

# Lessons From I Timothy

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## Elder Qualifications Pt 1

(I Ti 3:1-7)

### INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening,
  - a. Greeting...
2. Series of “Lessons From I Timothy.”
  - a. Last week we looked at “Professing Godliness Pt 2.”
    - i. **I Ti 2:8-15** “I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling... 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.”<sup>1</sup>
  - b. This week we will be examining “Elder Qualifications Pt 1.”
    - i. **I Ti 3:1-7** “The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.”
3. A few observations are needed before we get into the text.
  - a. Overseers are the same thing as elders and pastors.
    - i. **I Pt 5:1-3** “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock” (NKJV)
  - b. Pastors is an office of plurality.
    - i. **I Ti 4:14** “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.” (NKJV)
    - ii. **I Pt 5:1** “So I exhort the **elders** among you...”
    - iii. **Ac 20:28** “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.”
    - iii. **I Ti 5:17** “Let the **elders** who rule well...”

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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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4. Paul begins this section of the text with what appears to be a term used for emphasis to preachers.
  - a. “The saying is trustworthy” (ESV: LEB)
    - i. “This is a faithful saying” (NKJV)
    - ii. “It is a trustworthy statement” (NASB95)
    - iii. “Faithful is the saying” (ASV)
  - b. This phrase is found four other times, five total, in the Bible.
    - i. **I Ti 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; II Ti 2:11; Ti 3:8**
  - c. Some have suggested that this statement should be connected with the previous statements concerning worship and attire however it seems more contextually logical to apply to this section here on proper overseer qualifications.
4. Considering Paul makes clear this is a “point of particular interest” let us examine today these qualifications pertaining to shepherds.

### I. Character Qualifications

- A. He aspires [desires] to be a shepherd
  1. The Greek word here is “orego” and means, “to stretch one’s self out in order to touch or to grasp something, to reach after or desire something” (Thayer, J. H. (1889). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti*. New York: Harper & Brothers.)
    - i. The idea here is that an elder is one that has already been putting forth the effort to prepare themselves for this position.
      - a. Example: Brother Abner once told me he had been striving to become a qualified elder since he was a young man.
  2. What motivates these men?
    - i. It is not...
      - a. Selfish gain
      - b. Prestige
    - ii. It is...
      - a. “...a deep-rooted desire to serve God and the church.” (Notes on I Timothy by Stapleton, Robert pg. 12)
- B. He is above reproach [blameless]
  1. The Greek word here is “ana-pee-lem-ton” which means, “pertaining to what cannot be criticized—‘above criticism, beyond reproach.’” (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*. New York: United Bible Societies.)
    - i. The idea here is that this man lives morally, ethically, and in every other righteous way his life so as to no one being able to make a legitimate charge against him.
      - a. Keep in mind he is to live in such a way that as an elder no charge is to even be brought against him by the church without two or three witnesses.
        1. **I Ti 5:19** “Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.”

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- C. He is sober-minded [temperate]
1. The Greek word here is “ne-pha-lios” which means, “The thought behind *néphō* is a negative one, i.e., the opposite of intoxication.” (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 free from any intoxicating thing that would mentally hinder their judgments.
    - ii. Some things that would intoxicate the mind would be...
      - a. Anger, depression, arrogance, alcohol, drugs...
- D. He is self-controlled [sober-minded]
1. The Greek word here is “sophrona” meaning, “curbing one’s desires and impulses...” (Thayer, J. H. (1889). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti*. New York: Harper & Brothers.)
    - i. The idea here is that these men are able to control themselves in their passions and desires.
- E. He is respectable [of good behavior]
1. The Greek word here is “kos-mion” meaning, “what is well assembled or constructed from its individual parts.” (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 are living orderly, gentlemanly lives. They are thusly “courteous, polite, modest, and well-mannered.” (Notes on I Timothy by WVBS pg. 42)
- F. He is hospitable
1. The Greek word here is “philox-enos” which means, “loving strangers:—hospitable” (Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.)
    - i. The idea is that these men are ones that, as the old saying goes, “have never met a stranger.”
      - a. Shepherds are ones that should be inviting visitors to their house first.
        1. Remember back then there were no real “restaurants” so to speak so people invited others to their homes.
- G. He is not a drunkard [not given to wine]
1. The Greek word here is “par-oinos” and means, “...not sitting long at wine; not near wine.” (Notes on I Timothy by WVBS pg. 43)
    - i. The idea here is that these men do not put themselves in positions where their ability to sober-minded is put in jeopardy.
      - a. We already noticed that elders are to be “free from intoxicants.” Here we have the strengthening of this in connection with a common drink grape juice.
- H. He is not violent but gentle [striker]
1. The Greek word here is “plake-tes” meaning, “bruise, ready with a blow; a pugnacious, contentious, quarrelsome person” (Thayer, J. H. (1889). *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti*. New York: Harper & Brothers.)
    - i. The idea here is that these men do not settle disagreements with their fists.

