

Paul's  
1st Letter to  
**Timothy**



**Lesson 3-Qualifications for Bishops and Church Leaders**

**Focus: 1 Timothy 3:1-16**

➤ **What does it take to be a Pastor or Bishop? (v.1-7)**

- *The Bible here gives us some very important principles for how to choose church Bishops [i.e. Pastors] and also Elders, Deacons, and other church leaders. God has pure and holy standards for his leaders in the churches. Their example is very often the example which gets followed by many people in the church. In fact, the level of spirituality in the church members will seldom rise higher than that of the minister. It is very important and even essential therefore that the minister of God be living a pure, holy, and exemplary life before the other members of the church, so that they also in the general membership of the church may rise to the place where they should be.*
- **Problems with the spiritual leaders in the community have often lead to disastrous results among the people of the church. History has repeated the sad results of this far too often!** Just look at some of the many sad examples of this recorded in the Bible (See Ezekiel 22:25-28; Jeremiah 23:2; Matthew 15:14; 23:13-17).
- **(v.1-5) "A Good work," is great to desire, but it requires a good character and reputation to be able to carry out and fulfill that good work properly.**
  - **Being an able teacher of God's word is key!** (compare 1 Tim. 1:7 and 3:2). The word of God must be clearly given! "If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who then shall prepare for battle?" (1 Cor. 14:8). We are to "cry loud, spare not" and lift up the voice like a trumpet (Isaiah 58:1). God's ministers must give a clear and certain message! Another saying is, "A mist in the pulpit is a fog in the pew." Any error on the part of the ministered is multiplied out to the people! There for we must clearly know and teach God's holy word and message! Jesus taught with authority and clarity (Matthew 7:29). **We must know the word very well and proclaim it very well** (Ezra 7:6; **7:25**; 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Peter 3:15; John 21:16,17; Matthew 4:4).
  - **Exemplifying the generous, kind heart of Christ is important.** *We must give as Christ gave! (and the minister must set a good example for the people).*
  - **(v.2,4,5) Wife, kids, and family life are important!** The minister who is teaching God's holy word must set a good example of a loving and godly family before the people. The example of his family preaches a powerful message, either for or against the truth! Discipline must be held in his family and love must be demonstrated! These are the very principles of the gospel being played out in the minister's life and family! *The sad example of the priest Eli's undisciplined family should be a strong warning to all of us!* (**1 Samuel 3:13**; 2:12-17). **A**

***minister MUST take the time to care for his family! If he does not properly care for and raise them then he is failing to live out the Bible principles in his life and will also fail in the work for the church.***

- **The Bible here shows us that it is not only allowable, but proper for a minister to have a wife and family!**
- *According to God's standards given to His priests in the Old Testament, and still applicable to guide us in our choices today, a priest was not to marry a divorced woman, or an unclean woman. This was because the priest must proclaim God's holy word and standards, and must not set a poor example of failure in his life, inasmuch as is possible (See Ezekiel 44:22,23).*
- **(v.6,7) Also, the priest should not be too young. He needs to have maturity in his faith and in life. This will help him to be of a more humble spirit, and to live for God, not being misled by some kind of temptation to pride. His reputation should be a good one that will speak well to others and help to spread the gospel, not hinder it.**
- **What are the qualifications for being a deacon, elder, or church leader? (v.8-13)**
  - *The qualifications for deacons, elders, and other church leaders are very similar! They must be people who follow the way of God out of a pure heart! **Even their wives must be of the proper character—their family example is very important!** Having a good worldly job or lots of money never were, was, or should be considered a qualification for a leadership position in a church! To do such would be sin and corruption! We must consider, faith, character, godliness, leadership ability, reputation, and the example of a person's life. Those are the important things which must be considered! (not the other things as some have foolishly and evilly done!).*
  - *Husbands of "one wife," meaning they do not practice the sin of polygamy, and also they are not breaking the other laws of marriage either. **They should rule their houses well and set a good example for others!** We are to help all families to follow the order of God's love and truth! Church leaders must be able to do so, and to set a right example of having a well ordered home!!*
  - *(v.13) Such leaders will grow much in the faith by holding their sacred position well and faithfully before God and man.*
- **Knowing how to conduct ourselves under the eyesight of the Almighty God! (v.14-16)**
  - *The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. It should uphold all the truth of God's word! It should support the Bible's full message and uphold before the world! The word of God is truth (John 17:17). We should know how to conduct ourselves a right before God and exemplify the glorious mystery of the gospel and of godliness in our lives.*

*Question (s) for the Heart:*

**Will you seek, by God's grace, to live by God's pure, high, and holy standards in your own life? \_\_\_\_\_**