. It's the characteristic of false teachers, right? False teachers love money. That's all they're after. I was talking with someone yesterday, Josh yesterday about Benny Hinn. False teacher. What's he all about? Not that Josh is listening to him. He's not, we just -- he just happened to come up and we're talking about it. Benny Hinn he's a false teacher, and what is he all about? Money, the love of money. Characteristic of false teachers.

#13, One who manages his household well. He is to be a leader at home. A basic requirement is one who manages his household well that he's he must be a manager, a manager of his own household. That is his wife, his children, and others in his home. He must be a manager of his household and he must manage it well. That's what Paul is saying to Timothy. He must do it well. He's got a high standard of excellence there. And then he says he must be keeping his children under control with all dignity. The management is required in a particular sphere, within the sphere of his children. Within the sphere of his children, this management aims at a particular state of submission for the children -- that the children should be willing to submit. They desire to submit to their father, who is an elder.

Not forcing them into submission, but the children they love their children in a way that the children desire to submit to them. The management is exercised in a particular manner, he says with all dignity, this phrase relates not to the children, but to the father. He must be a dignified man, a man who is worthy of respect.

#14 He must not be a new convert.

Pretty simple third description of the list of what he cannot be, cannot be a new convert, so that he will not become conceited. That is, he won't become puffed up. You get a young believer and all of a sudden you put him into the office of elder over the church. And what happens to him? "Look at me, everybody look at how spiritual I am, right? How great I am!" and all of a sudden he becomes puffed up. And what will happen then? He'll fall into the condemnation or judgment incurred by the devil.

And then finally #15. He must have a good reputation with those outside of the church. That's an evangelistic ministry -- that is people outside of the church would look at this man and say yes, he is well respected in a man whom we should respect.

Now that's the qualifications of an elder.

2. Let's move on quickly to the Qualifications of Deacons

Starting in verse 8 *"Deacons, likewise, must be men of dignity, not double tongued or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain."* This word deacon here means servant or assistant. So you've got overseers, leaders, elders within the church and then you have deacons who are servants or assistants. They are there to serve the elders of the church so that the elders can be devoted to prayer and the Word to be leading the church spiritually.

What are the qualifications for a Deacon?

1. They must be men of dignity. Another way to say this is worthy of respect. Respectable men. A deacon must be a man who is known and respected by the congregation.
2. #2. He must be not double-tongued, he must be sincere and trustworthy. It also conveys the idea of deceitful that he must not be deceitful because, you think about it, he's dealing with people's needs and resources and even money within the church to meet the needs of people. And if he's deceitful, then he'll start to take things that aren't his right. So we can't be double tongued.
3. #3, not addicted to much wine. Same qualification as an elder.
4. #4. Not fond of sordid gain. Also a qualification of an elder free from the love of money. Remember Judas is a man that had the love of money right? He was the money keeper and he loved to take things from the money box. A deacon cannot be fond of sordid gain, so we won't be tempted to fall into that.
5. #5. We must hold to the mystery of the faith. That is a deacon must hold to the Christian faith and live it out for others to see. That's what that means there.
6. #6. He must be beyond reproach or above reproach. Also a qualification of an elder that is blameless. That's the overarching quality of an elder.
7. #7 must be the husband of only one wife. Also a qualification of an elder, a one woman man.
8. And then finally #8 he must be a good manager of their children and their own households. Again, a qualification of an elder.

See the similarities there between elders and deacons. But there's one thing that's not listed there with the deacons. Not "able to teach." Right? Or "must be able to teach." That's, that's not in there.

Now, what about women in verse 11? As I wrote the questions on your sheet there. Question #6 specifically, I was on the fence at this time as to whether women who serve in the church, or whether this was "wives of deacons." OK? Is it women that he's talking about? Women who served in the church? Or is this "wives of deacons?" I don't believe that this is deaconesses here. OK, I do not believe that it's deaconesses.

I'll give you some, some reasons why I hold to what I hold. I did a lot of study on this. And I've concluded that Paul is not talking about women deacons, or just about any women serving in the church, but specifically the wives of deacons there in verse 11. Why do I hold to that?

