



## "Growing in Personal Character"

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### I. A Noble Task

1 Timothy 3:1 "The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task."

#### A. The Shepherding \_\_\_\_\_

- "overseers" -episkopoi
- "elders" - presbyteroi

Acts 20:17 "Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders (presbyters) of the church to come to him."

Acts 20:28 "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers (episkopos), to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood."

#### B. The Stirred \_\_\_\_\_

1 Timothy 3:1b "If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task."

### II. A Life Well Lived

1 Timothy 3:2a "Therefore an overseer must be above reproach"

Daniel 6:4 "Then the high officials and the satraps sought to find a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom, but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him."

#### A. Learning \_\_\_\_\_ Mastery

1 Timothy 3:2a "Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled"

##### 1. Sober-Minded

1 Peter 1:13 "Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

1 Peter 5:8 "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."

##### 2. Self-Controlled

Proverbs 25:28 "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls."

Proverbs 16:32 "Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city."

James 3:5-6 "So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell."

Genesis 39:9 "He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

#### B. Developing a \_\_\_\_\_ Demeanor

1 Timothy 3:2b "sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable"

1 Timothy 3:8 "Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain."

1 Timothy 3:11 "Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things."

#### C. Rejecting False \_\_\_\_\_

1 Timothy 3:3 "not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money"

##### 1. Not a \_\_\_\_\_

1 Timothy 3:8b "not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain."

##### 2. Not \_\_\_\_\_

(1 Samuel 12:2b-4; 1 Timothy 6:5,10)

#### D. Practicing \_\_\_\_\_ Governance

1 Timothy 3:3 "not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money"

##### 1. Not \_\_\_\_\_ but Gentle

Matthew 11:29a "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart"

Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

##### 2. Not \_\_\_\_\_

(1 Timothy 6:4b-5; Titus 2:8; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Numbers 12:1-3)



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## BACKGROUND:

In today's passage, 1 Timothy 3:1-11, we see that discipleship involves growing in personal character. Paul applies this principle to the role of church leaders or overseers. The word "overseer" is translated from the Greek word episcope, which means "to inspect" or "to look after". An overseer is tasked with looking out for the church. Paul only identifies two church offices – overseers and deacons (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1,8). In today's context overseers typically hold the office of elders and pastors. Deacons are often referred to as ministry leaders.

## DIGGING DEEPER:

**Paul identifies several characteristics that would qualify someone to oversee the affairs of the local church. The biblical qualifications for the role of an elder/pastor in a church are to be above reproach, a husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, well thought of, and able to manage their household with dignity.**

1. Why is it important that followers of Jesus who have not been called into church leadership exemplify the same characteristics?

2. Read 2 Peter 1:5-10. How do these qualities parallel those of an overseer or deacon? Why does Peter stress that these qualities should be increasing as our faith grows?

3. Paul warns that overseers should not be a recent convert. What are some potential pitfalls with a leader who may be spiritually immature?

**Deacons should be dignified, hold their faith in a clear conscience, and be tested. They should not be double-tongued, have any addictions or be greedy for dishonest gain. Their wives should be dignified and avoid slanderous talk.**

4. How would you define dignity?

5. How might a church leader who falls "into disgrace, into a snare of the devil" harm the flock?

6. What role does a "clear conscience" play in a believer's life?

7. What does "double-tongued" mean?

8. How are addictive behaviors, greed, and slander contrary to the fruit of the Spirit?

**All church leaders should be spiritually mature and full of the Spirit (Acts 6:5) Overseers are responsible for the spiritual, emotional, and physical health of the flock.**

9. Read 1 Peter 5:2-3. Why is it important that church leaders serve because they are willing to without lording over others?

10. What could be the dangers of lording over someone you are responsible to shepherd or care for?

**Servant-leader is a term that has become popular among Christians. It is a phrase that encapsulates the idea that we should follow the example of Jesus, who "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).**

11. In what ways do you serve others and give of yourself to them?

**We need to continually pray for the elders, pastors, ministry leaders, and volunteers in our church. The responsibility of caring for and overseeing the body is a weighty and vulnerable thing.**

12. Why should you be praying for Shiloh? How can you improve this aspect of your prayer life?

## TAKING IT HOME:

**All overseers, deacons and church leaders are disciples. Every follower of Jesus shares in the burden of sharing the gospel, making disciples, handling the scriptures, living a godly life, and serving others with humility and love.**

13. How has your personal character grown during your walk with Jesus?

14. Which characteristics discussed in this sermon do you find challenging?

15. Which ministry or area of service can you see yourself being called into to serve?

16. How does your view of these characteristics change when you think about the fact God desires all His followers to portray them?