

Biblical Qualifications for Pastors and Elders
Session 1; 08.29.2026

The Character of a Biblical Pastor and Elder

1 Timothy 3:1–7

Lesson Goal: To understand that biblical eldership begins with godly character, tested maturity, and a life that provides a trustworthy example to the church.

Point 1 — A Pastor/Elder must be **above reproach in character.**

- Titus 1:6–8
- Galatians 5:22–23
- James 3:13
- Matthew 5:13–16

Biblical leadership begins with **character before competency**. Natural leadership ability may be useful, but spiritual qualification comes from the sanctifying work of God in a man's life.

Point 2 — A Pastor/Elder must be **faithful in his home and life.**

- Ephesians 5:25–33
- Proverbs 20:7

The pastoral office does not make a man godly. Godliness should already be evident before the church entrusts him with leadership.

Point 3 — A Pastor/Elder must be **spiritually mature and worthy of imitation.**

- Philippians 3:17
- 1 Corinthians 11:1
- Hebrews 13:7
- 1 Peter 5:2–3

The pastor/elder should therefore live in such a way that others can see what ordinary Christian faithfulness looks like. An elder's life should make Christianity more believable, not less. **The first qualification for spiritual leadership is not leadership ability, but Christlike character.**

Homework Questions

1. Why do you think most of the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 concern character rather than leadership skills? Read Galatians 5:22–23.
2. Why does Paul connect a man's family leadership with his fitness to care for the church? Read 1 Timothy 3:4–5.
3. What dangers arise when churches value charisma, professional success, or popularity more highly than proven spiritual maturity? Read 1 Samuel 16:7 and Proverbs 16:18.