1. Well, first, nowhere in scripture do we see women holding the office of deacon. Now remember again, it's an office. You have the office of elder, and you have the office of deacon. Nowhere in scripture do we see a woman holding an office in the church. Now some of you say, what about Phoebe in Roman 16? If you look at the word there, the word is "diaconos" which simply just means servant, and that's all she was. But Paul is not referring to a specific office within the church. She's just a servant who serves at the church at Cenchrea.
2. Second, the placement of these women in verse 11 is right in the middle of talking — Paul talking about male deacons. How do we know they are male deacons? What does he say? Husband of one wife? You can only be a man, right? If you're a husband of one wife. Therefore, when he says women or wives there in verse 11, I believe wives is the best translation there, he's referring to wives of deacons.
3. Third reason why is he gives the qualifications for these wives in verse 11 that are almost identical to the qualifications that he just gave their husbands over in verses 8 and 9. If you were to list these out — a woman, the wives of deacons are to be dignified. Deacons are to be men of dignity, not malicious gossips. Men are not to be not double tongued. They are to be temperate. Or the word there is sober-minded. Men, are not to be addicted to much wine, and then he lists out the fourth one "faithful in all things." Which just is a summary of four, five and six. Not fond of sordid gain, holding to the mystery of faith, beyond reproach. Just a summary statement there. So he summarizes it there.
4. 4th in Acts chapter 6:1-6 when the widows weren't being cared for. Who did they choose? Who did the apostles choose? Seven who? Men. Seven men. Now think about this. Who are they to serve? Widows. Women. You would think that's the ideal time to get some women on the deacon board, right? Into the office to serve the women. I mean, you got widows. These are women whose husbands have died. Get the women to come in and serve them, but they don't. Who do they choose? Men? They choose men.
5. 5th because it fits the biblical picture of what men are to do in God's perfect design. To lead, protect, and provide for women. Alexander Strauch says this "*does this not fit the biblical picture of what mature men, by nature, of their God-created masculinity are called to do. To protect, lead and provide for women.*" That's what men are called to do, and therefore men in some kind of leadership role in the church. It should be men who lead and protect and guard the women. That's their job. That's how God has created men. That's what He's created us to do.
6. And the sixth, because as Paul states in first Timothy 2:12. "*I do not allow a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.*" He's not going to say in chapter two "I don't permit a woman to exercise authority....Oh, but by the way, women can have authority and an office." He's not going to do that. He says it over there and he's not contradicting himself here. That's why he's saying these are the wives of deacons here.
7. And then finally, a seventh reason why is that just as "husband of one wife" is referring to the elders who are men only right? We would all agree on that, elders are to be men only. The same is there listed for deacons. They are to be husbands of one wife, specifically talking about men.

And so Paul lays out these qualifications for deacons, and he tells us that they should examine their wives and their household, the elders as they are choosing deacons. As they are looking to choose deacons to come in and fill this office, they need to examine their wives and they need to examine how they handle their household. That's what they are to do.

John Calvin says, “unlike her husband, the wife has no public duties, yet she is held accountable and knows that since God has called her husband to this work, she should behave like him and set a good example.” And that's what Paul's after, there in verse 11, that's the role of the women. “You are to set an example.” Your husband is in this office. You are to set an example for all of those as well, just as your husband is to do.

And then he says in verse 13 *“For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”* Simply, those who serve as deacons are rewarded with a recognition among the church as a great servant. Right? They're recognized, we recognize that man as one who serves his church, and it's a high standing to be recognized in such a low position. That's what a deacon is -- a servant, one who serves the church.

But how many people love to serve? The world's all about what? Serving me, right? Serving me. And so they look at a deacon who one who literally means servant. That's what that word means and they would go, oh, you're just a servant. But what does Paul say? You have a high standing indeed.

And sure, it might be a low position amongst people on the outside, as they're looking in and seeing you're just a servant, but that is such a high standing. You've been recognized for that. Remember that that's a high standing to be a servant in God's church.

Point #3 quickly. The Purpose of the Letter.

Verse 14 he says, *“I'm writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long. But in case I'm delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God.”*

Paul gives us the purpose of his writing to Timothy right here in this verse. This is how you are to conduct yourselves in the church. And Timothy, this is how you are to conduct the church as well. This is how the church is to function. So far he's told us how to handle false teachers, how men are to be in the church, how women are to handle themselves in the church, and what the leadership, roles and qualifications are in the church.

Those are all the things that Paul has listed out for us. And then Paul finally comes to this conclusion, and he summarizes for the church this confession.

This is confession here. We could call this the church's statement of faith, right? Here's our statement of faith. What we all agree upon, we would all sign this statement and say Amen. Verse 16 *“by common confession. Great is the mystery of godliness. He who was revealed in the flesh was vindicated in the spirit seen by Angels proclaimed among the nations believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”*

That's our Savior and we stand upon that confession. That's who He is, and we're a church of Jesus Christ, and therefore we do what Christ tells us to do. We seek to be godly people and we're godly as we obey Him in every area within the church. That's 1 Timothy chapter 3.

Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for our time in Your Word. Studying this, there's so much here for us to continue to learn. I pray that we would stand upon these truths, that you would continue to raise up men in our church who would be leaders “elders”, and deacons in our church that would desire this office, the office of elder and be deacons who would serve Your church. I'm so thankful for the men that we do have in our church. So grateful for them and their heart to serve You and how You continue to

use them. Father, continue to grow and strengthen us, and may we become more and more like our Savior, Jesus Christ and glorify and honor Him through obedience to You. We pray in Christ name. Amen.