

### INTRODUCTION / REVIEW

Paul wrote 1 Timothy to Timothy around AD 62-67, after his release from Roman imprisonment, to guide him in confronting false teachers in Ephesus and establishing proper assembly function. This letter, preserved for us, helps us understand God, Jesus Christ, and proper conduct in God's household. Paul begins with his apostleship by God's command, addressing Timothy as a beloved, faithful protégé.

He charges Timothy to instruct certain men against other doctrines, myths, and endless genealogies that fuel speculation rather than God's stewardship in the faith, the objective doctrine believed. The goal of instruction is love from a pure heart (clean thoughts free of corruption), a good conscience (godly evaluation), and sincere faith (unfeigned doctrine based on knowledge). Some strayed into empty babble, desiring to teach the Law without understanding their confident assertions, like Pharisees or Job's friends. The Law is good when used lawfully, not for the righteous (justified believers) but to reveal sin and the need for grace.

Paul's testimony showcases God's mercy and overflowing grace despite his past, leading to the faithful statement: Christ came to save sinners, with Paul foremost, demonstrating perfect patience. Timothy must fight the good fight, keeping faith (apostolic doctrine) and a good conscience (life of love and purity), unlike Hymenaeus and Alexander under apostolic judgment.

In chapter 2, believers relate to the world through prayer for all, including kings, for peaceful lives in godliness, as God desires all saved through knowledge of truth via one mediator, Christ, who ransomed all. Men pray and serve without anger. Women dress modestly with good deeds, learn in tranquility with yielding to lead, not teaching authoritatively over men, based on creation order and the fall. Women who desire to participate in the teaching ministry are to do so through raising children in faith, love, separation, and a sound mind, fulfilling their role.

This groundwork in doctrinal defense, grace's abundance in salvation and life, and assembly order transitions to chapter 3's leadership qualifications. Paul shifts from general instructions to specific roles, ensuring elders and deacons embody the godliness and sound doctrine from chapters 1-2, protecting the assembly from false teaching while modeling spiritual maturity and good behavior in God's household.

### 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-7 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- By the end of Paul's ministry, the church had developed well-known doctrinal statements. Paul identifies each of these as a "trustworthy statement." The Greek is "πιστὸς ὁ λόγος – pistos ho logos," which translated is "faithful the word;" translated into English as "the word is faithful."

The phrase found 5 times in the Bible, and all in the Pastoral Epistles, refers to a concise true statement. We need to understand these statements not as difficult but as basic doctrinal statements. This section is another clear basic doctrinal statement.

The other four are in reference to the most basic concepts of doctrine concerning salvation and living as a believer. How does this passage fit?

For doctrine to be taught and upheld, there must be qualified, strong, and faithful leadership. The doctrine of biblical leadership is designed to uphold biblical doctrine.

- The section is about character and skill: "overseer" focuses on watchful care; qualifications like "not a new believer" or "able to teach" speak to expertise and warn against pride. Others speak to characteristics that would disqualify a person, while others emphasize the good qualities of a proven character.
- The list is extensive but should not be considered exhaustive. Not every overt and harmful sin is mentioned (theft, immorality), and not every virtue is mentioned (mercy, love). So, these qualifications should be seen as in addition to the character of godliness.
- The focus is on proven spiritual maturity, leadership, and excellent character, aligning with the letter's purpose of orderly conduct in God's household (3:15).

### THREE QUESTIONS

1. What is the office of overseer, and how does it compare to elder/pastor?
2. What are the qualifications of an overseer (elder/pastor)?
3. What are not listed in the qualifications that are typically thought of as qualifications for evangelical churches? Are these biblically legitimate?

### EXPOSITION

1. What is the office of overseer, and how does it compare to elder/pastor? The "office of overseer" is introduced as a "fine work" (καλοῦ ἔργου, kalou ergou), good work. The verb ὀρέγω (oregō, aspires) means to reach out or stretch toward, implying earnest desire; it's commendable when aligned with God's will with a proper attitude (1 Timothy 6:10-negative; Hebrews 11:16-positive).

# 1 Timothy Lesson 8

## 1 Timothy 3:1-7 – Elders

Overseer – (ἐπίσκοπή episkopē) normally is translated as visitation. In Acts 1:20, it is translated as office. The visitation in Luke 19:44 indicates the time when the Lord came to take note and evaluate the people. By implication, 1 Timothy 3:1 indicates the office of one who is to evaluate the local people.

