

# 1 Timothy

<b>Church Order</b> (is maintained by giving priority to...)				
<b>Combat False Teachers</b>	<b>Uphold Church Life</b>	<b>Guard Life &amp; Doctrine</b>	<b>Advise Church Groups</b>	<b>Resist Materialism</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>Chapters 2–3</b>	<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>5:1–6:10</b>	<b>6:11-21</b>
<b>Doctrine</b>	<b>Worship</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Respect</b>	<b>Priorities</b>
<b>Warning</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>People</b>	<b>Warning</b>
Salutation Fight heresies God's grace Charge	Prayer Gender Roles Leader Qualities Purpose of Epistle	Future heresy Watch life Watch doctrine	Respect everyone Widows Elders Slaves False teachers	Spiritual goals Wealthy must give Closing charge
<b>Practical Exhortations Throughout</b> (in contrast to the normal theology then application Pauline epistle structure)				
<b>From Macedonia to Ephesus</b>				
<b>Autumn AD 62</b>				

**Key Word:** Order

**Key Verse:** "... I am writing you these instructions so that...you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth" (1 Tim 3:14-15).

**Summary Statement:** The way to defeat heresy is to obey God's priorities for church order.

**Application:** Do you actively guard your church against heresy—or do you expect others to do it?

# 1 Timothy

## Introduction

- I. **Titles:** The Books of 1 Timothy (*Πρὸς Τιμόθεον α΄ First to Timothy*), 2 Timothy (*Πρὸς Τιμόθεον β΄ Second to Timothy*), and Titus (*Πρὸς Τίτον To Titus*) designate three of Paul's letters that, since the 18th century, have been called "Pastoral Epistles." At least three facts make these unique:
- A. The Pastorals are Paul's only NT letters to individuals (except for Philemon, which some also consider a Pastoral Epistle). Timothy and Titus were younger men serving as apostolic delegates to different geographical areas, and, although the men are not specifically designated pastors in these writings, they fulfilled a pastoral-like role (hence the title "Pastoral Epistles").
  - B. The Pastoral Epistles are Paul's last three writings in the New Testament. Thus they give many insights into Paul's concerns at the end of his ministry.
  - C. The Pastorals have the most information in Scripture on local church life, order, and leadership. All church leaders should be experts in these books—and those of us who follow them too!

## II. Authorship

- A. External Evidence: Support for Paul's authorship is as good as for any other Pauline epistle except Romans and 1 Corinthians (Guthrie, 585).
  - 1. Early support from the Church Fathers is strong. Many passages in 1 Clement (*ca.* AD 95) and the Ignatian letters (*ca.* AD 110) directly depend on the Pastorals (Kelly, 3). Polycarp quoted them (*Letter to the Philippians*; *ca.* AD 135 at latest) and by the mid-second century Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and the Muratorian Canon cite them as Pauline (Kelly, 4).
  - 2. Despite the overwhelming evidence for Pauline authorship, most modern liberal scholars believe a "Paulinist," or second to third generation follower of Paul, wrote the Pastorals in the second century. The reasons for supposing such a forgery are:
    - a. Pastorals are not in Marcion's canon and 1 and 2 Timothy were rejected by Tatian. But Marcion was a second-century heretic who denied much of the NT.
    - b. The earliest Greek manuscript, *p*<sup>46</sup>, does not include the Pastorals. But the end of it is so unreadable that one cannot definitely say Pastorals were not originally there.
- B. Internal Evidence: The letters claim Pauline authorship (1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1; Tit 1:1) and contain the typical Pauline characteristics: divine call, many personal names, and doctrinal emphases (grace, redemption through Christ, purpose of the Law, the Scriptures, the need for practical godliness, etc.).

Liberal scholarship denies Pauline authorship based upon internal factors such as an inability to reconcile the contents historically with the book of Acts, a large number of words not found elsewhere in Paul's writings, a similarity to the vocabulary used in the second century, an ecclesiology "too advanced" for Paul's time, and "anti-Pauline" theology (Hellenistic terms "foreign to Paul"; 1 Tim 6:15-16; 2 Tim 1:10; Tit 2:10f.).

Each of these so-called "evidences" depends on presupposition rather than objective data, and biblical facts should never be ignored to harmonize with conjecture. Some even propose a fragments hypothesis where scraps of Pauline writings were pieced together in the second century to make the Pastorals, but this creates more problems than it solves and is rejected even by modern critics. Paul penned them after Acts and addressed local church issues with special vocabulary (e.g., "deacon") that arose in the 60s, which began the second generation of the Church.

### III. Circumstances

- A. Date: The chronology of the last years of Paul's life is obscure (Guthrie, 623), yet one harmony of the internal and external data yields this scenario (Hoehner, 381-84):

<b>First Roman Imprisonment (Acts 28:30-31)</b>	<b>February 60–March 62</b>
Paul writes <b>Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians</b>	Autumn 60–early Spring 62
James, the Lord's brother, martyred	Spring 62
<b>Freedom from Imprisonment</b>	<b>Spring 62–Autumn 67</b>
Paul in Ephesus and Colosse (Timothy left at Ephesus)	Spring–Summer 62
Peter travels to Rome	62
Paul in Macedonia	Late Summer 62–winter 62/63
<b>1 Timothy</b> written from Macedonia to Timothy in Ephesus	Autumn 62
Paul in Asia Minor	Spring 63–Spring 64
Paul in Spain (anticipated in Rom 15:24)	Spring 64–Spring 66
Christians persecuted by Nero and Peter martyred	Summer 64
Paul in Crete (Titus left there; Tit 1:5)	Early Summer 66
Paul in Asia Minor	Summer–Autumn 66
<b>Titus</b> written from Asia Minor to Titus in Crete	Summer 66
Paul in Nicopolis (Tit 3:12)	Winter 66/67
Paul in Troas (2 Tim 4:13), Macedonia and Greece	Spring–Autumn 67
<b>Second Roman Imprisonment</b>	<b>Autumn 67–Spring 68</b>
Paul arrested and brought to Rome	Autumn 67
<b>2 Timothy</b> written from Rome to Timothy in Ephesus	Autumn 67
Paul beheaded	Spring 68
<b>Destruction of Jerusalem</b>	<b>2 September 70</b>

- B. Origin/Recipients: The above dates reveal that, after Paul's release from prison, he wrote 1 Timothy from Macedonia (1 Tim 1:3a). He sent it to his long-time traveling companion, Timothy (1 Tim 1:2), who he had left in Ephesus (1 Tim 1:3b). The letter to Titus followed (Tit 1:4) which he sent to Crete (Tit 1:5) from an unknown origin (perhaps Ephesus, Macedonia, or Corinth). Paul then penned 2 Timothy from Rome during his second Roman imprisonment shortly after his first defense before the Imperial Court (2 Tim 1:8-17; 2:9; 4:16-17). Since he did not expect to live much longer (2 Tim 4:6-8), he requested Timothy to hurry to him before winter (2 Tim 4:9, 21).
- C. Occasion: Paul wrote 1 Timothy only a month or two after leaving him in Ephesus. It might seem strange that he would need to write him so quickly, but perhaps Paul had to leave Ephesus in a hurry without giving him adequate advice for church organization and oversight. Equally possible is that an emissary from Timothy asked for Paul's help. However, neither hypothesis is in the text so the reason for the letter must be determined from its contents that concern church order.

### IV. Characteristics

- A. Paul's first letter to Timothy contains more information on the qualifications for church leadership than any NT writing (1 Tim 3:1-12). He lists necessary qualities for both elders and deacons, in contrast to the letter to Titus that concerns only elders (Tit 1:5-9).
- B. Paul does not mention Timothy's position in the Ephesian church. He evidently was not an elder since Paul spoke of the elders as individuals different from Timothy. In like manner, Titus was to appoint elders (Tit 1:5) but not be one himself. Some have referred to Timothy as the pastor, but the letter suggests that his function at the church was to represent Paul (1 Tim 1:3; 3:14; 4:6, 13).

## Argument

Paul declares his purpose for writing the young Timothy: "... I am writing you these instructions so that...you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth" (1 Tim 3:14-15). Thus, Paul's aim is to help Timothy instruct others in keeping order in the church (cf. 2 Tim 2:2). When Paul penned the letter, false teaching was attacking the Ephesian church. Paul begins the epistle with a charge to Timothy to defend the faith using Paul's own life change as an encouragement to persevere (1 Tim 1). Proper conduct in public worship is discussed next so that the leadership and people might be above reproach before accusers (1 Tim 2-3), followed by an exhortation directed towards Timothy's life and doctrine (1 Tim 4). The letter concludes with instruction how to handle various groups in the church (5:1-6:10) and a warning of the perils of materialism to prevent the replacement of spiritual with material priorities (6:11-21). Throughout the letter Paul seeks church order not simply for order's sake alone, but as a deterrent to false teaching and practice that destroys local church ministry.

## Synthesis

### Church order priorities

<b>1</b>	<b>Combat false teachers</b>
1:1-2	Salutation
1:3-11	Warn against heresies
1:12-17	God's grace to Paul
1:18-20	Charge
<b>2-3</b>	<b>Uphold church life</b>
2:1-7	Prayer
2:8-15	Gender roles
3:1-13	Leadership qualifications
3:14-16	Purpose for epistle
<b>4</b>	<b>Guard personal life &amp; doctrine</b>
4:1-5	Warning of future heresy
4:6-16	Watch life/doctrine
<b>5:1-6:10</b>	<b>Advise church groups</b>
5:1-2	Treat all people with respect
5:3-16	Widows
5:17-25	Elders
6:1-2	Slaves
6:3-10	False teachers
<b>6:11-21</b>	<b>Resist materialism</b>
6:11-16	Priority of spiritual goals
6:17-19	Wealthy should share
6:20-21	Closing charge

## Outline

### **Summary Statement for the Book**

**The way to defeat heresy is to obey God's priorities for church order.**

- I. The way to defeat heresy is to accurately teach the Law and recall God's grace in our own life (1 Tim 1).**
  - A. Paul's apostolic authority should encourage Timothy to minister courageously amidst false teachers (1:1-2).
  - B. False teachers of the Law must not lead people away from love into speculation by majoring on minor matters (1:3-11).
  - C. God's grace to Paul despite his former persecution of the church should encourage Timothy that God can use Timothy too (1:12-17).
  - D. Paul charges Timothy to courageously defend the faith in the face of certain resistance (1:18-20).
  
- II. The way to defeat heresy is to require proper public worship and godly leadership (1 Tim 2-3).**
  - A. Prioritize prayer to show the local church's dependence upon God for victory in the battle over people's souls (2:1-7).
  - B. Male teaching and authority in the service balanced with women's service and priority to their homes averts passive men and dominant women (2:8-15).
  - C. Following high qualifications for elders and deacons will help assure victory against those who seek to find fault in the church (3:1-13).
  - D. Paul's purpose in giving leadership qualifications and writing the letter itself is to maintain church order (3:14-16).
  
- III. The way to defeat heresy is to guard one's personal life and doctrine closely (1 Tim 4).**
  - A. Some believers will reject Christianity for ascetic teaching that denies marriage and certain foods to show its demonic origin (4:1-5).
  - B. Timothy must watch his life and doctrine to diligently use his teaching gift to protect himself and his people from heretics (4:6-16).
  
- IV. The way to defeat heresy is to treat various groups in the church wisely to meet financial and other needs (5:1-6:10).**
  - A. Treat all people with respect as the general principle of interpersonal relationships (5:1-2).
  - B. Care for older, godly widows without family while younger widows should remarry so as not to be a financial or social burden to the church (5:3-16).
  - C. Elders should be well supported financially, not easily accused, and not hastily appointed so as to carefully guard the church (5:17-25).
  - D. Slaves of Christian masters must work harder than they would for unbelievers since they benefit believers (6:1-2).
  - E. Reject heretics emphasizing financial gain and useless theologies to prevent church members from focusing on money and speculation (6:3-10).

- V. The way to defeat heresy is to resist the materialism that destroys godly virtues and leads to apostasy (6:11-21).**
- A. Paul charges Timothy to flee materialism and speculation and pursue godly virtues to exhort him in spiritual rather than physical goals (6:11-16).
  - B. The materially rich must be rich in deeds by sharing their wealth to the needy so they can have rewards in heaven and joy now by giving (6:17-19).
  - C. Some professing Christianity have left the basics for speculation so Timothy must watch his own life lest apostasy take him in as well (6:20-21).

