

# Lessons From I Timothy

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## Deacon Qualifications

(I Ti 3:8-13)

### INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening,
  - a. Greeting...
2. Series of “Lessons From I Timothy.”
  - a. Last week we looked at “Elder Qualifications.”
    - i. **I Ti 3:1-7** “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. . . 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.”<sup>1</sup>
  - b. This week we will be observing the “Deacon Qualifications.”
    - i. **I Ti 3:8-13** “Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. 9 They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. 11 Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. 13 For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”
3. Having just given the qualifications for overseers Paul turns to the qualifications of deacons.
  - a. Notice the word “likewise” in verse 8.
    - i. Just like the shepherds must meet certain qualifications the deacons “likewise” must meet certain qualifications.
  - b. I have categorized these qualifications into three parts.
    - i. Character Qualifications
    - ii. Family Qualifications
    - iii. Congregational Qualifications
4. Something to keep in mind.
  - a. The Greek word for deacon is “διάκονος” and simply means servant.
    - i. It is not an uncommon word.
      1. It is found 29 to 30 times in the N.T. depending on which Greek text you use.
  - b. The word has two contextual definitions in the Bible.
    - i. It is generic in describing servants.
      1. **Jn 2:9** “When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom”
    - ii. It is specific in describing an office.
      1. **Ph 1:1** “Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons”

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<sup>1</sup> All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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- c. The point is just because we come across the word “διάκονος” doesn’t mean it is dealing with the office of deacon.
5. With these things in mind let us examine our lesson for today.

### I. Character Qualifications

#### A. He must be dignified

1. The Greek word here is “σεμνούς” which means ones conduct must be “serious and worthy.” (Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.)
  - i. The idea is that these men are dignified and serious-minded about serving the Lord’s church in an honorable and respectable manner.

#### B. He must not be double-tongued

1. This Greek word is “διλόγους” and literally means “two voices.” (Notes on I Timothy by WVBS pg. 48)
  - i. The idea is that these men are not known for saying two different things about the same situation.
2. Deacons have to be ones that tell all the truth to everyone.

#### C. He must not be given to much wine

1. The Greek phrase here is much like that of verse 3 yet with only one difference and that is the Greek word “πολλῶ” which means “many, much, great.” (Swanson, J. (1997). Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.)
  - i. The idea here is that these men, like elders, are not to be imbibing.
2. This particular phrase has been abused by many in an attempt to justify social drinking.
  - i. The argument goes as such...
    - a. God told elders they could not drink alcoholic wine but that deacons could not drink much alcoholic wine.
    - b. If deacons can drink some alcoholic wine and they are holding an office in the church than other Christians surly can drink of it as well.
  - ii. The truth against such nonsense.
    - a. First, last week, we showed that elders and everyone else is required by God to be sober-minded.
      1. Literally free from all intoxicants that can affect the mind.
      2. **I Pt 1:13** “Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded...”
    - b. Secondly addition of adjectives is a common practice in the Bible for example...
      1. **Ec 7:17** “Be not overly wicked, neither be a fool. Why should you die before your time?”
      2. **Ja 1:21** “Therefore, putting aside all moral uncleanness and wicked excess, welcome with humility the implanted message which is able to save your souls.” (LEB)

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- D. He must not be greedy for dishonest gain
  - 1. The Greek word is “αἰσχροκερδεῖς” and means literally “not greedy for base, shameful, and/or sordid gain.”
    - i. The idea here these men will not use the office in such a way as to shamefully profit from it.
  - 2. This flies directly in the face of the idea that this office is the “stepping stone” to becoming an elder.
- E. He must be tested and found blameless
  - 1. The Greek word here is “ἀνέγκλητοι” and is keen to “above reproach” found in verse two which is further illustrated by **Ti 1:6-7** concerning elders.
    - i. The idea here is that these men are living their lives in such a way that others cannot find wrongdoing with them.
  - 2. This illuminates young and/or immature Christians.
    - i. Young Christians because time has not been afforded in their walk to be “tested.”
    - ii. Immature because the testing will root out the immaturity and be found out.

