

# 1 Timothy 3

Remember the first major theme of *1 Timothy*: to organize things (set things right) at the church at Ephesus

## 1 Timothy 3.1-7 – the qualifications of elders

**V1 – Did elders originate in the New Testament?** No: *Numbers 11.16* – Moses appointed 70 men to help him lead the Israelites

-**Does a man have to want to be an elder? In other words, is this a qualification?** No – it is just good if he does

-**What other motives can he serve from?** Duty (the great need at a congregation)

**V2 – “Above reproach”** – man known for his integrity (no skeletons in the closet, etc.)

-*“Husband of one wife”* – There was much polygamy in the First Century

-We are to make sure that he has a scriptural marriage: his first wife might be dead, or he might be the innocent party in divorce for grounds of adultery (leave to local congregation to decide)

-**What happens when an elder’s wife dies, and he does not remarry?** He is no longer qualified

-**Why?** No hospitality, no counseling of women in the congregation

-Notice *vs. 11* – she must meet qualifications, so she is important to the role of her husband

-There is a congregation that has an elder who lost his wife many years ago, but he continues to serve, but this verse means that he is not qualified to be an elder

-*“temperate”* – able to restrain himself - moderate in lifestyle

-*“prudent”* – not flighty, but self controlled

-*“respectable”* – represents the godly lifestyle well

-*“hospitable”* – entertaining strangers – setting the right example for congregation

-*“able to teach”* – Always teaching? No – just has the ability to teach – he has a record of teaching in the past

**V3 – “no addiction to wine”** – to set a good example before the congregation

-*“not pugnacious”* – can control his temper, not always looking for a fight

-*“gentle”* – how does that man deal with people - Is he harsh in dealing with people?

-*“peaceable”* – will not fight over little, trivial things

-*“free from the love of money”* – not anxious to get rich from his position as an elder

**V4-5 – What about his children?** Must be under control and managed well

-**Is more than one child required?** *Genesis 21.7* – Sarah nursed “children” (but she had only one child – Isaac)/Question: **Do you have any children?** No, I only have a child – **Would that make sense?**

-*Ephesians 6.1* – *Children, obey your parents in the Lord...*

-**But what if there is just one child in the family, does he have to obey his parents?**

**V5 – Why be concerned about his children?** Because how he has raised his children indicates how he will conduct the affairs of the congregation

-If he was a failure with his children, then he will have problems with serving as an elder (even though he might be a great Christian otherwise)

-Notice: *Titus 1.6* – also says that he should have at least one child who is a faithful Christian

-“under control with all dignity” – He can manage his temper and his life

**V 6**– “not a new convert” – **Danger there?** Many become conceited and arrogant and fall away  
-We all know of cases where a “little guy” gets promoted too soon and becomes unbearable  
-In church work, such a person could wreck a congregation

**V 7**– “good reputation with those outside the church”

-**Why?** So as not to bring reproach on the church (over the past life of elder, etc.)

## **1 Timothy 3.8-13** - qualification of deacons

**V 8** – Deacon = servant (Greek word)

-“men of dignity” – notice use of word “men” (they are not to act like kids)

-“not double-tongued” – not giving two accounts of an event

-“not addicted to much wine” – seems to be less strict than for elders (v 3)

-“not fond of sordid gain” – not a lover of money, will not use role of deacon to make money

**V 9** – So beautiful: the deacon has to have a “clear conscience,” no hidden sins, a sincere, faithful Christian

**V 10** – **Background of deacons?** To be tested

-**Meaning?** Have they completed other assignments?

-“beyond reproach” – nobody can bring a charge against them - no obvious flaws - no secret sins

**V 11** – Greek word here can mean wife or woman (gu-n ay)

-**So are those women or wives?** Wives – because of “men” in v 8, and because those are different qualifications than for the men, so we are not talking about deaconesses, but about the wives of deacons

-There are elders in terms of old people; then there are elders that are officials in the church government (same with word *servants* or *deacons*)

-*Romans 16.1-2* – Phoebe was a servant of the church at Cenchrea

-But no reference anywhere in the Bible to a special class of women known as deaconesses

-The groups of women known as deaconesses did not arise until 100 years after the First Century

-But there is no record of them in the early years of the church

-**Why would Paul give qualifications for wives of deacons, but not for wives of elders?**

Because Timothy must have been having problems with the wives of deacons at Ephesus

-But if these qualifications apply to the wives of deacons, then surely they also apply to the wives of elders

-“dignified” – women of dignity, not behaving in immature way

-“not malicious gossips” – **Why not?** Because elders and deacons come across a lot of private information about members in the congregation – they cannot have wives who like to gossip

-They have to have wives who know how to keep their mouths shut on these private matters

-“temperate” – they have their bodies under control (no bad habits, a “moderate” lifestyle)

-“faithful in all things” – must be faithful Christians

**V 12** – “Husbands of one wife” – same as with elders

- “*children*” – general term/not specific
- “*good managers of their children and own household*” – notice that his children do not have to be Christians but still must be well behaved
- Notice: managers of their own households – it is easy to point out problems that other people are having with their children, but it is required of a deacon to just concentrate on his own household, and leave the criticism of other families to the elders (if something needs to be said) – in other words, "I should mind my own business"

### **V 13 – What blessings come from being a deacon?** Good standing and great boldness

- In other words, being a deacon builds a man up in the faith – it has happened many times; we have seen it over and over
- When you appoint the right man to be a deacon, he takes off with his assignment
- Sometimes a man will be a disappointment, and that has happened also – a man will do nothing – but look at the other cases in the congregation of the great jobs that dedicated deacons are doing
- Where would a congregation be without its loyal and faithful deacons?**

## **1 Timothy 3.14-16**

### **V 14 – Why couldn't Paul wait until he got there to tell Timothy those things?** The need was too urgent, and it couldn't wait

- There is such a need for elders and deacons – the longer a congregation goes without them, the harder it will ever be to appoint them
- The author of these class notes spoke at a congregation in Central Illinois several years ago, and after the service a middle-aged lady came up to me and said, "I grew up in the church and have been a Christian for many years, but you are the first elder that I have ever met. Can I touch you just to say that I have actually touched an elder in my life?"
- We shook hands, and I was greatly saddened by her story
- But most congregations in the Upper Midwest do not have elders and probably never will
- They have grown used to have a monthly men's business meeting – what a great tragedy!
- There are some men who are obviously not qualified to be elders, but know that they still have some power in the men's business meeting
- Therefore, whenever somebody brings up the possibility of appointing elders, they say, "But we don't have anyone who is qualified" – and they continue on with the monthly meetings
- So there is a great urgency about elders and deacons

### **V 15 – Also: the danger of delay**

- Purpose of Chs 1-3?** Conduct in the church
- Purpose of the church?** Truth has been given to the church - It is the pillar and support of the truth
- Some people don't want the church, only Christ – a false view

### **V 16 – “great mystery” – why God would want to communicate with us – How the gospel produces godliness in us**

- Maybe a First Century hymn here:
- Vindicated by the Spirit?** Resurrection of the dead

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