## Authority in the Church

### I. The Problem of Balance

- A. The ultimate authority over the universal church is Jesus Christ, the head of the body (Eph. 1:10; 4:15; 5:23).
- B. While Christ is also the ultimate authority over each local church, he has prescribed a practical means for each church to determine his will in human authority structures:
  1. Congregational Authority: The local church as a unit has authority.
    - a) The congregation has the authority to select its own leaders:
      - (1) The people (not the leaders alone) chose men to feed widows (Acts 6:3-5).
      - (2) The Antioch church as a whole (not the leaders alone) sent Paul and Barnabas to settle a doctrinal dispute (Acts 15:2-3).
    - b) The church as a whole sent out missionaries (Acts 11:22; 2 Cor. 8:19).
    - c) The people themselves have the responsibility for church discipline:
      - (1) The process of discipline can begin with anyone in the body (Matt. 18:15). It also ends with corporate discipline where the sin is told to the church (v. 17).
      - (2) Paul admonished the Corinthian church as a whole to discipline an unruly member (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 2:6-7).
    - d) The priesthood of believers gives all Christians equal access to God (1 Pet. 2:9).
  2. Leadership Authority: While apostles were the highest authority in the first century, elders had the highest authority after the apostolic age.
    - a) Paul put elders in charge in churches (Acts 14:23).<sup>1</sup>
    - b) Every church had a *plurality* of elders in their congregation rather than a single leader (Tit. 1:5).
    - c) “Elder” and “overseer” are interchangeable terms (Acts 20:17, 28; Tit. 1:5, 7; 1 Pet. 5:1, 2), indicating their authoritative role to lead with maturity.
    - d) “Ruling” was one role of elders (1 Tim. 5:17).
- C. The Issue: How can a church balance these two potentially contradictory authority structures of congregation and leaders? How can it have both at the same time?

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<sup>1</sup> The congregation, however, chose these elders. In Acts 14:23 the word *appointed* (Gr. *cheirotoneantes* χειροτονήσαντες) means to “choose; elect by raising hands” (cf. 2 Cor. 8:19; Tit. 1:9; BDAG 881; cited by Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* [Chicago: Moody, 1994], 358).

## II. Believers are Commanded to Obey Their Church Leaders

- A. The church must obey its leaders: “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Heb. 13:17).
- B. “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith” (Heb. 13:7). To “imitate” them clearly means not to fight against them!
- C. Obviously, the time when believers are most tempted to disobey their elected church deacons, elders, or pastors is when they disagree with them. Yet the NT does not excuse the congregation from obedience simply based on personal tastes or opinions. Even in these cases they should obey. This means that members should *never* vote against the decisions of their elected leaders. To do so fights against God-ordained authority.

## III. What Should Church Members Do if the Leadership Itself is Divided?

- A. Every church leadership team has times of disagreement. This is inevitable due to the limited understanding of fallible men, both in the congregation and in the leadership team.
- B. When leaders themselves are divided, the people should submit in the following ways:
  - 1. Pray for unity on the elder council.
  - 2. Patiently wait for the leaders to render their verdict rather than usurp their authority by taking matters into one’s own hands.
  - 3. Decide in advance to support the leadership decisions, even if these decisions are not unanimous and even if the membership disagrees.
  - 4. The first maxim of George Mueller is helpful here when seeking God’s will in a difficult situation: “I SEEK AT THE BEGINNING to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the trouble with people is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord’s will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state, it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is.”<sup>2</sup>

## IV. What Should Church Members Do When They Disagree with Their Leaders?

- A. If a leader is clearly in sin, members should follow the four-step procedure for restoring sinning Christians noted in Matthew 18:15-20:<sup>3</sup>
  - 1. Go to this leader in private.
  - 2. Bring one or two others along for a second meeting if there is no repentance.
  - 3. If there still is no repentance, bring the matter before the entire church body.
  - 4. If publicly exposing the sin does not restore him, the leader should be removed from office and treated like a non-Christian (i.e., encouraged towards repentance).

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<sup>2</sup> George Mueller, *George Mueller: Man of Faith*, reprint of “How I Ascertain the Will of God,” from *An Hour with George Mueller: The Man of Faith to Whom God Gave Millions*, ed. A. Sims (Warren Myers, P.O. Box 125: Singapore, ca. 1981), 43.

<sup>3</sup> A detailed look at Matthew 18:15-20 is in my separate study on “The Process of Church Discipline” (NT Survey class notes, 240a-c).

- B. However, many church disagreements between a congregation and the leaders are differences of opinion in matters that are not sinful or addressed in Scripture. What should the church do over debatable matters?
1. God expects respectful appeal to authority here as well. The Matthew 18:15 principle of keeping matters as small as possible is wise in these situations too.
  2. The church should *never* appeal to unbelievers to solve church matters (1 Cor. 6:1-8). Such cases of the justified going before the unjustified for justice (!) shows that the church is defeated already (v. 7a). It is better for believers to be wronged (justice not meted out) than for the truth of the gospel to be tarnished—or the truth of the situation be exposed before ungodly civil authorities. This prohibits a church from ever seeking a judgment from the Registry of Societies, the courts, or any other unbeliever. A neutral, godly arbitrator is best in these situations.
- C. When a believer disagrees with the church leadership, he has but *three options*:
1. *Submit* to these leaders without appeal, even though in disagreement.
  2. *Appeal* to them respectfully, but still abide by their decisions.
  3. *Leave* the church so as not to be under their authority by transferring his membership to another church that is led by leaders he respects.
- D. The option that is *not allowed* in Scripture is to fight against God-ordained leaders, whether in the civil (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13), family (Eph. 5:22-6:3), employment (Eph. 6:5-8), or church realm (Heb. 13:7, 17; 2 Cor. 10:8).

#### V. When Should Church Members *Not* Obey Their Leaders?

- A. John encouraged Gaius not to allow one of his church leaders named Diotrephes to lead a fight against missionary teachers (3 John 9-10). This situation was so serious that the minority group led by Diotrephes actually removed ministry staff! This congregation was held captive by aggressive and ungodly leaders that they should have opposed but did not. John commanded Gaius to oppose Diotrephes for the sake of the body.
- B. Believers should disobey their church leaders only when these leaders mandate them to do something unscriptural, such as murder (e.g., abortion), lying, etc. One clear NT example of disobeying spiritual authority is when Peter and John disobeyed the command of the high priest and Council who would not permit them to share Christ. They replied, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God” (Acts 4:19), then they continued to publicly witness for Christ. The situation of Gaius disobeying Diotrephes is relevant here, for God commands the church to support the truth.
- C. If the issue at hand is one that does *not* oppose the Bible (e.g., a command from deacons or elders to attend or not attend a meeting), then those under authority are obliged to obey. Otherwise, one's submission to authority soon becomes a “pick and choose” situation whether to obey or rebel against God-ordained leaders.

## VI. What Does “Congregational Authority” Mean?

- A. Sometimes congregational polity is misinterpreted to mean that the congregation is the final authority in church matters. This view sees the church governed by the congregation. This is not accurate and will lead to micromanagement.<sup>4</sup>
- B. What, then, is proper congregational authority? (One Baptist theologian suggests it is best to talk of “congregational authority” rather than “congregational government,”<sup>5</sup> which seems appropriate since even congregational churches also have leaders.) These are three basic elements that our church seeks to maintain:<sup>6</sup>
1. Autonomy: Congregational polity means that a bishop or pope or denomination board or any other outside body does not determine local church polity. This is often called the autonomy (independence) of the local congregation. Each congregation calls its own pastor, determines its rules, and determines its own budget rather than having a pastor assigned to them (as in the Anglican structure).
  2. Priesthood of the Believer: “Every member of the local congregation has a voice in its affairs. It is the individual members of the congregation who possess and exercise authority. Authority is not the prerogative of a lone individual or select group.”<sup>7</sup> The primary manner in which the church members express their “priestly” function is in the selection of their leaders.
  3. Leadership: Even congregational governments must have leaders (be they pastors, elders, or deacons). These congregations elect leaders to determine governance, doctrine, staffing, and ministries. Submission to leaders is required even in political democracies “of the people, by the people, and for the people” (Abraham Lincoln). The alternative is chaos. “Early church government [was] a combination of the congregational and the presbyterial [elder] forms.”<sup>8</sup> Elders will account to God whether they listened to the concerns of the people. As servant leaders, they must act in the congregation’s best interests rather than lord it over them (1 Pet. 5:2-3). However, the people must also submit to their leaders. Submission to leadership is not contradictory to congregational authority since the people themselves ultimately choose their leaders.

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<sup>4</sup> This takes congregational authority to its logical extreme and is critiqued by Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 935-36.

<sup>5</sup> Earl D. Radmacher, “The Question of Elders” (Portland, OR: Western Baptist Press, 1977), 13; cited by Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 3:256.

<sup>6</sup> Baptist theologian Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, one vol. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983-85), 1078 notes that autonomy and democracy are key. I have added leadership not because this is unique to Baptist polity, but because all Baptist churches also have leaders in addition to congregational authority.

<sup>7</sup> Erickson, 1078.

<sup>8</sup> Henry C. Thiessen, *Lecturers in Systematic Theology*, rev. Vernon D. Doerksen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 322; cf. Enns, 359.

## VII. Conclusion

- A. A helpful summary of the above is provided in the following five points, to which I have added a sixth point:<sup>9</sup>
1. “A biblical view would seem to include elements of elder rule and congregational rule. The apostles had authority over local churches but they never established a system of [rule where the leaders were not accountable to their congregation].
  2. “The model for church government must come from Scripture [and] not from examples of civil government (i.e., the church is not to be a democracy just because America is). The goal of church decision-making is not to determine the will of the majority but to determine the will of God.
  3. “God has designed His spiritual ‘organism’ – the church – to be led by spiritually qualified leaders (see qualifications). They do indeed direct the church’s ministry toward God-given goals. Spiritual leaders are initiators.
  4. “The congregation as a whole was gathered to decide on some very significant issues... so it seems that a local congregation today would also be involved in weighty matters [such as the selection of pastors, elders, and deacons, exercise of church discipline, etc.].
  5. “Each church has to decide how much decision-making is done at the leadership level and what is done at the congregational level. Some issues are of such a nature that it would be unwise to involve the whole congregation. Some issues are of such a nature that it would be unwise *not* to involve the whole congregation. But godly qualified leadership is key. When spiritual leaders have courage to lead and sensitivity to the needs of the congregation, God is free to produce harmony and effective spiritual ministry.”
  6. Although congregations have a voice and vote, they are not the supreme authority in church matters, except in the sense that the people themselves choose their leaders; it is their leaders that will bear the greatest responsibility before God.
- B. God’s will for all believers, even those in congregational churches, is simple: “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you” (Heb. 13:17).
- C. Here is the main point of this study: God will hold all Christians accountable to live under the authority of their leaders, even when they disagree with the decisions of these leaders. The only exception is when these leaders clearly violate the Bible’s teachings. In such cases, even following them is a sin as the Word of God must remain our highest authority.

*Approved by the elders of Crossroads International Church on 12 January 2009*

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<sup>9</sup> Adapted from Sid Litke, “Survey of Bible Doctrine: The Church” ([http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page\\_id=424](http://www.bible.org/page.asp?page_id=424)), section IV, B, 1, d.

## The Role of Women in the Church

Paul wrote to Timothy, who gave pastoral oversight in Ephesus (1 Timothy 2:11-12, NIV):

“A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.  
<sup>12</sup>I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.”

Many issues strike the modern reader about this text. In what *context* do these restrictions appear? What is *meant* by “exercise authority” and is it negative or neutral? Are these limits *culturally* defined, applying only to first century Ephesus or to today too? If they *apply* today, then how—which ministries convey authority and are limited to men? These four issues are addressed below.

### I. **Context:** Do these limits apply to both private and public arenas?

- A. The six chapters of 1 Timothy alternate from teaching for Timothy (1), the church (2–3), Timothy (4), the church (5:1–6:10), and finally back to Timothy (6:11–21). The basic exhortation is that he makes sure order exists in both in his personal life and the church.
- B. Our text on women concerns order within *public worship* for these reasons:
  1. “I urge, then, first of all,” (2:1) indicates a change in subject from the more private “Timothy, my son” exhortations (1:18) of the previous context.
  2. The command, “I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer” (2:8) does not mean women cannot pray in private. The context is the gathered church assembly.
  3. The prescription for modest dress (2:9–10) would make little sense privately.
  4. The exhortation for women to “learn in quietness and full submission” (2:11) obviously refers to the public assembly since parents—both mothers and fathers—are elsewhere commanded to teach children at home (e.g., Deut. 4:9–10; 11:14).

