



1 TIMOTHY 3-6 MINISTERIAL, DEACON & DEACONESS REQUIREMENTS; RICHES

In 1 Tim. 3, Paul gives Timothy fifteen qualifications regarding ordaining an elder who has pastoral duties in the Church. We have already covered the first, that the candidate be "blameless," or having a good overall reputation.

The second condition is being "the husband of one wife." The Greek term literally means a "one-woman man" and is the opposite of a "many-woman man," or a polygamist. According to the Old Testament, a man could be married to more than one wife (Ex. 21:10), but now, in the New Testament, marriage is restricted to only one wife.

Next is being "temperate," or a judicious person who carefully weighs a matter. Then, it is being "sober-minded," or self-controlled and having a "good behavior" or an orderly conduct. The sixth is being "hospitable," from the term meaning "loving strangers" or willing to house brethren or ministers in the home. "Able to teach," indicates having mental skills to grasp Church doctrines and clearly explain them. Next, he is, "not given to wine," from *paroinios*, or "one who sits too long over wine." This prohibits the abuse of alcohol, or drunkenness. Also he should not be a "violent" person in words or actions, but be peaceable.

Another thing to avoid is being "greedy for money," literally, "a lover of money," or putting material things first in his life. Instead he should be "gentle," meaning being considerate of others. "Not quarrelsome," from *amachos*, meaning "not getting into fights" or having a short fuse. "Not covetous" is lusting after other people's money.

Now, focusing on family life, Paul says, "one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)" (1 Tim. 3:4-5). This indicates having an orderly life and if he has children in the house, they should be an example of good behavior, showing obedience and respect. The key principle is found in Luke 16:10--if one is faithful over little, he will also be over much.

The fourteenth quality is "not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil." In the Greek, the term for novice is *neophytos*, where we get the word

neophyte, which literally means a "new plant." So here is a "newly planted" member, or one who has been baptized for a short time. A new position could puff him up and then he can end up being like Lucifer, who because of pride, became Satan, the fallen and resentful adversary of God and man.

The final requirement is, "he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:7). So his example must extend beyond the Church to the community, and not have "skeletons in the closet," or else, Satan can take advantage of this to discredit the person and the Church.

Paul then mentions the qualifications for deacons. He says, "Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless" (1 Tim. 3:8-10).

The term deacon (Gk. *diakonos*) was a table-waiter and then became a general term for a servant. In Acts 6, the first deacons were appointed so the apostles would not "leave the word of God and serve tables" (Acts 6:2). Most of the qualifications here are the same as for ministers, but includes not being "double-tongued" or insincerely saying one thing to one and something different to another to gain favor. Also added is the condition of "first being tested," or having to prove themselves by first showing the fruits of diligence and faithfulness in their labors.

Next, deaconesses are probably referred to here, as the Gk. term, *gyne* or woman (where we get our word gynecologist) can also signify a wife. Yet it would be odd to mention qualifications for a deacon's wife and not an elder's, so it likely means the office of a deaconess, like that of Phoebe in Rom. 16:1. He says that these women, must "in the same way" as the deacons, be "worthy of respect" and "to be serious in behavior, saying no evil of others [not being malicious talkers], controlling themselves, true in all things" (1 Tim. 3:11, BBE).

Paul then reminds Timothy, "These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which

is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:14-15). A pillar, *stulos* in Gk., is one of the strongest parts of a building, since ruins usually show pillars still standing up, and "ground" or *hedraïoma* in Gk., is a bulwark, a solid, wall-like structure built for defense. So both words mean the Church supports and reinforces God's truths against all heresies.

So Paul warns Timothy about such attacks, "Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:1-5).

God's Word, such as Matthew 24, contains end-time prophecies that warn of a falling away of brethren who, instead of being led by the Holy Spirit, will be persuaded by deceiving spirits and the teaching of "demons." One false teaching is that marriage is less "spiritual" than being "celibate" or abstaining from marriage--a false claim that today the Catholic Church still holds as binding for its priests and nuns and recommended as a "superior" state for the general membership, and has led to much sexual abuse from priests.

Expositor's says, "What these false teachers forgot is that marriage 'is ordained by God,' as we are reminded at weddings. God clearly established marriage as the normal thing in human society. Those who commend celibacy as being more holy or religious are promoting the heresy of Gnosticism, not the teaching of the N.T."

