

“The Pastor’s Job Qualifications” - 1 Timothy 3:1-7

Imagine you're building a house and you hire a contractor because they said they have experience as they've built 100 houses over the years. But you decide to look a bit deeper and discover that:

- Several of them have collapsed due to bad construction.**
- His employees don't trust him.**
- He has multiple lawsuits.**
- He has a reputation for cheating customers.**
- He takes way longer to finish the job and frequently raises the cost.**

Would you hire that contractor? No, because even though they have the credentials, they lack the character. The same can be true of church leadership. Paul is instructing Timothy on how God wants His church to function, and a vital part of the church is the leadership that runs it.

One interesting thing you'll notice is that the list of God's job qualifications for a Pastor are not “does he have a degree?” or “is he a charismatic speaker?” or “does he look cool?”. He doesn't even tell us anywhere about how to set up a church government. He doesn't talk about if a church should be congregational led, pastor led, or elder/deacon group led. Though I can argue I see one of them more possible or defensible, the truth is we don't see a specific, full form of church government anywhere in the New Testament. The closest statement is Paul saying God is the head of the Church, do what He wants.

And what God focuses on when it comes to the leadership of His church is very different to what people, including ourselves, might think.

I remember back when the Hillsong documentary dropped they talked about the type of pastor they wanted for NYC. Their qualifications were finding someone who was young and culturally relevant, charismatic, a strong communicator, socially connected, with a compelling public personality who could mingle with celebrities, represent the brand, and build a large church. So they picked Carl Lentz.

But we know what happened. We saw the aftermath. Multiple affairs and the opening of a can of worms for a Church that had a lot of issues beyond just unqualified leadership. They didn't pick based on God's qualifications, but man's. We do this too, sometimes we may put on the list “Level of Education” or “Titles” or “Successful business man” or “Likable” or even “their my friend/

family member.” It seems the qualities that can make someone a good cultural influencer or organization builder don’t make you a good pastor!

David Guzik - “Going to seminary doesn’t make one qualified for spiritual leadership. Being a good talker doesn’t make one qualified for spiritual leadership. Natural or spiritual gifts in themselves do not qualify one for spiritual leadership. What one gives in money or volunteer time does not qualify them for spiritual leadership. What qualifies a man for spiritual leadership is godly character—and godly character established according to these clear criteria.”

We have to remember it is God’s Church, and we need to look for the leadership He wants.

1. You Must Know What Pastoring Is v1

1. **3:1 NKJV - “This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.”**
2. **If a man:** we established last week that Paul established that God wants male leadership. But Paul is about to blow up the idea that leadership is decided just because of your biological sex. Some think like that, and those that do show they are completely foolish, knowing nothing of biblical qualifications.
 1. Paul is going to show that though, yes, this office is for a male, that alone isn’t the qualification. Within a Church, only a small group of men would qualify for the office. Currently, if you take the recorded world population and the amount of pastors we have on record, only 0.06% of the world’s population are pastors. Now if you add the word “qualified by 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1” that number is gonna drop even lower.
 2. So being a man does not by default make you viable for leadership, be it in the church or even your home! Do you meet the qualifications that God has for that role?
3. **Desires:** Another thing is there has to be a desire. There is both a calling and a desire. Pastors shouldn’t be in the role on a whim or just because there was nothing else to do. You’d be surprised how many people end up in pulpits because they think of the paycheck, the fame, or didn’t know what else to do in life.
4. **Bishop:** The New Testament uses three words that seem interchangeable: Bishop, Elder and Pastor. The Bishop comes from the Greek mindset and means overseer. Elder comes from the Jewish mindset and means carries the idea of a wise person, usually wise because they’ve lived for some time. Pastor means Shepherd, and was a general idea. In any case if these

were the same office, in the end, the man should be a capable overseer, who's wise and can shepherd God's people.

5. **Good Work:** Likely the two most important words of verse one! Pastoring is not a position, it is not a title, it's a work, and should be a good work. It is an honorable, good, and often difficult work. So you need to find someone who is willing to do the work. You would be surprised how many people serve, serve, and serve until they get the title. Once they have it, they stop serving and start ordering!