### II. **Meaning:** Is “exercise authority” the best translation?

- A. The text of 1 Timothy 2:12 not only prohibits women from teaching men in the worship service, but it also does not allow them to “have authority” (NIV, NLT, RSV) over men in this context. However, some argue that this prohibition not to “exercise authority” (NASB) has a negative connotation. In this sense, doesn’t Paul mean that women leaders should not “usurp authority” (KJV) in a domineering manner over men?
- B. This Greek verb (*αὐθεντέω* *authenteo*) can have either the negative meaning of “to domineer” or the positive idea of “to have authority over” (UBS dictionary).<sup>10</sup> It is used only here in the Bible, making the sense difficult to determine as no NT cross-references can be consulted. However, the word is used many times in Greek literature from the first century BC to the fifteenth century AD. Henry Scott Baldwin wrote the most detailed study of *authenteo*. He concluded after studying 82 uses outside the NT that it has an unambiguously negative meaning (“tyrannize”) only *once*.<sup>11</sup> Some claim that Paul could have used a more common word for “authority” if he simply meant authority in a neutral or positive sense.<sup>12</sup> But each

<sup>10</sup> The negative sense is also indicated as possible in Thayer’s Lexicon, though Thayer applies a neutral meaning to 1 Tim. 2:12: “*αὐθεντέω* *αὐθέντῳ*; (a biblical and ecclesiastical word; from *αὐθέντης* contracted from *αὐτοέντης*, and this from *αὐτός* and *έντεα* arms [others, *έντης*, cf. Hesychius *συνέντης* *συνεργός*; cf. Lobeck, *Technol.*, p. 121]; hence, a. according to earlier usage, *one who with his own hand kills either others or himself*. b. in later Greek writings *one who does a thing himself, the author* [*της πράξεως*, Polybius 23, 14, 2, etc.]; *one who acts on his own authority, autocratic, equivalent to* *αὐτοκράτωρ* *an absolute master*; cf. Lobeck ad Phryn., p. 120 [also as above; cf. *Winer’s Grammar*, sec. 2, 1 c.]); *to govern one, exercise dominion over one*: *τινός*, 1 Tim. 2:12.\*” Note that the negative sense applied only before and after NT times while the first century sense was neutral: *to govern or exercise dominion over*.

<sup>11</sup> H. Scott Baldwin, “A Difficult Word,” in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, eds. Andreas J. Kostenberger, Thomas R. Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995], 75.

<sup>12</sup> Andrew C. Perriman, “What Eve Did, What Women Shouldn’t Do: The Meaning of *ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ* in 1 Timothy 2:12,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 44 (1993): 135; Richard and Catherine Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman; Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11–15 in Light of Ancient Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 84; Alva Mickelsen, “An Egalitarian View: There is

word for “authority” has a range of meanings.<sup>13</sup> For *authenteo*, “the root meaning involves the concept of authority,”<sup>14</sup> without referring to how that authority is used.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the idea of it being negative is unfounded.

- C. Yet 1 Timothy 2:12 has two infinitives, not just one: “I do not permit a woman *to teach* or *to have authority* over a man.” Some say that “these two infinitives joined by the word ‘neither’ (*οὐδέ*) communicate a single coherent idea”<sup>16</sup> so that only *one limit* is imposed—*authoritative teaching* in a worship service. It is true that teaching and authority are linked closely so that the sense of one of them also applies to the other. Either “both items proscribed are viewed negatively or positively. Thus, the verse either means ‘I do not permit a woman to teach falsely or domineer over a man’ or ‘I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man.’ The latter option is demanded, for there is no evidence here that the infinitive *διδάσκειν* [“to teach”] should be rendered ‘to teach falsely.’”<sup>17</sup> In other words, since “teaching” is positive, “authority” must also carry a positive sense. However, teaching and authority are distinct concepts so the idea of only *one* prohibition here (“*authoritative teaching*”) cannot stand up exegetically.

### III. Culture: Does the prohibition from teaching and leading men apply today?

- A. Interestingly, these limits were never challenged in the church during the first nineteen centuries. However, since the rise of feminism (and evangelical feminism in particular), some modern interpreters say that Paul’s commands are culturally conditioned—applicable only in the first century. This assumes that women of his day could *not* teach men publicly—either in the Jewish synagogue or in the Gentile city of Ephesus where Paul sent his 1 Timothy letter.
- B. So how did women function in public worship in the first century? The assumption above is correct. Paul was consistent with the generally restrictive limits of his time. In fact, in the synagogues not only did women *not* teach, but they also worshipped in a different section.
- C. But what about Ephesus where Timothy ministered? Other evangelical feminists advocate that Paul was going *against* a prevailing liberalism in women’s roles. They seek to portray a “feminist Ephesus” so that this text “is not directed against women participating in leadership but rather against a *monopoly* on religious power by women.”<sup>18</sup> However, even in Roman-Greco political groups and in the Artemis cult in Ephesus, it was still the *men* who occupied the highest positions—both in politics<sup>19</sup> and in religion. In fact, the priests who served the majority of pagan deities in Ephesus were men!<sup>20</sup>

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Neither Male Nor Female in Christ,” in *Women in Ministry: Four Views*, eds. B. Clouse and R. G. Clouse (Downers Grove: IVP, 1989), 202; David M. Scholer, “1 Timothy 2:9-15 and the Place of Women in the Church’s Ministry,” *Women, Authority, and the Bible* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1986), 205; Philip H. Towner, *The Goal of Our Instruction* (JSNTSup 34; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 216; Ben Wiebe, “Two Texts on Women (1 Tim 2:11-15; Gal 3:26-29): A Test of Interpretation,” *Horizons in Biblical Thinking* 16 (1994): 59-60; all cited by Thomas Schreiner, “A Dialogue with Scholarship,” in *Women in the Church*, 132, n. 120.

<sup>13</sup> Schreiner, 132.

<sup>14</sup> Baldwin, 79.

<sup>15</sup> Despite the above evidence, some still favor the negative sense of “domineer”: Gordon D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, NIBC (Peabody, Mass.: Hendricksen, 1988), 73; Timothy J. Harris, “Why Did Paul Mention Eve’s Deception? A Critique of P. W. Barnett’s Interpretation of 1 Timothy 2” *Evangelical Quarterly* 62 (1990): 342; Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women, and Wives: Marriage and Women’s Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendricksen, 1992), 109; Carroll D. Osburn, “*ΑΥΘΕΝΤΕΩ* (1 Timothy 2:12),” *Restoration Quarterly* 25 (1982): 1-12; Philip B. Payne, “Libertarian Women in Ephesus: A Response to Douglas J. Moo’s Article, ‘1 Timothy 2:11-15: Meaning and Significance,’” *Trinity Journal* 2 n.s. (1981): 175; Towner, *Goal of Our Instruction*, 215-16; Ben Witherington, *Women and the Genesis of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990), 121-22; Clarence Boomsma, *Male and Female, One in Christ: New Testament Teaching on Women in Office* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 71-72; Steve Motyer, “Expounding 1 Timothy 2:8-15,” *Vox Evangelica* 24 (1994): 95-96; all cited by Schreiner, 133.

<sup>16</sup> Philip B. Payne, “*Οὐδέ*, in 1 Timothy 2:12,” paper presented at the 1988 meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, 104-8; Boomsma, 72-73; Motyer, 96; all cited by Schreiner, 133. Kostenberger, 82-84 critiques Payne.

<sup>17</sup> Schreiner, 133.

<sup>18</sup> Kroegers, 93, emphasis mine (cited by S. M. Baugh, “A Foreign World: Ephesus in the First Century,” in *Women in the Church*, 15).

<sup>19</sup> “There were a number of primary magistrates and civic groups at Ephesus. No women are known to have filled these magistracies at Ephesus in the first century” (Baugh, 18).

<sup>20</sup> If a supposed feminine supremacy in religions in Ephesus was true, “We would expect to find either priestesses or other women controlling the resources of the [cult of Artemis] and appointments to its offices. Instead, Ephesian religious affairs were governed by the Roman and municipal authorities who were decidedly male” (Baugh, 24).

- D. However, though Paul's teaching of predominant leadership for men (not women) was consistent with both pagan and Jewish practice, he did not support his stance by appealing to culture. In verses 13-15 he appealed to the trans-cultural creation order. Since Adam was created first (2:13), male headship applies to all cultures and all times. Male leadership is also based on Eve's sin of being deceived so that sin entered the human race (2:14). For this reason, God's plan is for women to lead their children rather than lead in the church services (2:15).<sup>21</sup> While many say that a woman training her children at home does not fully utilize her gifts, this is certainly not the view of Scripture. God has a very high view of the impact of parents in their children's lives.

#### IV. **Application: Which church ministries convey authority and thus are limited to men?**

- A. Churches today often decide women's roles based on pragmatism rather than God's Word. Some say that since some women are gifted as teachers, they can teach men in the church service. This pragmatism does not address the limits of 1 Timothy 2:12. Such decision-making based on experience rather than the Bible assumes women must exercise their gifts in a mixed (both sexes) worship service. However, many other avenues of ministry outside the worship service exist: women's and children's ministries, parachurch groups, etc. Countries like China rely extensively on the teaching of "Bible women." God will require an accounting of the church in each culture as to the degree to which the Bible affected culture (or vice versa). Some churches reason that they lack godly men, but we must decide what our authority will be.
- B. Our church holds the Bible as final authority, even where it makes unpopular demands. Article 4.6 of our Constitution states, "The Bible is the inspired Word of God written without error, our only sure source of knowledge about God and His plans, and our absolute guide for doctrinal teaching and godly living (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21)." Since Scripture disallows women from teaching or having authority over men in the church assembly, the leaders have concluded that we will follow God's limits. Therefore, women do not teach by preaching to men in our church services.
- C. How else does Paul limit women from exercising authority in a worship service? Surely singing a solo or singing on the worship team does not have authority, but being the worship leader may convey such authority. In the OT, both men (1 Chron. 9:33) and women (Neh. 7:67) served as temple singers and instrumentalists, but men always led the worship (e.g., 1 Chron. 16:4-6). However, in NT churches (unlike in the synagogue/temple), men and women sat together. We assume that NT saints followed the OT pattern of male worship leading based on the creation order and the injunction for men alone to pray publicly (1 Tim. 2:8). But this is an assumption so we show latitude here and at times have had female worship leaders.

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<sup>21</sup> This verse states, "But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love, and holiness with propriety" (2:15). Either "saved" has a [less-used] meaning of "preserved" or, if it refers to spiritual salvation, the verse is an appropriate response to false teachers at Ephesus who denigrated marriage (1 Tim. 4:3) and childbearing. Adhering to this God-given role of childbearing still will not save, so Paul adds character qualities that show real faith.

## V. Do You Agree or Disagree?

To explore your own ideas on this vital subject, please mark as A, U, or D beside each statement below to show whether you Agree, are Unsure, or Disagree with the teaching.

- A. A woman cannot serve as a pastor-teacher with authority over an entire church.
- B. A woman cannot serve as an elder (or other role on the highest ruling council) of a church.
- C. A woman cannot be the main worship leader in the church worship service.
- D. A woman cannot be an adult Christian Education director with authority over male teachers.
- E. A woman cannot be a children's Sunday school director with authority over male teachers.
- F. A woman cannot teach a mixed adult Sunday school class at the church building.
- G. A woman cannot teach a mixed adult cell group at a private home.
- H. A woman cannot teach a mixed biblical studies course at a seminary or Bible college.
- I. A woman cannot teach a mixed non-biblical course at a seminary or Bible college.

## VI. Conclusion

Believers who take 1 Timothy 2:12 seriously find the above agree-disagree statements difficult. Where does one draw the line? As advocates of grace, our church believes that women should be given as much latitude as biblically possible. Scripture does not prohibit women from teaching men in private contexts such as Priscilla and Aquila did with Apollos (Acts 18:26). This would allow them to teach any course in the seminary, as well as teaching and serving in most leadership positions within the church. In fact, Scripture grants women authority to direct men in *most* local church positions, except (a) being an elder (repeated "he" and "husband" of 1 Tim. 3:1-7), (b) serving as a deacon (1 Tim. 3:8-12), (c) leading as senior pastor (an elder position), and (d) the public assembly context of 1 Timothy 2 requires women to listen rather than to teach *in that worship service only*, and to follow rather than to exercise authority over men *in that worship service only*. Surely many women are as gifted by the Spirit as are men (both now and in Paul's day), but this is not the issue. The point is that both NT examples and commands impose the above as universal limitations in their roles. That these limits are not applied in many (especially missionary) settings does not absolve our church from obedience. Therefore, we agree with statements A & B above, we're unsure with C, and disagree with D-I.

The four questions addressed in this paper thus have the following answers:

1. Context: Do these limits apply both privately and publicly? *They relate to public worship only.*
2. Meaning: Is "exercise authority" the best translation? *Yes, it has a neutral or positive sense.*
3. Culture: Does the ban on teaching and leading men apply today? *Yes, it is trans-cultural.*
4. Application: Which church ministries convey authority so are restricted to men? *First Timothy 2:8, 12 limits women from teaching or authoritative leading (e.g., public prayer) in a church worship service. Other texts limit them from being an elder (esp. pastor-teacher) or deacon.*

The cliché says, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." Was it true years ago before the rise of feminism? Is it true today? How can women have the greatest impact for Christ? Paul believed in marriage and in the great influence that mothers have over their children (1 Cor. 7:14). He also wanted people to do the most for the cause of Christ—men and women alike. For this reason, he continued the age-old practice in the first century of keeping women in the most influential place possible in society: the home (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15). However, women are also gifted of God to serve Christ in thousands of ways outside the family, with the exception of the few public context positions noted in the NT.