The other heresy is "commanding to abstain from foods which God created" to be eaten and this is another form of asceticism taught by incipient Gnostics, where some foods are considered as taboo. The Catholic Lent is one example of this, where people abstain from eating certain foods for forty days before their Easter and on Fridays during the year, of not eating meat.

Paul is careful to note we can only eat foods "sanctified [or set apart] by the Word of God." It is

clearly referring to food which is declared clean by God, as *The Complete Word Dictionary* says about the term "sanctified": from *hagios*, to make holy, sanctify. *To make clean, render pure.* So it is wrong, as traditional Christianity teaches, to now eat unclean foods not "sanctified" by God's Word.

He tells Timothy how vital this is: "If you explain these things to the brothers and sisters, Timothy, you will be a worthy servant of Christ Jesus, one who is nourished by the message of faith and the good teaching you have followed. Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come" (1 Tim. 4:6-8, NLT).

He urges Timothy (as he also says in 1 Tim. 1:6 and Titus 1:14) to avoid worldly teachings and old Jewish religious fables, (*muthos* in Gk., where we get our word "myth") such as myths in the Jewish Midrash, which devout Jews still regard as true.

Paul tells him to "train yourself to be godly." The term, "train" is *gymnaze* in Gk., from "gymnastics," and is the applying of athletic discipline to a task.

He also exhorts him, "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12). Timothy was a young and somewhat timid minister, so older men could have belittled him. Paul just tells him to set the right example. This is also valid for young ministers today.

Paul reminds Timothy, "Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (1 Tim. 4:13-16).

He is to continue "reading" the Old Testament Scriptures and using them in his "preaching" and "teaching" of doctrine. He is to remember his ordination, being a faithful and dedicated minister. He should examine himself and his teachings so they conform to God's Word, bringing salvation to him and to his hearers.

He mentions how to respectfully treat members of different ages, "Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity" (1 Tim. 5:1-2).

Older men are to be treated with the gentleness and humility as if they were elderly fathers. Young men should be treated as younger brothers, older women as respected mothers and younger women as sisters, adding a needed caution "with all purity" (or no sexual connotations). The pastor who fails to heed this warning will find trouble.

Next, Paul mentions which widows should be financially helped: "Honor widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God" (1 Tim. 5:3-4).

He says a widow who has children or grandchildren should be financially sustained by them. Of course, in those days, they normally lived in the same house as the family, not as many today. Widows who do not have financial support can be helped with Church funds and be placed on the "list" of regular recipients. Yet those who can still marry should try to do so in order to avoid becoming idle and gossipers. Older widows should teach younger ones on how to serve and behave.

Paul again focuses on the elders and says, "Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,' and, 'The laborer is worthy of his wages.' Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear" (1 Tim. 5:17-20).

Church employed elders should be aptly remunerated and those with additional duties should be given an extra portion—applying a free market principle. Any accusation against them should have multiple witnesses to be credible. But those found guilty should be publicly reprimanded as an example and Timothy should not show any partiality in the cases that come before him.

He then tells Timothy to drink some wine to help with his stomach problems and frequent infirmities

(1 Tim. 5:23). Water was not very safe, especially in cities, and wine served as a natural antiseptic and also used to heal wounds, as the Good Samaritan did with the injured man. Vincent brings out, "Observe that the Gk. *oinos* here, as everywhere else, means wine, fermented and capable of intoxicating, and not a sweet syrup made by boiling down grape-juice, and styled by certain modern reformers 'unfermented wine.' Such a concoction would have tended rather to aggravate than to relieve Timothy's stomachic or other infirmities" (*Vincent Word Studies*).

Paul then returns to the subject of choosing ministers: "Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later. Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden" (1 Tim. 5:24-25). Sometimes, what is the true character of the man is not seen right away, but with time, the fruits should be apparent, nevertheless, some actions will only be revealed at Christ's judgment seat.

He then focuses on converted slaves, saying they should be obedient to their masters and those who have believing masters should not "despise them" and become disrespectful or lazy due to a more Christian treatment of infractions. He also mentions the importance of being content with what we have, to make the most of it, but be at peace, for the "love of money," *philarguria* (lit. loving silver, or money) is a lust and the root of so many ills. Also, Timothy should "fight the good fight" meaning facing trials with courage and faith.

Finally, he tells "those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

Notice Paul doesn't tell the rich brethren to sell all their goods, but rather to avoid becoming arrogant and vain, and to properly use the riches in a humble and generous way. We have good examples in the Bible of Abraham, Joseph, David, Nehemiah and Joseph of Arimathea being that way.