1. They think they achieved the goal, and now don't need to dirty themselves, now they can tell others to do it. People who think like that have zero place in church leadership.
2. *"What is the use of a lazy minister? He is no good either to the world, to the Church, or to himself. He is a dishonor to the noblest profession that can be bestowed upon the sons of men."*
- Spurgeon

2. You Must Know God's Qualifications for the Role v2-7

1. **3:2-7 NKJV - A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; 3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; 4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); 6 not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.**
2. So what are God's clear qualifications? What does God look for in a man truly called and capable to fill that palace of leadership?
 1. Now before we go through with them. Keep in mind there are ways we can become legalistic about these. Remember these are men, who sin and are flawed. One outburst of anger 20 years ago doesn't disqualify them. One lazy day doesn't mean fire them.
 2. *David Guzik - "However, this is not a rigid list which demands perfection in all areas; they are both goals to reach for and general criteria for selection. One looks at this list and asks, "Does the man in question desire all these things with his whole heart?" "Does that desire show itself in his life?" "Are there others available who better fulfill the requirements of this list?"*
3. **Blameless** - It literally means nothing to take hold of. It is a broad word meaning that they live an overall righteous life and can't be accused of any grievous sin. Their track record is clean. You don't find they have another family somewhere, they don't have arrest warrants or are known to lie in

their business. Though they aren't perfect, no one can bring a major accusation against them.

4. **Husband of one wife** - This means a one woman man. It doesn't mean he HAS to be married, because if so, Paul, Timothy, Titus, and even Jesus would be out of a job! But the meaning is that he isn't a flirt, a fornicator, and adulterer. He conducts himself with purity, not as a playboy. The idea is that his love, affection and heart is for ONE WOMAN, his wife. Remember in this time period, some practiced polygamy, though Rome actually looked down on it, but having affairs and multiple lovers was a whole other matter.
 1. You'd have a pagan get saved, and walk in with his wife and concubine. So it was clear that the sexual ethic and character of a man mattered if he was to lead the church. This includes not just other women, but the depiction or images of women as well.
5. **Temperate** - This means they are not given to extremes. They don't swing from one side to the other emotionally or on ideas or vision. They are reliable and stable people. Some see faithful, temperate people as boring because they don't seem exciting or spontaneous at times. But stability in a leader, someone who isn't ruled by emotions and desires, is a characteristic God desires in a leader.
6. **Sober-minded** - It means a person who is able to think clearly and with clarity. They know when they can joke and when to be serious. He knows the value of things and doesn't cheapen things by acting foolish in moments he should be serious.
7. **Of Good Behavior** - It is the same word in Greek that is used for "modest" when addressing how women should dress in chapter 2. The idea is of someone organized or orderly. They act and live properly and in moderation, not having crazy extravagant lives.
8. **Hospitable** - They are willing to open their homes to friends and strangers and are generous hosts. In that time, hospitality was essential to help people who traveled. But even today, pastors should be people who are kind and gracious hosts and open their homes, not closed off individuals.
9. **Able to teach** - notice it doesn't say excellent teacher or speaker. It says able, be it in public or small group settings. The leader doesn't have to be the greatest speaker, but should be able to explain and teach Biblical truth clearly, be it on a pulpit or over coffee. They might not be the best in the pulpit, but they can understand, explain and defend God's Word.
10. **Not given to wine** - the idea is not being addicted to wine or intoxicating drink. Today, there are many other addictions that can be added, but the principle is they aren't under the control or addiction to anything. Though the verse does not prohibit drinking outright, the easiest way to not be addicted to anything is simply not using it. It should also be noted that the alcohol industry of today and the use of wine back then differ greatly.