*Approved by the elders of Crossroads International Church Singapore on 5 December 2006*

## Paul's Dealing with Problems

The New Testament does not systematically present theology. Rather, most NT writings are actually letters addressing a particular problem (and at least ten letters below respond to heretics). The chart below shows Paul's unique solution for each situation. The *key word* for that epistle is *italicized* (cf. NT Survey, 1:24).

<b>Letter</b>	<b>Recipient's Problem</b>	<b>Paul's Solution</b>
<b>Galatians</b> (Soteriology)	<b>Heretics</b> taught new believers that they must obey the Mosaic Law to be saved	<b>Justification</b> is by faith alone and not by keeping the Law
<b>1 Thessalonians</b> (Eschatology)	<b>Heretics</b> questioned Paul's church planting motives and the state of believers at Christ's Return if they had already died	They should prepare for the <b>Rapture</b> by seeing Paul's pure motives and being comforted over believers who died
<b>2 Thessalonians</b> (Eschatology)	<b>Heretics</b> taught the believers were in the Tribulation due to intense persecution so some quit their jobs and became lazy	The Day of the Lord ( <b>Tribulation</b> ) won't start until after the Church is removed and they must persevere without idleness
<b>1 Corinthians</b> (Ecclesiology)	Disorder in the church came from divisions, moral deviations, and false doctrines taught by <b>heretics</b>	Proper behavior where positional <b>sanctification</b> becomes practical results only from a true theology of the gospel
<b>2 Corinthians</b> (Ecclesiology)	<b>Heretics</b> undermined Paul's authority to advise the church	Paul defends his <b>apostleship</b> in his new covenant ministry to affirm the church's doctrinal foundation and giving
<b>Romans</b> (Soteriology)	<b>Jew-Gentile</b> struggles disrupted body life in confusion over the role of the Law and insensitivity to one another in gray areas	Living out God's <b>righteousness</b> achieved by justification through faith will bring unity before Paul arrives
<b>Ephesians</b> (Christology)	<b>Jew-Gentile</b> disunity within the church hindered their testimony before unbelievers	God's mystery of Jew-Gentile <b>unity</b> in the Church under Christ as Head must show itself in love for each other
<b>Colossians</b> (Christology)	<b>Heretics</b> led believers into combining legalism, asceticism, and angel worship	Christ is God ( <b>deity</b> ), so the church must worship Him alone in holy living
<b>Philemon</b> (Christology)	A Christian slave owner (Philemon) was tempted to <b>mistreat</b> his now-believing former slave, Onesimus, who had returned	This master must grant <b>forgiveness</b> to his former slave to model the reconciliation of believers to God through Christ
<b>Philippians</b> (Christology)	Concern over Paul's fate in prison was complicated by legalistic and libertine <b>heretics</b> and two quarrelsome women	Imitating Christ's <b>attitude</b> will give joy, humility, balance between "law extremes" and peace with God and man
<b>1 Timothy</b> (Ecclesiology)	Ascetic and speculative <b>heretics</b> threatened Timothy's leadership of the Ephesian church	Church <b>order</b> will follow if Timothy guards his personal life and doctrine and shares leadership with other godly men
<b>Titus</b> (Ecclesiology)	<b>Heretics</b> on Crete hindered the health of the newly planted churches	Teach believers sound <b>conduct</b> through qualified elders to silence accusations
<b>2 Timothy</b> (Ecclesiology)	<b>Heretics</b> and persecution of believers caused many believers to deny Christ	Persevere in sound <b>doctrine</b> by preaching and practicing God's Word despite hardship

Do you also know the issues *your* people face? Do you ignore them or *resolve* them within your church?

## Selecting Leadership for the Local Church

### I. How Do Most Churches Select Their Leaders?

(i.e., What criteria is often used to find out who will be the church deacons, elders, etc.?)<sup>22</sup>

- A. Popularity (attractiveness, charisma, and likableness)
- B. Past (tradition, "He's always had that office" mentality)
- C. Politics (shrewdness, clout, manipulation)
- D. Pocketbook (wealth, large church contributions, even bribery)
- E. Profession (occupational standing—why do so few middle- and lower-class elders exist?)

### II. How *Should* Churches Select Leaders? What Process of Selection and What Qualifications Must Potential Church Leaders Meet?

#### A. Scriptural Examples:

##### 1. APOSTLES: The Replacement of Judas (Acts 1:12-26)

- a. Process of Selection: Congregational selection of candidates, prayer, drawing of lots, apostolic appointment. Since we no longer have apostles, this is not a pattern for us!
- b. Qualifications: To be in "the twelve," one had to be a participant in Christ's ministry and eyewitness of His resurrection (Acts 1:21-22). For other apostles, only the latter was required (cf. 1 Cor 9:1). This is why no one today qualifies as an apostle.

##### 2. DEACONS: The Church at Jerusalem (Acts 6:1-6)

- a. Process of Selection: Congregational selection, apostolic appointment (Gr: "ordain")
- b. Qualifications: Good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom (v. 3; but see especially 1 Tim 3:8-13 that is explained later in this study)

##### 3. ELDERS: Titus' Responsibility (Titus 1:5-9)

- a. Process of Selection: undefined, but Paul told Titus as his apostolic representative to appoint (Gr: "ordain") men once they had been selected. Elders were likely selected by church vote just as were the leaders in the Jerusalem church (cf. Acts 6:1-6). With no apostolic delegates today to ordain elders, ordination must be by the church leadership.
- b. Qualifications: Titus 1:6-9; 1 Tim 3:2-7 (explained on the following pages)

#### B. Scriptural Principles:

- 1) Qualifications *apply only to men* (women are excluded).
- 2) Qualifications are not optional but *essential* (all qualities must be true of one being considered; failure in one area should be reason for withholding appointment).
- 3) Qualifications primarily refer to one's *present lifestyle* and character, not his past (unless Scripture designates past actions as applicable to the present).
- 4) Qualifications refer to the *office of elder* (i.e., bishop, overseer, pastor) *or deacon* but no other church leadership positions (e.g., Sunday School teacher, care group leader).
- 5) Qualifications *must be maintained* to stay an elder. Those who at first meet the qualifications but later neglect to maintain the standards must resign or be removed from the board.
- 6) Qualifications emphasize a man's *character far more than his abilities* (which may disqualify some of the most successful and shrewd businessmen in the church).
- 7) Qualifications emphasize a man's ability to manage his *home* more than his work.

<sup>22</sup>Chuck Swindoll, *Excellence in Ministry* (Fullerton, CA; Insight for Living, 1985), 39.

## An Examination of the Elder Qualifications (Titus 1:6-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7)

### I. Outline of the Qualifications

A. General Reputation	(Titus 1:6a;	1 Tim 3:2a)
B. Family Life	(Titus 1:6b;	1 Tim 3:2b, 4-5)
C. Negative Characteristics	(Titus 1:7;	1 Tim 3:3a, 6)
D. Positive Characteristics	(Titus 1:8;	1 Tim 3:2b, 3b, 7)
E. Teaching Requirement	(Titus 1:9;	1 Tim 3:2)

Note: A man's *desire* to be an elder must precede any official evaluation (1 Tim 3:1a). If a man does not want to become an elder, it matters little whether he qualifies, so even if "desire" is not considered a qualification, it certainly is relevant. Also, "BDAG" in the qualities below abbreviates the Greek lexicon by Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker. This work is considered the standard dictionary for defining Greek words.

### II. Examination of the Qualities Individually (NIV translations are underlined)

#### A. General Reputation (Titus 1:6a; 1 Tim 3:2a)

1. Above Reproach is a general qualification of general reputation that can be seen as an "umbrella principle" under which all the other traits fall.
  - a. (ἀνέγκλητος Tit 1:6, 10 [deacons]) means "blameless" (cf. KJV) or "irreproachable" (BDAG 64b) in the sense that no one can point a finger at his character or behavior with an accurate accusation—not perfect, but having a good reputation. This means not "merely unaccusable, but unaccused; not free from any just charge... but free from any charge at all...if any present [at the elder's ordination] had such a charge to bring, the ordination should not go forward until such a charge had been sifted" (Trench, 381). This requirement to be blameless excludes one guilty of sin in his past which the church would need to discipline (e.g., divorce, immorality, criminal offenses) or which affects his present reputation.
  - b. (ἀνεπίληπτου 1 Tim 3:2) is translated "above reproach," being a synonym and also meaning "irreproachable" (BDAG) with the same sense as ἀνέγκλητος above (Tit. 1:6).
2. Respectable (κόσμιον 1 Tim 3:2b) also has the idea "honorable" (BDAG) and is used of women who wear modest apparel (1 Tim 2:9). The word refers to one who is living an orderly or well-arranged life, and Christ used the verb form (κοσμέω) to designate a "well-ordered house" (Matt. 12:44), "well-trimmed lamps" (Matt. 25:7) and "decorated" tombstones (Matt. 23:29). A respectable man shows maturity that avoids personal excesses that may offend others, particularly weaker brothers and sisters. The church whose leaders do not earn respect will have a difficult experience.
3. [Having] a Good Reputation with Those Outside the Church (μαρτυρίαν καλήν ἔχειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξωθεν 1 Tim 3:7) also is mandatory for one being considered for office. An elder should be respected both inside and outside the church. The phrase literally reads, "to have a good witness from those outside." This requirement disqualifies anyone known by unbelievers as a crooked businessman, a lazy worker, a tyrant, a hardheaded and insensitive man, etc. A "good reputation" can be very broad.

Note: The following qualities relate to a man's *genuine* character, but the qualities above ("above reproach," "respectable" and "good reputation") denote his *perceived* character. A godly man who is not *known* as a godly man cannot qualify as elder.

**B. Family Life (Titus 1:6b; 1 Tim 3:2b, 4-5)**

4. The Husband of One Wife (μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα in 1 Tim 3:2; μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἀνὴρ in Tit 1:6) emphasizes a man's control in sexual restraint and a faithful relationship to his wife if he is married. (If he is not faithful in this second most important relationship in life should he be trusted in the affairs of the church?) This qualification excludes any husband unfaithful to his wife or one guilty of homosexuality, incest, habitual pornography and other sins of the flesh. (See the detailed evaluation on pages 228-230).
5. Having Responsible Children is generally translated like the NIV's "whose children believe" (τέκνα ἔχων πιστά Tit 1:6) but may also be translated "having faithful children." This alternate translation is preferable since: (1) parents are not ultimately responsible for the salvation of their children, and (2) because the parallel meaning is supported in 1 Timothy 3:4 where an elder is required to "manage his household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity" (cf. 1 Tim 3:12 for deacons). The word for "manage" is also used of elders who "rule" (1 Tim 5:17). The meaning of "having faithful children" is explained in the following clause (below).
6. (Whose Children Are) Not Accused of Dissipation or Rebellion (μὴ ἐν κατηγορία ἄσωτίας ἀνυπότακτα Tit 1:6) refers to the elder's children not being able to be slandered for riotous living or insubordination ("being wild or disobedient," NIV), but rather being disciplined and restrained (able to accept authority). The man whose children are rebellious or excessive (drugs, sex, drunkenness, etc.) would best get his family under control before taking on responsibility as a church leader (cf. 1 Tim 3:5).