### II. Family Qualifications

- A. He must be the husband of one wife
  - 1. The Greek word here is “mias gyne andra” or “heis gnye aner” at its root, and means, “one woman man.”
    - i. The idea here is that these men are (a) males (b) married (c) married to only one woman.
  - 2. As mentioned last week this word has two possible meanings.
    - i. First that the man is currently married to one woman not multiple women or no woman at all.
      - a. Thus if this man finds himself without being married he no longer is qualified.
    - ii. Second that the man is married or has only been married to one woman ever.
      - a. Thus if the man has never been married or marries a second woman he becomes disqualified.
  - 3. As mentioned last week I personally lean toward the second based partially on the conversation the Samaritan woman had with Jesus at the well.
    - i. **Jn 4:17-18** “The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.””
    - ii. Since we find nowhere in the Bible where the term husband or wife is used of anyone in an unlawful state (**Mk 6:18; Lk 3:19**) then it seems that God recognizes lawful marriages as additions i.e. husband of two wives.

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- B. He must manage his household well
1. The Greek word of “he manages” is “pro-ist-a-men-on” and means “to so influence others as to cause them to follow a recommended course of action—‘to guide, to direct, to lead.’” (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains. New York: United Bible Societies.)
    - i. Thus the idea here is that elders are men that lead their homes in such a way as to spiritually influence their family to follow righteousness.
      - a. Illustration: I know a man that was placed in the office of deacon and when he spoke to the congregation, after he became a deacon, he explained how honored he was to be found having served his household well enough to serve the Lord’s household.
- C. He must manage his children well
1. The Greek word for children is “τέκνων” and means “that which is birthed.”
    - i. The idea here is that these men have managed their children’s lives well and righteously.
  2. The question of whether or not deacons and elders must have more than one child has been up for debate.
    - i. There is no doubt the word is in the plural not singular however when one looks at the Bible one can see that the word is used interchangeably.
      - a. **Gn 21:7** “... Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”
      - b. **I Ti 5:4** “But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God.”
- D. He must have a wife that is dignified
1. The Greek word here is “σεμνούς” which means ones conduct must be “serious and worthy.” (Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.)
    - i. The idea here is that these men have wives that are serious minded workers for the Lord.
- E. He must have a wife that is not slanderous
1. This Greek word here is “διαβόλους” and literally means “accuser.”
    - i. The idea here is that these men have wives that are not gossips or ones that talk repute about others.
    - ii. This Greek word is used 34 times in the N.T. as Satan’s title.
      - a. This wives ought not have any connection with the devil.
- F. He must have a wife that is sober-minded
1. The Greek word here is “νηφαλίους” and is the same as that which is found in the qualifications of elders (**I Ti 3:2**).
    - i. The word literally means free from all intoxicants.
    - ii. Those these men are to have wives that are mentally sharp and not persuaded by those things that impair the sound judgment.

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- G. He must have a wife that is faithful in all things
  - 1. The literal rendering of this Greek phrase is “faithful in all.”
    - i. The idea here is that these men have wives that are sound in their obedience to God.
- H. Thus...
  - 1. One may ask why must a deacon’s wives have qualifications?
    - i. The answer is simple there is much service that needs to be rendered toward the congregation that requires a female.
      - a. Example: An elderly woman desiring baptism might need help changing close and thus a deacon’s wife would be a much better option than the deacon.

### III. Congregational Qualifications

- A. He must hold to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience
  - 1. Deacons are responsible for much of the day to day service toward the church. The elders rely on them for a great deal as they should.
  - 2. If a deacon is found compromised doctrinally or morally there resides a great problem.
    - i. That trust that is lost and the deacons influence for good is shattered.
- B. Thus...
  - 1. Deacons must be students of God’s Word and daily buffing their bodies to make certain they are righteous before God and the congregation they serve.

### CONCLUSION

- 1. Brothers and sisters Paul was clear when congregations are mature to the point of Scripturally organized than they must take a painstakingly long and diligent look at these qualifications before shepherds and deacons are appointed.
  - a. Let us be prepared for that day when we can appoint qualified men to oversee us and serve us here.
- 2. Question: Are you familiar with these qualifications enough so as to determine if one fits each of these qualifications or not?
  - a. If you are continue therein and grow thereby.
  - b. If not why not?
- 3. Invitation
  - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
    - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

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- b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
- i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
  - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
  - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
  - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
  - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
  - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**