Comparing to "elder" (πρεσβύτερος, presbyteros) and "pastor/shepherd" (ποιμήν, poimēn): These are interchangeable in Scripture, describing the same function. Acts 20:17, 28 equates elders with overseers, tasking them to "shepherd" (ποιμαίνειν, poimainein) the flock, used metaphorically for guiding and protecting (John 10:11; Ephesians 4:11). Titus 1:5-7 explicitly has elder and overseer as synonyms, with similar qualifications. Historically, in 1st-century assemblies, elders were mature men providing oversight (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). ἐπίσκοπος is functional, focused on doctrinal stewardship, providing guidance and protection rather than authority. A person who has been given a position to care for, look after, evaluate, and have an accountable concern. This is more than a careful evaluation; this is an involvement in the lives of the people he cares for.

Careful, this does not mean prying or forcing. This cannot be done without the consent of the ones he looks after.

2. What are the qualifications of an overseer (elder/pastor)? Qualifications emphasize character, teaching skills, and ensuring leaders embody the doctrine they guard (1:19, 4:16). The list is an instruction with an imperative force (δεῖ εἶμί, dei eimi; must be).
  - Above reproach (ἀνεπίλημπτος, anepilēmtos—above reproach, irreproachable). This is a negative particle with “ἐπιλαμβάνω *epilambanō*,” not one who is not able to be laid hold of, seized. The implication is not open to attack.
  - Husband of one wife (μία γυναῖκα ἄνθρωπος, mia gynē anēr): Literally "one-woman man," emphasizing fidelity, not mandating marriage. Excludes polygamy, common in Greco-Roman culture, and implies sexual purity; not a bar to widowers or divorcees who are currently faithful if remarried.
  - Temperate (νηφάλιος, nēphalios): One who is clear-headed, free from rash, confused, or extreme thinking. Sober in mind. Careful in the mind.
  - Prudent (σώφρων, sōphrōn): Classical Greek contrasted this with a self-indulgent man. A man who desired what he should, as he should, when he should. LXX has this mean a quality of the mind: one who restrains one's emotions and desires. Meaning – One who has his mind in control of his emotions.
  - Respectable (κόσμιος, kosmios): One who is well ordered, self-disciplined. Genuine moral, respected: a life in good order (used in 2:9 for women).

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### 1 Timothy 3:1-7 – Elders

- Hospitable (φιλόξενος, philoxenos): one who loves strangers or foreigners, usually implies one who is hosting (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2).
- Able to teach (διδασκτικός, didaktikos): skilled in instruction; only skill-based trait, vital for communicating doctrine, correction, and refuting those in error.
- Not addicted to wine (μή πάροινος, mē paroinos): not lingering beside wine; not next to wine; not one who stays near wine. Again, this is a character trait, not a prohibition against having a drink.
- Not pugnacious (μή πλήκτης, mē plēktēs): not a person who gets physically violent.
  - But gentle (ἐπιεικής, epieikēs): yielding, considerate, forbears offenses, reasonable, suitable, moderate in attitude (Philippians 4:5).
- Peaceable (ἄμαχος, amachos): **not** one who is quarrelsome, not a rebel rouser.
- Free from the love of money (ἀφιλάργυρος, philargyros): literally, **not** loving silver, not greedy, guards against exploitation or improper motivation.
- Manages household well (τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκος καλῶς προϊίστημι, tou idiou oikos kalōs proistēmi): leads family effectively, with children that follow leadership with dignity and take it seriously (σεμνότης, semnotēs—seriousness). Rhetorical question (3:5) links observable (οἰκονόμος, oikonomos stewardship).
- Not a new convert (μή νεόφυτος, mē neophytos): not newly planted, avoids pride that leads to the devil's commendation (τυφώω, typhōō—puffed up, cf. 1:4 speculation).
- Good reputation outside (μαρτυρία καλή ἔχω ἀπό τῶν ἔξωθεν, martyria kalē echō apo tōn exōthen): positive external testimony, prevents traps (1 Peter 2:12).

This list focuses on spiritual maturity and observable character. By whom? By Timothy, those whom the candidate would serve, and even with unbelievers who know him. This is not a positional identification but an observable character, not by God but by those who know him and have observed him.

3. What are not listed in the qualifications that are typically thought of as qualifications for evangelical churches? Are these biblically legitimate?