**C. Negative Characteristics (Titus 1:7; 1 Tim 3:3a, 6)**

7. Not Self-Willed (μὴ ἀυθάδη Tit 1:7) means that the man under consideration must not be "stubborn or arrogant" (BDAG), or not self-indulgent to the point of showing arrogance to others. He must be a protector of God's concerns (holiness, purity, faithfulness, etc.) rather than of selfish pursuits (desire for control in the church, overbearingness, etc.). Humility is indispensable.
8. Not Quick-Tempered (μὴ ὀργίλον Tit 1:7) means not "inclined to anger" (BDAG), not given to outbursts of wrath, not contentious or belligerent. Gentle (ἐπιεικῆ 1 Tim 3:3) or "yielding" and "kind" (BDAG) describes this characteristic positively.
9. Not Addicted to Wine (μὴ πάροινον Tit 1:7; 1 Tim 3:3) properly describes one who is "not drunken" (BDAG). The literal translation is "not (one who lingers) beside (his) wine." Temperate (νηφάλιον 1 Tim 3:2) refers to the same idea, "literally temperate in the use of alcoholic beverages, sober, clear-headed, self-controlled" (BDAG). An alcoholic or heavy drinker should never be considered for the office of elder. Ideally an elder should be a non-drinker and at the most one who drinks with great moderation.
10. Not pugnacious (μὴ πλήκτην 1 Tim 3:3) refers to a "pugnacious man, bully" (BDAG). This is a man who is "not violent" (NIV) and not given to blows, not eager to use his fists, and not argumentative. Certainly any man with a reputation for physical and emotional retaliation at others would not meet this elder qualification.
11. Uncontentious (ἄμαχον 1 Tim 3:3b) properly understood refers to the quality of being "peaceable" (BDAG). Not only should the elder avoid fighting ("not pugnacious" above), he must also actively pursue unity and harmony within the body of Christ. One who tends to "witch hunt" makes the work of the elders terribly difficult in the many potentially explosive situations that eventually face every church. If this characteristic is expected of all believers (Tit 3:2), how much more for the leaders!
12. Not Pursuing Dishonest Gain (μὴ αἰσχροκερδῆ Tit 1:7) refers to one "not fond for dishonest gain, greedy for money" (BDAG 25a). He makes an honest living and is upright in all his business dealings since he is "not given to filthy lucre" (KJV). Free from the love of money (ἀφιλάργυρον 1 Tim 3:3b) describes the characteristic positively. A man who gambles,

hoards his money, or is pursuing the elder office for financial advantage is clearly disqualified, as would be one who refuses to at least tithe.

13. Not a New Convert (μὴ νεόφυτον 1 Tim 3:6) means not “newly planted” and gives our English word “neophyte” (BDAG). The age in Christ a Christian qualifies for eldership is not designated, but Paul appointed elders from men less than a year old in Christ during his first missionary journey (Acts 14:23). However, they were not novices as they were steeped in Judaism. The principle is to appoint mature men in Christ, especially mature in humility to fight pride from being appointed to office.

#### D. Positive Characteristics (Tit 1:8; 1 Tim 3:2b, 3b, 7)

14. Hospitable (φιλόξενον Tit 1:8; 1 Tim 3:2), or “loving strangers” (Hendriksen), also should characterize one considered for the office of elder. The word for “hospitable” here is a compound word (φίλος, “brotherly love” plus ξένος, “stranger, alien”) which means showing love towards those one doesn’t know. Does the man love and care for believers and strangers, or treat people with contempt, especially if they are of a different social status or race? One who still struggles with racial, religious, or social prejudices is disqualified on this requirement. “For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Gal. 5:14).
15. Loving What is Good (φιλάγαθον Tit 1:8) has the same root (φίλος, “brotherly love”) as above, meaning “loving goodness, virtuous, ready to do what is beneficial to others” (Hendriksen; cf. Phil. 4:8). The KJV, “a lover of good men,” is an inaccurate and unfortunate translation in its exclusiveness (especially since believers are commanded to love all men; cf. Rom. 13:8-10). “Loving what is good” in its simplest sense means loving God and what God loves. This characteristic definitely disqualifies from office one who approves of abortion, premarital and extramarital sex, and other harmful practices clearly forbidden by Scripture.
16. Sensible (σώφρονα Tit 1:8) suggests being “of sound mind, reasonable, sensible, serious, keeping one’s head” (BDAG). Prudent (σώφρονα 1 Tim 3:2) expresses the same concept with a different English translation of the same Greek word. This connotes that an elder needs to be wise and balanced in his judgment, marked by a proper self-image (humility without self-condemnation) as Romans 12:3 exhorts. This quality excludes men known as lacking proper judgment or proud “know-it-alls.”
17. Just (δίκαιον Tit 1:8) is defined as “upright, righteous” (BDAG). Being just suggests a man who demonstrates impartiality in his decision-making. He is fair, able to make mature judgments and characterised by practical righteousness affirmed in his lifestyle.
18. Devout (όσιον Tit 1:8) especially emphasizes a man’s relationship with God as “devout, pious, pleasing to God, holy” (BDAG). One demonstrating this quality continually progresses in holiness to be more like Christ. He has made it a priority to “put on the new man” (Eph. 4:24). He is one of whom people declare, “He sure is a godly man!”
19. Self-Controlled (ἐγκρατῆ Tit 1:8) also refers to being “disciplined” (BDAG). A man with excesses in habits, tardiness, anger, etc. reveals him to be undisciplined in his lifestyle and therefore not qualified for the office of elder. The point here is to require someone to exercise control over his own life before he is given control over the church.

#### E. Teaching Requirement (Tit 1:9; 1 Tim 3:2)

20. Able to Teach (διδακτικόν 1 Tim 3:2) and Holding Fast the Faithful Word... to Exhort (Encourage)... and to Refute... (Tit 1:9) both specify that elders should have some aptitude for teaching, although not necessarily possessing the *gift* of teaching (Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28; Eph. 4:11). They need not be scholars, but they should have a good grasp of the Word of God for two purposes (Tit 1:9b): (1) to exhort (encourage) others in sound doctrine, and (2) to refute those who contradict [sound doctrine]. This teaching qualification is no light order, especially since the responsibility covers a church-wide scale. It is imperative that an elder be well grounded in the “faithful word which is according to the teaching” (Tit 1:9), and yet to be able to communicate the Word in a non-offensive manner. This characteristic excludes those with no aptitude for teaching on a group or one-on-one basis and those who possess only a superficial knowledge of the Bible, especially in its basic doctrines.

### III. Summary of the Qualifications

The 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 elder qualifications mostly describe a man's character, not his abilities (exceptions being "able to teach" and "managing his household well"). It can be concluded from this observation that God is more concerned with *who* a man is than *what* he can do, especially as this is revealed in his family relationships and general reputation as a man of God.

### IV. Practical Implications

The qualifications for elder are presented as a unit. No ratio or percentage of them that need to be true of a man appears in either 1 Timothy 3 or Titus 1. Paul stressed each characteristic as vital. Therefore, *all* of the traits are necessary to accept a man as an elder. (If *all* the qualities were not mandatory, who would be so presumptuous to decide *which* ones are optional?)

This requirement of all the qualifications does not infer that the man must have *arrived* as a man of God, but that he is progressing toward greater spiritual maturity with these qualities as a foundation. The church should be instructed in the meanings of the requirements in a series of messages, then as a congregational body should decide upon each possible elder candidate who is put forward by a committee which recommends elders.

The question rises concerning how long to wait until such men are identified in a congregation. Scripture gives no time indication here. The temptation in some churches is to appoint men too quickly to this office; this leads to selecting elders who don't really scripturally qualify.

However, this also doesn't mean that the body of believers should sit around and wait for qualified men to appear like magic. The pastor needs to build his life into several men with the prayer that many of them would eventually qualify to assist him as elders.

These men certainly can and should assist the pastor before assuming the title of elder. They need not be elders to be useful to the church. Being disciplined by the pastor allows them time for growth into men of God who then can serve as elders with the pastor as models of a church with high, biblical standards of church leadership.

Alexander Strauch summarizes the importance of elder qualifications:<sup>23</sup>

It is highly noteworthy that the New Testament provides more instruction concerning the qualifications for eldership than on any other aspect of eldership. Such qualifications are not required of all teachers or evangelists. One person may be gifted as an evangelist and be used of God in that capacity, yet be unqualified to be an elder. An individual may be an evangelist immediately after conversion, but Scripture says that a new convert cannot be an elder (1 Timothy 3:6).

When we speak of the elders' qualifications, most people think that these qualifications are different than those of the clergy. The New Testament, however, has no separate standards for professional clergy and lay elders. The reason is simple. There aren't three separate offices—pastor, elders, and deacons—in the New Testament-style local church. There are only two offices—elders and deacons. From the New Testament perspective, any man in the congregation who desires to shepherd the Lord's people and meets God's requirements for the office can be a pastor elder.

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<sup>23</sup> Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership: Restoring the Eldership to Its Rightful Place in the Church*, rev. (Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 1997), 21. This is a pamphlet size summary of his earlier full-length book available for US\$14.99 at <http://www.discerningreader.com/bibelalstrau.html>.

## A Closer Look at “Husband of One Wife” for Elders (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6) and Deacons (1 Tim. 3:12)

### I. Various Translations

- A. Ambiguous/Literal: “the husband of one wife” (NASB, NAU, NJB, ESV, KJV, NKJV, RSV, Beck, Amplified)
- B. Emphasizing Number of Wives: “the husband of but one wife” (NIV, NIB), “must have only one wife” (LB, Williams, TEV [The Everyday Bible]), “with only one wife” (Phillips), “married only once” (NAB, NRS)
- C. Emphasizing Faithfulness in Marriage: “faithful to his one wife” (NEB), “faithful to his wife” (NLT), “committed to his wife” (The Message), “a one-wife kind of a man [that is, married only once]” (Wuest, brackets his)

### II. Greek Nuances

- A. Literally, *μίας γυναικὸς ἄνδρα [ἀνὴρ]* means “a one woman (wife) man (husband)” or “a man (husband) of one woman (wife).”
  1. “Woman” and “wife” are both possible translations of the same Greek word (*γυναικὸς*).
  2. “Man” and “husband” are both possible translations of the same Greek word (*ἄνδρα [ἀνὴρ]*).
- B. The emphasis is upon the word “one” in the original.

### III. Various Interpretations & Critiques

- A. Prohibition of Those Not Married to the Church (i.e., must be celibate)
  1. Strengths
    - a. The church is referred to as “the Bride of Christ” in Scripture.
    - b. Paul considered celibacy honorable (1 Cor. 7:37-38).
  2. Weaknesses
    - a. While the church is frequently called the “bride of Christ” in the NT, it is never referred to as the “wife of Christ.” The New Jerusalem is called the “wife of the Lamb” (Rev. 21:9).
    - b. Although celibacy is honorable, if it was necessary for church leadership then the requirements regarding the elder’s children and family management would have no meaning (1 Tim. 3:4-5; Tit. 1:6). Therefore, this view does not fit the context.
    - c. If Paul required the single lifestyle for church leadership, he would be excluding even some of the married apostles such as Peter.
    - d. “Marriage” to the church is a concept foreign to Scripture.
    - e. This view is even abandoned by most Roman Catholic commentators today.
- B. Prohibition of Single Men (i.e., must be married)
  1. Strengths
    - a. Married men have a broader range of experience due to family responsibilities and can probably relate to more church and relational problems than can single men.
    - b. “Husband” and “wife” seem to be better translations than “man” and “woman” since the following phrase concerns the candidate’s children.
  2. Weaknesses
    - a. Paul considered the single life preferable over the married life (1 Cor. 7:37-38).
    - b. The same logic for marriage as a requisite would have to be used for the qualification “having children...” This would disqualify married men without children.
    - c. If Paul forbade the single lifestyle for church leadership, he would be contradicting his own warning against false teachers who prohibited marriage (1 Tim. 4:3).
    - d. If Paul forbade the single lifestyle for church leadership, he would be contradicting his own lifestyle as a single man (1 Cor. 7:8).
    - e. The qualification reads, “husband of *one* wife,” not “husband of a wife.”

## C. Prohibition of Polygamy or Concubines

## 1. Strengths

- a. One with two or more wives/mistresses can't be called a "husband of one wife"!
- b. Even men of God practiced polygamy in the OT times. God may be attaching a stricter rule here for leaders than that allowed in the OT.
- c. Men with concubines were a frequent NT practice.

## 2. Weaknesses

- a. Polygamy and promiscuity are banned of *all* Christians, so the requirement must mean more than this.
- b. There is no evidence that polygamy was practiced in the first century church. It was illegal by Roman, Greek, and Jewish law.

D. Prohibition of Remarried Widowers (Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 75-76)

## 1. Strengths

- a. Those who remarry following the death of a spouse may do so out of lack of self-control (1 Tim. 5:11-12).
- b. Remarried widowers have had two wives, not one.
- c. Most first and second century commentators taught this view as they saw remarriages as indicating lack of sexual self-restraint.
- d. Paul considered unmarried widows happier than remarried widows (1 Cor. 7:40).

## 2. Weaknesses

- a. A second marriage following a spouse's death does not have to imply lack of sexual self-restraint.
- b. Remarried widowers still only have one wife at the time of consideration regarding elder requirements.
- c. The practices of the church in the first few centuries are still subject to God's Word as their authority, and an ascetic bias prevailed during this time.
- d. Paul allowed remarriage after the death of a spouse (1 Cor. 7:39).

## E. Prohibition of Divorced Men Who Remarry

## 1. Strengths

- a. Christ claimed that one who marries another while his first spouse is still living is an adulterer (Matt. 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18). Similarly, Paul called a woman an adulteress if she is married to another man while her husband is living (Rom. 7:3).
- b. Paul commanded divorced believers to remain unmarried (1 Cor. 7:10-11).
- c. Divorce is a failure in one's most important arena (the home), and, though forgiven of the believer, is not the type of leadership example that the congregation should follow.
- d. Since the man who has never been married in the first place is called an adulterer for marrying a divorced woman (Luke 16:18), surely one who actually commits adultery himself cannot be deemed "above reproach" (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6).