1. Some people love to quote Jesus' miracle of turning water into wine. Yet have little understanding of what the action actually meant. It was about revealing who Jesus was, not if Jesus endorsed wine drinking. Other passages in scripture show His thoughts on it like this.
 2. Plus, abstaining from it can also be necessary to show love to a weaker believer, and taught in 1 Corinthians and Romans.
 3. But if someone thinks losing their chance to drink alcohol means killing the party, that person has zero place in leadership. Though not prohibited, they don't need it to have a good time.
11. **Not Violent** - They aren't a violent person publicly or privately. Someone whose natural reaction is to throw hands isn't qualified to leadership in God's house. He is not someone always looking for a fight. Though God can always transform them into peace makers.
 12. **Not greedy for money** - The ministry is not for making money. Greedy people are not to be in church leadership. Meaning that a person who claims to both be a pastor and that God wants him to get a third private jet might be lying about both of them!
 13. **Gentle** - Another word is kind, patient or tolerant. They are like Jesus, showing patience and kindness to people who may not deserve it. They don't lose their temper easily, but show mercy and patience.
 14. **Not quarrelsome** - They are not someone always fighting over something or other. Today, looking at someone's social media comments can show if they like to cause quarrels and fights. They aren't brawlers either. It is not that they don't stand up for their beliefs or debate, but that they can disagree agreeably.
 15. **Not covetous** - This is broader than just greed for money. This is a man who lives an unsatisfied life, always wanting more, especially what they can't have or isn't theirs. If they just had that wife, if they just had that house, if they just had a church like that one, they'd be happy. There was a pastor who is now disqualified, and it started because he wanted to be the guy who prayed with the president, and wanted it so much he pushed to get his church into a place that could make his name big, and in the process destroyed the church.
 16. **Rules his own house well...Children in submission** - A godly leader demonstrates his leadership first at home. How is his marriage? Does he take care of his house? Is he a good father? If his marriage is in shambles, house is falling apart and kids are the spawns of Satan, it'll be hard for him to effectively lead the church. You want someone that can manage their own home. He can pay his bills, maintain his house, is a good spouse and husband.
 1. Now, something to think about. Kids who are rebellious may try to purposefully disqualify their fathers from ministry. There can be

rebellious children even in godly homes. So then we have to ask ourselves “is the child rebelling because of their parent or in spite of the job as a parent?” Meaning the parent might be a godly father who is qualified, but the child refuses to submit.

2. That is something to take into account. And if the child is old enough, they may be told to live on their own, but while under their roof, they are to obey their parents. This issue is more complicated and takes time to observe.
 3. It should also be noted the wife can also disqualify the husband. Over the years I’ve seen more men disqualified by the ambition or actions of their wife than by their own. So for a leader, the whole family has to be taken into account.
17. **Not a novice** - Simply put, they should not be a new or young believer. The word is literally “newly planted”. One of the greatest mistakes people make, especially if a “famous” person gets saved, is they put a new believer into leadership and preach way too fast. All you are asking for is for Satan to corrupt them and make them prideful. Especially if they were someone of influence or power, you take them SLOW. Even Paul went three years into Arabia, and then was in obscurity for around 10 years before he became a pastor. Physical age is also not a measurement for spiritual maturity. You want mature, godly believers who know how to walk with God, less Satan make them prideful and destroy them, to the detriment of many.
18. **A good testimony** - There was a time churches would post in the local news paper that they were evaluating someone to be a pastor or elder, and that if anyone in town had credible evidence against them to bring it forward before they did so. The person should have a good reputation outside of the church. Their neighbors shouldn’t have anything bad to say about them. Their bosses or employees shouldn’t think badly of them. Their testimony both outside and inside the church should be a good one. They can’t be one person in church and another outside.

3. **So what does it mean for you?**

1. Do you have God’s perspective on leadership? Do you look to people to meet these qualifications for a leader or do you have your own list?
2. God will place people you would never expect in these roles, and reject others who seem to even have leadership skills from a worldly perspective.
3. But even more so, we should all aspire to these qualities. Because all these qualities are seen in Jesus. And the ultimate goal of walking with God is to be more like Him. These are godly and good character qualities to cultivate, so why wouldn’t we want to have them present in our lives, be we called into pastoral office or not.

4. Take time, read the list over, and compare it to what you think a leader should be, and ask the Lord to change your view on leadership. This is the type of man God wants helping lead His house, and so that's the type of man we should seek.

Discussion Questions — 1 Timothy 3:1–7

1. Why do you think God places so much emphasis on a leader's character rather than their education, charisma, popularity, or accomplishments?
2. What is the difference between viewing pastoral ministry as a "position" or "title" versus viewing it as a "good work"? How should that affect the way someone approaches leadership?
3. Which of the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:2–7 do you think is easiest to overlook when evaluating a potential church leader? Why?
4. Why do you think Paul connects a man's ability to manage his household with his ability to care for the church? What does this teach us about the relationship between private character and public ministry?
5. How can a person's desire for recognition, influence, money, or a bigger ministry become a danger to their leadership? What are some warning signs that ambition has become unhealthy?
6. Why is spiritual maturity more important than simply being talented, successful, or well-known when considering someone for leadership? What dangers can come from putting someone into leadership too quickly?
7. If these qualifications are ultimately qualities that we see in Jesus, which one do you personally need to ask God to develop more in your own life—even if you have no desire to become a pastor?