

A Different Way to be Human

1 Timothy 3:1-13

Their reputations will be proven by their character, maturity, and daily living.

Remember: Hymenaeus and Alexander have already been removed. There are overseers (bishops) who are currently in place that need to be evaluated.

Side Note: Very similar list in Titus (1:6-9) although a slightly different situation. Titus was given the task of appointing overseers.

“Those who hold leadership positions in the church are people who model the gospel message that there is a different way to be human, a different kind of lifestyle from what we see in the world all around.” ~ NT Wright

vs. 1, Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task.

episkopos - bishop (Dealing with finances, leading, as well as shepherding / pastoral).

Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus: To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons.

Titus 1:7 As an overseer of God's household,

Acts 20:28 Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.

1 Peter 5:2 Shepherd God's flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; not out of greed for money but eagerly;

Necessary details to be aware of:

- There is no (he, him, or his) in the passage.
- The grammar of Greek.
- Idiom - Husband of one wife. (Speaking to both genders).
- Idiom - has been the wife of one husband 5:9 (Speaking specifically to widows) Women only.

Women as elders

Priscilla and Aquilla,

Acts 18:2-4, 8, Along side Paul they help start the Corinthian church. Imagine the conversations the three of them had about Jesus, faith, and the kingdom.

Acts 18:18-21,

- Both Priscilla and Aquila are trusted by Paul and given the green light (from an Apostle) to shepherd and lead.
- P&A teach Apollos doctrine and share their lives as well. Apollos is receiving the benefit of P&A learning from Paul. (2 Timothy 2:2)

Lydia, **Acts 16:14-15, 40** A God-fearing woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, was listening. The Lord opened her heart to respond to what Paul was saying. **15** After she and her household were baptized, she urged us, “If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house.” And she persuaded us. **40** After leaving the jail, they came to Lydia's house, where they saw and encouraged the brothers and sisters, and departed.

Junia, **Romans 16:7** (NLT) Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews, who were in prison with me. They are highly respected among the apostles and became followers of Christ before I did.

- In addition to the twelve apostles, there was a larger circle of apostles who were, like Paul, Timothy, Barnabas, Silas, Apollos, and others, traveling missionary leaders.

Nympha, Colossians 4:15 Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her home.

One more for good measure...

Mary Magdalene, John 20:11-18

NT Wright refers to Mary as the “apostle to the apostles”. Jesus chose Mary as the first evangelist and the foundational proclaimer (preacher) of the resurrection.

When trying to make sense of the meaning of scripture one must read ambiguous (confusing) or highly specific passages in light of clear ones.

Insight: We can not say with certainty how the church was organized in the first century.

Luke 6:45 A good person produces good out of the good stored up in his heart. An evil person produces evil out of the evil stored up in his heart, for his mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.

Goodness -> the word for good in Hebrew is Tov (טוֹב).
Complete / whole

Galatians 5:22-26 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

- A person's character is a presenting factor in leadership decisions. Character precedes gifts, skills, abilities, and education.

vs. 2-7,

Above reproach

Faithfully committed to spouse

Self-controlled

Sensible

Respectable

Hospitable

Able to teach

Not an excessive drinker

Not violent, but gentle

Not quarrelsome (argumentative)

Not greedy (lover of money)

Ability to manage household well

Children are persons of respect and dignity

If not their own home how can they manage the church?

*Wisdom at work.

- A tov parent's character will shape the character of a child, so a child's character can function as a barometer of the parent's faith.
- What seems implicit is that being a household father is connected to being a church bishop, creating an intrinsic and organic link between household and church communal life and structure.
- Such a calling in the community of faith was structured after the paterfamilias, evoking the importance of submission (malleable / humble) to the leader of the family.
- Furthermore, the bishop nurtures faithfulness to the gospel through correct teaching as well as skillful admonishment to correct those who have been duped by false teaching or compassionate rebuke for those struggling with sin.

*Scot McKnight, The Pastoral Epistles, ed. Ben Witherington III, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge, United Kingdom; New York; Australia; New Delhi; Singapore: Cambridge University Press, 2023), 70.

Not a new convert (situational) -> Be wise as to not cause pride which will lead to selfish endeavors.

Acts 14:1-3, 21-23 In Iconium they entered the Jewish synagogue, as usual, and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. **2** But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. **3** So they stayed there a long time and spoke boldly for the Lord, who testified to the message of his grace by enabling them to do signs and wonders. **21** After they had preached the gospel in that town and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch, **22** strengthening the disciples by encouraging them to continue in the faith and by telling them, "It is necessary to go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." **23** When they had appointed elders for them in every church and prayed with fasting, they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Is this person well liked in their vocation, community, etc.?

- The overseer is one that is respected socially and gifted in the interaction with others.

James 3:1 Not many should become teachers, my brothers, because you know that we will receive a stricter judgment.

vs. 8-13, Deacons (*diakonos* / *διάκονος* - servant / ministry provider)

1 Corinthians 3:5 After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God's servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us.

2 Corinthians 3:6 He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old written covenant ends in death; but under the new covenant, the Spirit gives life.

Worthy of respect

Not Hypocritical
Not an excessive drinker
Not greedy (lover of money)

Holding the mystery of the faith (understand and live the beauty of the good news of Jesus and the inauguration of his kingdom).

Tested first (demonstrating their wholeness).

vs. 11, Women (Deaconess)

Phoebe, **Romans 16:1-2** (NLT) I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deacon in the church in Cenchrea. **2** Welcome her in the Lord as one who is worthy of honor among God's people. Help her in whatever she needs, for she has been helpful (*prostatis* / *προστάτις*) to many, and especially to me.

Prostatis -> patroness, protectress, a range of meaning including leader, chief, presiding officer, ruler, guardian, champion

Worthy of respect

Not slanderers

Self Controlled

Faithful in everything (understand and live the beauty of the good news of Jesus and the inauguration of his kingdom).

Faithfully committed to spouse

Ability to manage household well (children are a testimony)

To serve as a deacon develops confidence, assurance of faith and contentment in the work.

My life is making a difference and it is all because of Jesus!

Remember: Healthy & whole churches require healthy and whole leaders.

Question:

- What does your character demonstrate concerning your relationship with Jesus?
- Is it congruent with the values of the kingdom?
- How do those outside (non-believers) view who you are? Do they notice a difference in your attitude, care, life compass, goodness?
- Does your life align with the Hebrew concept of Tov?
- Are you feeling the freedom to make a difference in the particularity of your life all because of Jesus?
- Is it possible the Holy Spirit could be asking you to take a step of faith, continue to grow in character, and make yourself available to serve the church (body of Christ) as an overseer or deacon?