## 2. Weaknesses

- a. The emphasis in elder qualifications is on one's *present* traits, not his past. A man could have been a complete failure in a previous marriage but a success in the present one.
- b. The past divorce could have been largely or even entirely the wife's fault.
- c. The reference to married men being "adulterers" in the Greek describes an act, not an ongoing condition or state. The sin is forgiven and forgotten in God's book, so the church shouldn't hold against someone what God Himself does not hold against him—especially for one whose divorce occurred as an unbeliever.
- d. At the time of being considered for office, the candidate would have but one wife (i.e., he has only had "one wife at a time").

## F. Husband Who is Faithful to His Wife

### 1. Strengths

- a. It sees “a one-woman kind of man” as indicative of his character at present.
- b. It interprets an ambiguous phrase generally, not attaching any more meaning to it than the mere words allow. Being a “one-woman man” denotes a man who is not sexually promiscuous, who has his thought life under control, who is not flirtatious, etc.

### 2. Weaknesses

- a. The “one-woman kind of man” view says nothing at all about moral faithfulness. The above interpretation is too general for a specific phrase mentioning the number of wives a man has had. If Paul had a general sense in mind, why did he not write, “morally pure” or “sexually upright” to clearly indicate moral integrity?
- b. None of the Church Fathers of the first two centuries interpreted the qualification this generally—and they were reading this in Greek as their first language.
- c. It is legitimate to disqualify a man for something he did in his past. Although every believer’s sin is forgiven, the consequences are often long lasting.

## III. Conclusion

The ambiguous Greek for “husband of one wife” makes it a difficult qualification to understand. The primary question seems to be, “How stringent a standard did Paul mean by this phrase?”

In summary, six views of the “husband of one wife” clause exclude from the eldership one who is:

1. Married to the church (elders must be single)
2. Single (elders must be married)
3. Polygamous or entertaining concubines (immoral)
4. A remarried widower
5. A remarried divorcee
6. Not morally upright with and devoted to the wife he presently has

The last two views have the most to commend them. Chuck Swindoll holds to the last view: “Taken in its most basic sense, it means that an overseer, if married, must be married to only one woman (which excludes bigamy, polygamy, and homosexuality) and must be devoted to his wife (which excludes promiscuity and an unhealthy marriage).”<sup>24</sup>

Yet even if the final view is correct, other issues regarding divorced men must be considered:

1. There is reason to question whether one who is divorced can be considered as “above reproach” (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6). Failure in marriage is failure in the most important relationship in life.
2. Can a divorced man be an example for the flock as “one who manages his own household well” (1 Tim. 3:4-5; cf. Tit. 1:6)? Paul also emphasized ability: “If a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?” (1 Tim. 5:5).
3. Depending upon views on divorce in society at large, some may doubt whether a divorced man could be described as “having a good reputation with those outside the church” (1 Tim. 3:7). Even if this failure has now been remedied, the effects from such a failure (e.g., broken home with children) generally last throughout one’s lifetime and become public knowledge.
4. The sticky question is whether one who marries a divorcee is disqualified on either or both of these texts: “... the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery” (Luke 16:18), and whether one who marries a divorcee may be deemed “above reproach” (1 Tim. 3:2).

Therefore, although “husband of one wife” may emphasize only that a man must be a faithful husband if married, other qualifications may exclude from church leadership those divorced.

<sup>24</sup>Charles R. Swindoll, *Excellence in Ministry* (Fullerton, CA; Insight for Living, 1985), 41.

# An Examination of the Deacon Qualifications

## 1 Timothy 3:8-13

### I. Outline of the Qualifications

- A. Men: Specific Behavior (1 Tim 3:8-10)
- B. Women: Specific Behavior (1 Tim 3:11)
- C. Men: Family Life (1 Tim 3:12-13)

The elder qualification study (class notes, 224) noted that a man's *desire* to be an elder must precede any official evaluation (1 Tim. 3:1a) since if he does not *want* to become an elder, it matters little whether he qualifies. Although not expressly stated in the following passage on deacon qualifications, obviously the same truth applies here as well. Thus, implicitly a man's desire to be a deacon would have to precede or accompany any evaluation of his life.

As to the origin of the deacon office in the Church, this is not given in Scripture nor recorded for us in the extra-biblical writings. While the appointment of "the Seven" in Acts 6 in AD 34-35 may perhaps serve as model, nowhere are these seven men ever called deacons. In fact, over twenty years after their appointment (AD 57), Philip is still called one of "the Seven" (Acts 21:8), not "one of the Jerusalem deacons." However, in AD 62 Paul addressed his letter to Philippi's "elders and deacons" (Phil. 1:1) so the office was certainly known by this time.

As to the nature (i.e., responsibilities) of the office, this is also never laid out as with the elders (cf. Acts 20:28, 35; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). However, the term "deacon" means literally one who serves in a menial capacity such as waiting on tables, so these persons fulfilled a role subservient to the elders. Elders were responsible for teaching and hospitality, roles that were never required of deacons.

### II. Examination of the Qualities Individually

#### A. Men: Specific Behavior (1 Tim 3:8-10)

1. Worthy of Respect (*σεμνούς* v. 8) means "worthy of respect or honor, noble, dignified, serious" (BDAG 747a 1a). This quality was required of older men in general (Tit. 2:2). A respectable man shows maturity that avoids personal excesses that may offend others, especially weaker saints. The church whose leaders do not earn respect will have difficulty.
2. Sincere is the positive way of saying "not double-tongued" (*μη διλόγους* v. 8; BDAG 198d; cf. NASB) and means one who is consistent in what he says. He is not a "double-talker" who says "one thing to one man and a different thing to the next" (Kelly, *Pastoral Epistles*, 81). Deacons, being responsible for many servant tasks, must be men who can keep a tight rein on the tongue backed by integrity of heart.
3. Not Indulging in Much Wine (*μη οἴνω πολλῶ προσέχοντας* v. 8; cf. elder qualification #9 "not addicted to wine" or "not (one who lingers) beside (his) wine" [*μη πάροινον*] in Tit. 1:7; 1 Tim. 3:3) means one who is not "occupying oneself with, devoted or applying oneself to" wine (BDAG 714d 1c; cf. 1 Tim. 4:13). Temperate (*νηφάλιον* 1 Tim. 3:2) has the same idea, "literally temperate in the use of alcoholic beverages, sober, clear-headed, self-controlled" (BDAG 538d). An alcoholic or heavy drinker must never be considered for the office of deacon. Ideally a deacon should be an abstainer and at the most one who drinks with great moderation.
4. Not Pursuing Dishonest Gain (*μη αἰσχροκερδείς* v. 8, is an alternate form of elder qualification #12 *μη αἰσχροκερδῆ* Tit. 1:7) means "not fond for dishonest gain, greedy for money" (BDAG 25a). He makes an honest living and is upright in all his business dealings since he is "not given to filthy lucre" (KJV). Free from the Love of Money (*ἀφιλάργυρον* 1 Tim. 3:3b) used for elders describes this characteristic positively. A man who gambles, hoards his money, or pursues the deacon office for financial gain is clearly disqualified. Also, his giving record reveals whether he loves God or loves money. Deacons are often entrusted with large sums of money in the congregation (offerings, alms, etc.) and must show restraint here before appointment.

5. Keep[ing] Hold of the Deep Truths of the Faith with a Clear Conscience (*ἔχοντας τὸ μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει* v. 9) refers to adhering to “the mystery of the faith,” or doctrine received by special revelation (cf. Eph. 3:2-6). Today “mystery” denotes something concealed but in the NT it meant a secret revealed. A deacon must be firmly grounded in the basic, revealed, scriptural teachings and living in harmony with them. He need not be “able to teach” as is required of an elder, but he must hold firm personal convictions. This disqualifies those who lack assurance of salvation or have doubts about inerrancy, Christ’s virgin birth, his substitutionary death, Christ’s resurrection, etc.
6. Tested to See if There is Nothing Against Them (*δοκιμαζέσθωσαν πρώτον* v. 10; elder qualification #1 in 1 Tim. 3:2a; Tit. 1:6) means to be “proved...blameless” (KJV) or “irreproachable” (BDAG 64b) so that no one can point a finger at his character or behavior with an accurate accusation—not perfect, but has a good reputation. “Tested” means “to put to the test, examine” (BDAG 202c 1), but *how* to conduct this test is not specified. “Some have thought that a probationary period or a formal examination is envisaged, and either or both are possible” (Kelly, 83). Also, a candidate should have first proven himself responsible in *other* ministries in the church before being considered to be a deacon (cf. Matt. 25:21). This requirement to be blameless excludes one guilty of sin in his past that the church would need to discipline (e.g., divorce, immorality, criminal offenses) that would adversely affect his present reputation.

### B. Women: Specific Behavior (1 Tim 3:11)

Verse 11 gives traits simply of women whose identity has long perplexed the Church, partly because the word here (*γυναικός*) can be legitimately translated as “women” or “wives.” At least six views on this phrase prevail: (1) women in general, (2) wives of both elders and deacons, (3) deaconesses with equal authority to male deacons,<sup>25</sup> (4) a group functioning like deacons but ranking under them,<sup>26</sup> (5) deacon wives,<sup>27</sup> or (6) deacon wives who are *called* deaconesses.<sup>28</sup>

The first view (women in general) contradicts the context that addresses qualifications for an office. The second (wives of both elders and deacons) is unlikely as verse 11 falls in the section on deacons (vv. 8-13). The third has weaknesses explained below while the fourth and fifth are most likely. The sixth view differs little from the fifth except for the name of these wives.

Some translations and scholars render the unclear word ambiguously as simply “women” (NASB, RSV, Amplified, TEB).

However, most English translations and scholars argue that they are deacon wives (view #5). I hold this view (or possibly view #4) for the following reasons:

- Verse 11 about women divides the male deacon qualifications in two sections (vv. 8-10 and 12-13), so it makes good sense that the women related very closely to the male deacons. Their wives would be the closest relationship possible, so they are the most likely referent.
- Deaconesses served the church around AD 115 (Pliny to Trajan *Eps.* 10.96-97; cf. others in Kelly, 84), but whether this happened in the first century is debatable (Earle, *EBC*, 11:368).
- Paul prohibited women to exercise authority over men (1 Tim. 2:12), so at best he advocated a group of women serving with equal authority as male deacons (view #3 above).

<sup>25</sup> 和合本。新國際版; NIV footnote, Williams; James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, 229-33; J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 83; Newport J. D. White, in *Expositor's Greek Testament*, 4:115-16; J. H. Bernard, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 58-59; Walter Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, ICC, 40-41.

<sup>26</sup> They are a group by themselves, not just the wives of the deacons nor *all* the women who belong to the church.... On the other hand, the fact that no special and separate paragraph is used in describing their necessary qualifications, but that these are simply wedged in between the stipulated requirements for deacons, with equal clarity indicates that these women are not to be regarded as constituting a third order in the church, the office of ‘deaconess,’ on par with and endowed with authority equal to that of deacons” (William Hendricksen, *Pastoral Epistles*, NTC, 346; cf. Donald Guthrie, *Pastoral Epistles*, 85).

<sup>27</sup> NIV, KJV, NKJV, GNB, Beck, LB, Phillips; Wiersbe, 51-52; Earle, *EBC*, 11:368; Litfin, *BKC*, 2:238 says the view has a “slim advantage.”

<sup>28</sup> Wiersbe, 52, cites this as a second possibility.

A few translations and many scholars give arguments that they are woman deacons (view #3):

1. It seems unusual for Paul to prescribe qualifications for wives of deacons but not for elders (who occupied a more influential position), so they probably are not deacon wives.

Response: While elders may be sworn to secrecy in private affairs of the church so that they would not even inform their wives, deacons often serve in conjunction with their wives; thus wives of deacons would need to have a tighter control of their tongue than wives of elders. Also, the mention of a quality for deacons but not for elders does not *exclude* it for elders as well (e.g., elders are not required to be “tested” as this is assumed).

2. Nothing about the office of deacon would exclude women (viz., they do not teach or exercise authority over men; cf. 1 Tim. 2:12).

Response: This argument from silence argues neither for nor against being deaconesses.

3. If deacon wives were meant Paul could have been clearer by writing either “*having wives*” (cf. “having children...” in v. 4) or “*their wives*” or at least “*the women.*”

Response: This also argues from silence and thus carries little weight. Adding either word would have cleared up the problem but evidently Paul felt he was already clear. Since it is in the context of deacons, he felt a qualifying word was unnecessary.

4. Phoebe is a biblical example of a women who was a deaconess (Rom. 16:1). The masculine form of the word is used there (*διδάκωνος diakonos*) since no feminine form existed at the time. The masculine form was used of women as well.