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- I. He is not quarrelsome
  - 1. The Greek word here is “ama-chos” meaning, “pertaining to a lack of conflict and contention—‘not contentious, peaceful.’” (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains. New York: United Bible Societies.)
    - i. The idea here is that these men are ones that seek out peace rather than conflict. They would rather not argue and be combative.
      - a. This is not to suggest they will not stand for truth but rather they will not argue and quarrel with someone so that they hear the truth.
- J. He is not a lover of money [not covetous]
  - 1. The Greek word here is “aphil-argy-ron” meaning, “free from the love of money.” (Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.)
    - i. The idea here is that these men do not desire to earn money in any dishonorable way or make money a priority in their lives.
      - a. Far too many congregations have put in “accountants” or “CEOs” into the eldership only to see the treasury used for things liking in any spiritual usage.

## II. Family Qualifications

- A. He is 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.
      - a. The details of this have been discussed for many years.
  - 2. The two most prevailing thoughts.
    - i. A married man is a man that is married physically to one woman at a time.
      - a. As long as this man is physically married to a woman scripturally speaking then he fits the qualification here.
        - 1. Thus if the man’s wife stops being his wife by death or other means than he is no longer qualified and must step down.
    - ii. A married man is a man that is married or has been married to only one woman.
      - a. As long as this man has not been married twice than he is qualified.
        - 1. Thus if the man loses his wife while he is an elder he can continue as an elder as long as he does not remarry.
  - 3. Personally I lean toward the latter because God clearly sees multiple scriptural marriages as having one, two, three...wives or husbands.
    - i. **Jn 4:18** “for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.””

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- B. He manages his own 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. One man wrote, “Go home with the prospective elder and observe the conduct of his wife and children. Do they respect him? Is he regarded as competent by those who know him best? (Paul’s Letters To Timothy And Titus by Welt, Don De; College Press, Joplin, Missouri 1961; pg. 62)
    2. One point of interest here is that often we assume elders are men that have children that are grown and out of the house however it appears here that this doesn’t always have to be the case.
      - i. The term elder usually signified someone well over forty.
        - a. Notice Timothy was considered youth (**I Ti 4:12**) which was used to describe people up to forty years old.
        - b. There appears to be a time when people went from youth, to adult, and then to elder.
          1. There is nothing to suggest one went from youth to elder.
      - ii. Here however the term here seems to be considering the spiritual maturity more so than the physical maturity.
        - a. I say more so because it takes physical maturity to gain the spiritual maturity to a degree and thus become a good shepherd.
- C. He manages his own household with dignity [reverence]
1. Here in lies the importance found in examining the man desiring to become an elder or the men that are already elders as pertaining to their home.
    - i. Anyone can “lord over” their family in such a way as to make them submissive and obedient.
      - a. That is not the qualification stipulation however for the shepherds.
    - ii. Shepherds and those desiring to become such must have gained their wives and children’s respect through their honorable leadership.
- D. He manages his own household keeping his children submissive
1. It behooves me why so many men would ruin their chances at becoming overseers of Christ’s church simply because they will not lead in such a way as to have their children in submission.
    - i. Whether a father is simply trying to be a Christian father or has aspirations of one day being an elder both are expected by God to raise their children to learn respect and submission.
  2. There have been far too many men that have disqualified themselves on this front.

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E. Thus...

1. When one looks into the family qualifications one sees quickly that

### III. Congregational Qualifications

A. He is not a recent convert

1. The Greek word here is “νεόφυτον” and literally means “newly-planted.” (Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W., Jr. (1996). Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. Nashville, TN: T. Nelson.)
  - i. Thus the idea is that these men must not be babies in Christ.
2. When one matures from recent convert to convert is a matter of opinion and up for debate.
  - i. There is really is not “standard” answer for this.
  - ii. The men must be evaluated and it must be determined if they fit the category.

B. He is able to teach

1. The Greek word here is “διδασκτικόν” and literally means “skillful in teaching.”
  - i. Thus the these men must be skilled teachers of God’s Word.
2. Elders are to be skillful teachers because they are shepherding the flock.
  - i. Part of being a shepherd is teach the flock and protecting it against false doctrines.
    - a. **Ti 1:9** “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”

C. He must be well thought of by outsiders [good testimony]

1. The Greek phrase here is “μαρτυρίαν καλήν” which means literally “witnessed as having beautiful qualities”
  - i. The idea here is that these men are of such high character that even the lost and dying world cannot but admit they are upstanding people.

### CONCLUSION

1. Brothers and sisters this list is by no means exhaustive yet what we get is a glimpse into the expectations God has placed on the man who desires and be an elder and the men that are elders.
  - a. Over the years some have tried to “relax” the qualification to make more men eligible but in doing so all they have done is put in unqualified men.
  - b. Instead of relaxing the qualifications let us always be a people that help mature our younger men to reach lofty yet worthy qualifications.
2. Question: Do you have a good enough understanding these qualifications to know if someone fits them or not?
  - a. If so continue therein and help others to reach that maturity.
  - b. If not why not?

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### 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."
- 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**