Response: The word can simply mean “servant” rather than designate an office. The NT never clearly uses *diakonos* of women in the *office* of deacon, but it does refer to *men* having this role. Therefore, the clear texts should inform unclear ones such as Romans 16:1, not vice versa. In other words, we can be sure that men were deacons but we can’t be sure whether women held this position in the first century.

5. The word “likewise” in verse 8 set apart deacons as a different office from the preceding elder qualifications (vv. 1-7). In the same way, “likewise” reappears in verse 11 to indicate another class of persons. Thus, “Paul chose to introduce the women in a manner which set them parallel to the elders and deacons, implying a new, similar class of persons. He said, “Women, likewise...” (Hurley, *Man and Women in Biblical Perspective*, 230).

Response: If Paul meant to set the women apart as a *separate office*, it would seem strange to do so in the middle of his deacon qualifications. The more natural sequence would be to finish the deacon qualifications first, *then* explain women deacon requirements.

Conclusion: One cannot be dogmatic about this difficult passage, but the two best views seem to indicate either deacon wives or women deaconesses not related to the deacons. While the deacon wives view may have the most to commend it, since women did not exercise authority over men in the church (1 Tim. 2:11-12), nothing would eliminate them from serving equally with men in servant roles in NT times. (However, in some modern churches the title “deaconess” refers to a woman in a helping role with no authority over men, but the NT never uses this term coined in the second century.) The best we can argue is that women served in capacities under the leadership of the elders, perhaps at the same level as male deacons but never over them.

However, let’s not “miss the forest through the trees.” The point of the verse is that proper conduct of *women*, not just men, is vital to the proper functioning of the church. Women are typically more relational than men, which has both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that they are more available to meet counseling needs in the church, but the disadvantage is that being trusted with such information requires respectable behavior and restraint of the tongue to prevent gossip.

Actually, whether women can have the title of “deaconess” is irrelevant. They can serve in the church in hundreds of ways without holding an office. Also, the guidelines in verse 11, while not directed at all women generally, are still a good model for any woman to pursue.

One final observation may be noteworthy: the four women qualifications closely parallel the first four requirements of deacons (cf. adapted from Hurley, 231):

<b>Deacons (v. 8)</b>	<b>Women (v. 11)</b>	
worthy of respect (#1) ( <i>semnous</i> )	worthy of respect ( <i>semnas</i> —the feminine form of <i>semnous</i> )	deacon quality #7
not double-tongued (#2) ( <i>me dilogous</i> )	not slanderers ( <i>me diabolous</i> )	deacon quality #8
not given to much wine (#3) ( <i>me oino pollo prosechontas</i> )	sober/temperate ( <i>nephalious</i> )	deacon quality #9
not pursuing dishonest gain (#4) ( <i>me aischrokerdeis</i> )	trustworthy in all things ( <i>pistas en pasin</i> )	deacon quality #10

“The qualifications are point for point parallel. The final item in each list has to do with trustworthiness. In the case of the deacon it looks to his business life. In the case of the women, it looks to their handling of daily affairs and relationships, perhaps because few women were involved in business affairs” (Hurley, 231). The significance of these parallel features is left up to the reader.

### C. Men: Family Life (1 Tim 3:12-13)

11. The Husband of One Wife (*μίας γυναικὸς ἄνδρες*) is equivalent to elder qualification #4; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6) emphasizes a man's control in sexual restraint and a faithful relationship to his wife. If he is not faithful in this second most important relationship in life, he should not be trusted in the affairs of the church. This qualification excludes any husband unfaithful to his wife or one guilty of pornography, homosexuality, incest, and other sins of the flesh. (See the detailed evaluation of this requirement prior to this study on deacon qualifications).
12. Must Manage His Children and His Household Well (*τέκνων καλῶς προϊστάμενοι καὶ τῶν ἰδίων οἴκων*) is parallel to elder qualifications #5-6 where an elder is to “manage his household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity” (1 Tim. 3:4; cf. Tit. 1:6). No charge should exist against a deacon's children for riotous living or insubordination, but rather they should be disciplined and restrained (able to accept authority). A deacon candidate whose children are rebellious or excessive (drugs, sex, drunkenness, etc.) should get his family under control before serving as a church leader (cf. 1 Tim. 3:5).

Two results of serving well as a deacon are provided in verse 13:

- (1) A good reputation before people and God (perhaps “promotion” to pastor or elder is in view)
- (2) Increased confidence in dealing with other people (Tom Constable, Dallas Seminary class notes, 24).

### III. For Further Study

- A. Dresselhaus, Richard L. *The Deacon and His Ministry*. Springfield, MO: Gospel Pub., 1977.
- B. Green, Michael. *Called to Serve*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964.
- C. Hiebert, D. Edmond. “Behind the Word ‘Deacon’: A New Testament Study.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 140 (April-June 1983): 151-62.
- D. Strauch, Alexander. *The New Testament Deacon*. Littleton, CO: Lewis & Roth, 1992. 192 pp. pb. US\$10.

#### IV. Summary

To review, let's compare and contrast the 20 traits required of elders with the 12 traits for deacons. Similar characteristics appear in parallel columns in the following chart. Trait numbers in parentheses correspond with the numbers in the preceding trait studies. For the third column, the elder trait translation and trait number appears first, followed by the deacon translation and trait number. Also, similar but not exactly parallel qualifications match horizontally across the chart (e.g., respected = blameless, children believe = children obey, teach = holds doctrines, and deacon wife traits 7-10 parallel deacon traits 1-4).

Unique to Elders	Unique to Deacons	Required of Both Offices
Respected by non-Christians (3)	<u>Deacon Wife Qualities:</u>	Blameless (1)/tested as above reproach (6)
Not a new believer (13)	Wife respectable (7)	Respectable (2/1)
Not quick-tempered (8)	Wife not a slanderer (8)	Not quarrelsome (11)/ not deceptive (2)
Self-controlled (19)	Wife temperate (9)	Temperate (9)/not addicted to wine (3)
Not a lover of money (12b)	Wife trustworthy (10)	Not pursuing dishonest gain (12a/4)
Children believe or faithful (5)		Children obey (6)/managed well (12)
Able to teach (20a)		Holds basic doctrines (20b/5)
Not self-willed (7)		Husband of one wife (4/11)
Gentle/not violent (10)		
Hospitable (14)		
Loves what is good (15)		
Sensible/prudent (16)		
Just/fair (17)		
Devout/holy (18)		

#### Observations

1. More requirements apply to elders (20) than to deacons (12) since elders hold the higher office.
2. Deacon traits in the third column fall into two basic categories: four parallel both wives and elders, plus four parallel elders alone.
3. While no traits of elder wives are listed, four traits are given for deacon wives. This does not mean that an elder's wife is unimportant; it probably indicates that whereas elder wives are not privy to information shared in elder meetings, deacons serve with their wives, so these women must hold similar traits as the men themselves. In fact, requirements of their wives are the only requisites expected of deacons that are not expressly required of elders.
4. Nearly all traits address character rather than ability. Exceptions include both teaching ability and household management.

## Qualifications for Elders and Deacons

Bible Visual Resource Book, 257

1 Timothy

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### Qualifications for Elders/Overseers and Deacons

Self-controlled	ELDER	ITi 3:2; Tit 1:8	Husband of one wife	ELDER DEACON	ITi 3:2; Tit 1:6 ITi 3:12
Hospitable	ELDER	ITi 3:2; Tit 1:8	Temperate	ELDER DEACON	ITi 3:2; Tit 1:7 ITi 3:8
Able to teach	ELDER	ITi 3:2; 5:17; Tit 1:9	Respectable	ELDER DEACON	ITi 3:2 ITi 3:8
Not violent but gentle	ELDER	ITi 3:3; Tit 1:7	Not given to drunkenness	ELDER DEACON	ITi 3:3; Tit 1:7 ITi 3:8
Not quarrelsome	ELDER	ITi 3:3	Manages his own family well	ELDER DEACON	ITi 3:4 ITi 3:12
Not a lover of money	ELDER	ITi 3:3	Sees that his children obey him	ELDER DEACON	ITi 3:4-5; Tit 1:6 ITi 3:12
Not a recent convert	ELDER	ITi 3:6	Does not pursue dishonest gain	ELDER DEACON	Tit 1:7 ITi 3:8
Has a good reputation with outsiders	ELDER	ITi 3:7	Keeps hold of the deep truths	ELDER DEACON	Tit 1:9 ITi 3:9
Not overbearing	ELDER	Tit 1:7	Sincere	DEACON	ITi 3:8
Not quick-tempered	ELDER	Tit 1:7	Tested	DEACON	ITi 3:10
Loves what is good	ELDER	Tit 1:8			
Upright, holy	ELDER	Tit 1:8			
Disciplined	ELDER	Tit 1:8			
Above reproach (blameless)	ELDER DEACON	ITi 3:2; Tit 1:6 ITi 3:9			

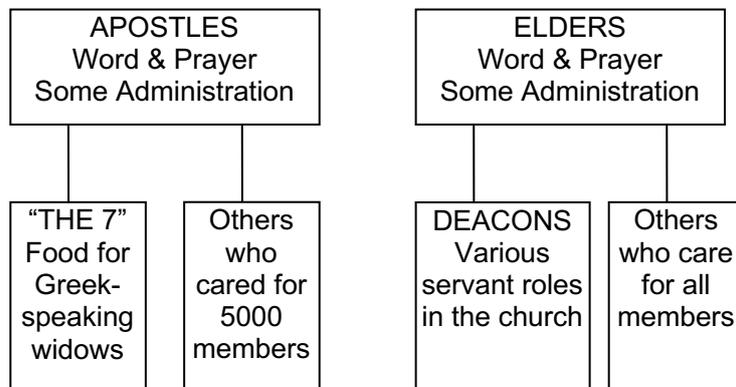
## Roles of Elders

### I. Pastoral Leadership (mostly a shepherd imagery)

Elders primarily serve in a pastoral capacity, which includes the following...

#### A. Elders teach the church (a shepherd feeds the flock in green pastures).

1. "Shepherd the flock" includes teaching the Word (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).
2. "Able to teach" is a basic elder requirement in this highest office of the church (1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9b).
3. His foundation must be Scripture (Titus 1:9a).
4. Paul modeled the teaching content as the full plan and purpose of God (Acts 20:20, 27).
5. The church should pay elders who work hard at preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 5:17-18; cf. pastor-teachers in Eph. 4:11). For practical purposes, such elders could be called "pastor-teachers" (Eph. 4:11), but nothing in the term "pastor-teacher" denotes a paid position *per se*.
6. The Acts 6:1-7 principle is that the highest ruling body in the church must commit to teaching and prayer—and delegate what is necessary to maintain these priorities.
  - a) In Acts 6, apostles filled this highest role. However, the Jerusalem church also had elders (Acts 11:30; 15:4).
  - b) As the apostles died out and as leaders were selected for other churches, elders filled this role (Acts 14:23).



7. The mention of "overseers" (elders) before deacons ("overseers and deacons") shows their prominence (Phil 1:1). There is evidence for deacons only here at Philippi and also at Ephesus (1 Tim. 3:8-13).

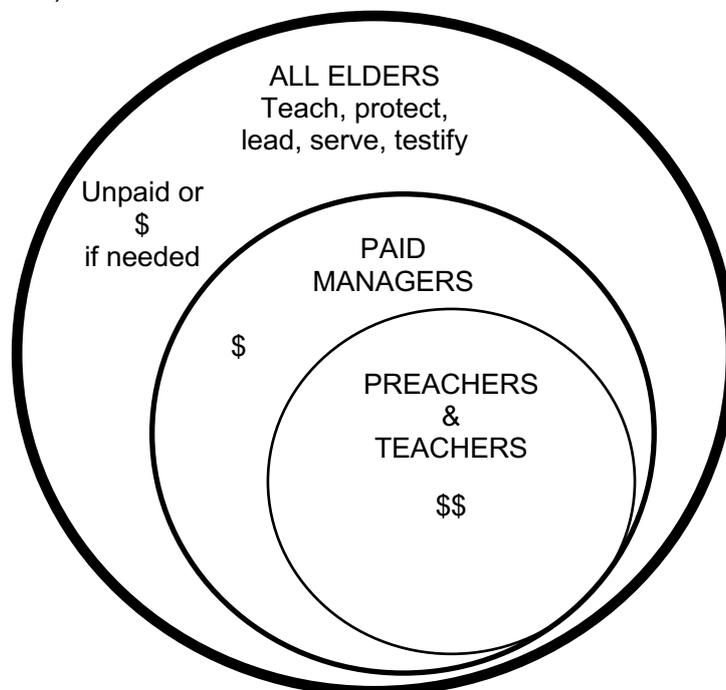
#### B. Elders protect believers from heresy (a shepherd uses his rod against enemies).

1. Judge doctrinal error (Acts 15:6).
2. Guard the flock from false teachers (Acts 20:17, 28-31a).
3. Know the Word well to refute heretics (Titus 1:5, 6a, 9).

#### C. Elders lead believers (a shepherd guides his flock, a "household manager" takes care of the master's servants, property, and finances).

1. Leading is primarily by example (1 Pet. 5:3).

2. "Shepherd the flock" includes leading the church (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).
3. In biblical language, shepherding a nation or group means to lead or govern (2 Sam. 5:2; Ps. 78:71-72).
4. Elders exercise oversight of the body (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:1-2; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 5:2).
5. All elders should be honored, meaning that the church makes sure their material needs are met. Those elders who rule [lead, direct, manage] well should be paid the most, especially preachers and teachers (1 Tim. 5:17a).
  - a) This verse distinguishes paid from unpaid elders, assuming that those with a vocation outside the church do not need a church salary. Elders who devote more time to the church should be paid more to relieve them of needing another means to make a living.
  - b) Taking into account I.A.5. above, three types of elders are noted in verses 17-18: unpaid, paid teachers/preachers, and paid managers (though all elders must be "able to teach").



D. Elders serve/care for the church in practical ways:

1. Care for the flock like managing one's own family and home (1 Tim. 3:5).
2. Pray for the sick (Jas. 5:14). Anointing with oil was a shepherd's role to their sheep.
3. Help the weak in the flock (Acts 20:35)—counsel and comfort those who are bereaved.
4. Work hard for the saints (1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 5:17).
5. Officially welcome visitors (Acts 15:4).

E. Elders testify to the church and world in an official capacity:

1. Represent the church to appoint (ordain) qualified leaders (1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22).

2. Accept and distribute money (Acts 11:30).
3. Send representatives of the church to serve in official capacities (Acts 15:22).

## II. Shared Leadership

- A. All NT texts refer to a plurality of leadership. The “overseer” (elder) in the singular (1 Tim. 3:1) refers to a man who is representative of the larger group of shepherds. This pastoral team is never called a “board” as “board” is an administrative term from the business world.
- B. Peter appealed to “fellow elders” (1 Pet. 5:1), so his readers had more than one elder.
- C. Paul modeled team ministry in all his travels (with Barnabas, Luke, Silas, etc.) and elder appointments (e.g., Acts 14:21).

## III. Male Leadership

- A. All OT and NT occurrences of elders are men. Similarly, while Christ had both male and female disciples, all twelve original apostles were males (Matt. 10:1-4).
- B. Male spiritual leadership for NT elders is in line with the OT pattern of having male priests. However, women sometimes served in administrative roles as queens and judges (Judges 4–5). Further, women sometimes were prophetesses in both the OT (Exod. 15:20-21) and NT (Luke 2:36-38; 1 Cor. 11).
- C. Male leadership is particularly underscored by the requirement that an elder be the “husband of one wife” (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6).

## IV. Qualified Leadership

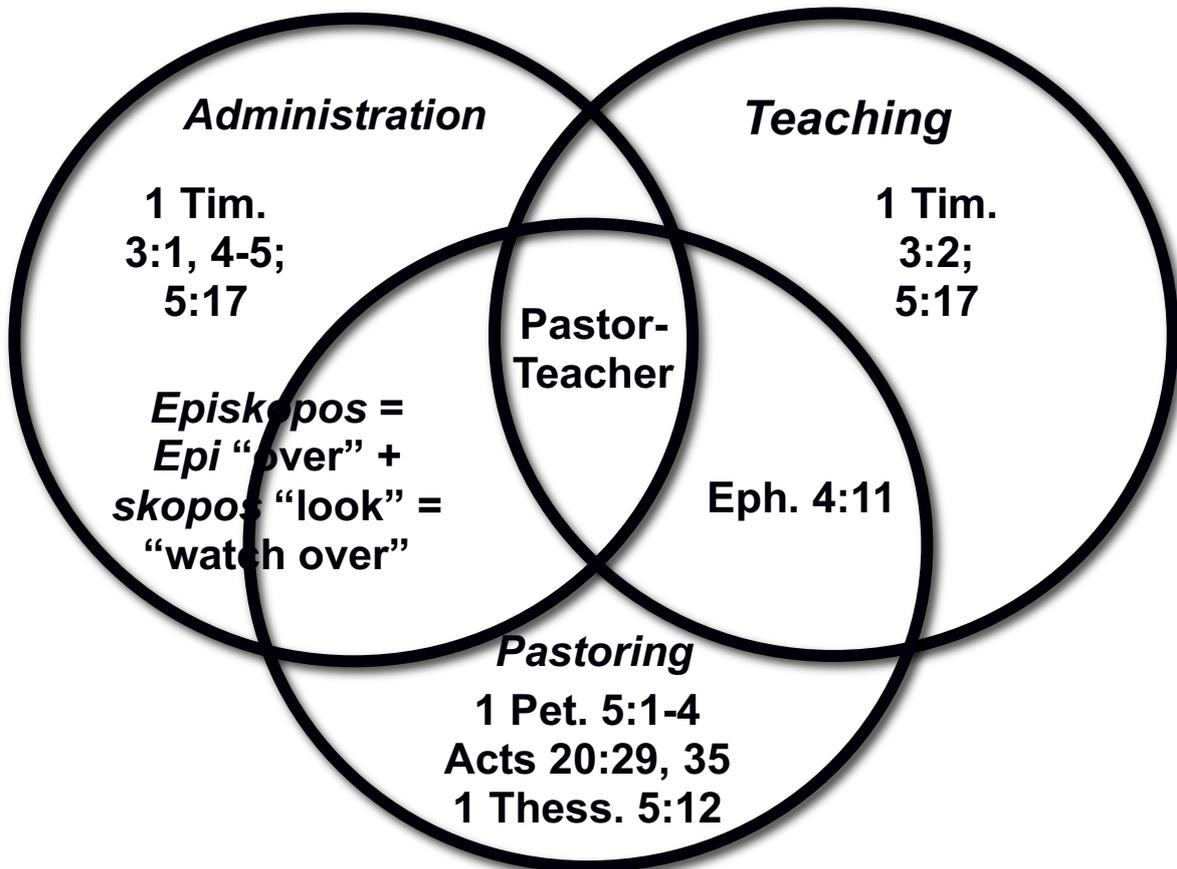
- A. Elders must be evaluated by 20-22 criteria, depending on how one divides similar characteristics in parallel texts in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
- B. Please refer to the NT Survey studies under Selecting Leadership (p. 223), Elder Qualifications (pp. 224-230), and Deacon Qualifications (pp. 231-234). Summaries of the qualifications of both offices are on pages 235-236.

## V. Difficult Leadership: Why is being an elder so difficult?

- A. Few Christian men can genuinely qualify for the 20 or more elder requirements noted in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.
- B. One can be sure that Satan and his demons will concentrate untiring efforts to make sure leaders will not function in their biblical role.
- C. The time demands to meet people’s pastoral needs are extensive! Few men manage their own family well while meeting the flock’s needs—especially if they work outside the church.

## Three Major Tasks of Elders

The multitude of tasks that elders handle can be boiled down into three general areas: **teaching** (point A on page 236a), **pastoring** (protect and lead on points B and C on page 236a), and **administration** (serve/care as well as testify on pages 236b-236c). These three roles overlap for the pastor-teacher (Eph. 4:11) as he fulfills them in a greater capacity due to his having more time available to meet needs and also due to the opportunities that come with his position.



## Elder & Pastor Interview Questions

*64 questions to ask potential shepherds of the flock*

### I. Personal Summary

<b>Name &amp; Age</b>	
<b>Occupation</b>	
<b>Wife &amp; Yrs Married</b>	
<b>Children &amp; Ages</b>	
<b>Year Saved</b>	
<b>Year Baptized</b>	
<b>Ministries with Our Church</b>	
<b>Past Ministry Roles</b>	

### II. Motivations

- A. Why have you chosen to be committed to our church?
- B. What do you think you can bring to the leadership team as an elder?
- C. How long can we count on your involvement in this position? Our By-Laws say 5 years.

### III. Passions

- A. Joys in Life
  - 1. What are your spiritual gifts?
  - 2. What things bring you the most joy?
- B. Life Goal(s) & Calling
  - 1. Why did God put you on earth?
  - 2. How are you progressing in accomplishing God's calling for you?
  - 3. How do you show a commitment to world mission?
  - 4. Why did you make the specific choices you made in your education?

**C. Personal Devotional Life**

1. Describe your prayer life.
2. Describe your Bible study and reading program.
3. How many times have you read through the entire Bible?
4. How and when do you pray with your wife and children?

**IV. Background****A. Family of Origin**

1. What memories of your parents remain with you?
2. How are you improving your marriage beyond your parent's marriage?
3. Describe your relationships with your siblings while growing up and right now.

**B. Salvation Testimony**

1. How did you trust Christ?
2. In what ways has Jesus changed your life?

**C. Ministry Experience**

1. How have you served in similar roles to the elder role you are seeking now?
2. Who has had the greatest influence in your spiritual growth? How?
3. How have you helped nurture those outside your family in spiritual growth?
4. What is your objective of preaching and your process of sermon preparation?

D. Family Life

1. Marriage

- a) Have you ever married prior to your present marriage?
- b) What stages have you experienced in your marriage?
- c) How do you lead your wife spiritually?
- d) How does your wife feel about you becoming an elder or pastor?
- e) Is there anyone right now with whom your wife has a broken relationship?  
How?

2. Children

- a) How do you nurture your children spiritually?
- b) What present issues are you addressing in your children?

E. Relationships

1. Relate a time when you had to repair a broken relationship.
2. Is there anyone right now with whom you have a broken relationship? How?

F. Personal Life

1. Which of the 20 elder qualifications is your *strongest* area (Tit. 1; 1 Tim. 3; p. 235)?
2. Which of the 20 elder qualifications is your *weakest* area (Tit. 1; 1 Tim. 3; p. 235)?
3. What character traits are you presently working on?

## V. Theology

### A. Doctrinal Statement

1. Have you read through our entire church doctrinal statement?
2. What part of it do you have even the slightest contrary opinion?

### B. Church Practice

1. Have you read through our entire church By-Laws?
2. What part of it do you have even the slightest contrary opinion?

### C. Other Theological Matters

1. What NT church offices apply today (e.g., apostles, elders, deacons, etc.)?
2. Where does the ultimate human authority in the local church lie?
3. Controversial Spiritual Gifts
  - a) Define prophecy and its place in the church today.
  - b) Define tongues and its place in the church today.
4. Role of Women in the Church
  - a) What ministries do you think Scripture prohibits for women? Why?
  - b) Does the Bible reserve the roles of elders and worship leaders for men? Why?
5. Church Discipline
  - a) What should be the church's goal in disciplining errant members?
  - b) Describe when you have seen church discipline and your role in the process.
6. Baptism
  - a) Are sprinkling and pouring biblical modes of baptism? Why or why not?
  - b) Should immersion be required for church membership? Why or why not?
  - c) Must church members have believer's baptism? Why or why not?

## Combating Materialism

One problem that Christian workers face is thinking that materialism cannot have grasp on them. This is why Paul warned Timothy against becoming a lover of money (1 Tim 6:3-10). Yet how can pastors, missionaries, and all believers fight the grip of materialism in practical terms? Here are some suggestions, most of which I keep myself:

1. Give your speaking honorariums over to the church or to another Christian organization—or don't get paid for your speaking in the first place.
2. Require approval from someone (e.g., your spouse) for purchases over a certain amount (we use \$100 as a guideline, except for groceries!).
3. Don't make a purchase over a certain amount without both praying about it and sleeping overnight on it. (My wife's and my guide is \$100 here too, which has saved us from buying many a vacuum cleaner and encyclopedia set! Again, groceries are exempt here.)
4. Commit to living on a certain income for a time period and give the excess money earned back to the Lord's work.
5. Don't let sales people into your home unless both husband and wife agree. This means that a salesman will never enter your home when only one spouse is there.
6. Put budgeted money into respective envelopes and stop spending when they empty.
7. Don't compare your salary with others. Don't ask what others make or tell them your own salary. This will keep you from the twin sins of pride (if you make more) and jealousy (if you make less). Sometimes ignorance is better than knowledge.
8. Don't purchase anything on credit (except a house) that you cannot pay off within one month. This will prevent purchase of depreciating items such as cars, furniture, computers, etc.
9. Never gamble—at the horse races, card games, or stock market. Instead, put your savings in lower-risk investments. They may have lower rates of return but at least you can't lose all your money. Avoiding the stock markets (except mutual funds when someone else is managing your money) will also keep you from the temptation to always watch the rates to discern whether to buy or sell rather than invest yourself in ministry.