



10/6/26

1 Timothy 3:1-13

Today's passage talks about overseers (elders) and deacons. The easiest explanation I've had for delineating between the two is... Elders serve by leading and deacons lead by serving. Interestingly, the requirements for both elders and deacons are pretty similar.

Someone might say, "Well, I don't want to be an elder or a deacon, so none of this applies to me." But... as a follower of Jesus Christ, is there anything in these requirements that shouldn't apply to me?

So... how does an elder serve by leading, and what can I apply to my own life?

First, aspiring to the office of overseer/elder is a noble task. It's an office, and an official role in the church... and desiring to meet the qualifications of that role is noble. It's not just the desire to have the title. It's the desire to live up to the title.

These are the noble things I will desire because these are things that please God.

- Being above reproach... if someone looked to find dirt on me, they wouldn't be able to come up with anything. I'm so thankful that this is speaking more to who I am now and not to who I was.*
- Husband of one wife... He's a one woman man, devoted to one woman in love. Obviously, I'm not a man, but I can seek to be a faithful, loving wife to my husband.*
- Sober minded... clear minded... not whipsawing all over the place based on feelings.*
- Self controlled... living in God defined balance.*
- Respectable... having a well ordered world, living honorably.*
- Hospitable... literally being a generous, serving host.*
- Able to teach... skilled in instruction.*
- Not a drunkard... not being controlled by anything but the Holy Spirit.*
- Not violent but gentle... not a harsh bully but caring and gentle.*

- *Not quarrelsome... but pursuing peace.*
- *Not a lover of money... not greedy for selfish gain.*
- *Managing their own household with care.*
- *Keeping children submissive with all dignity... bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Truly, if someone isn't able to raise his kids with wisdom, he can't lead the church with wisdom.*
- *Not a recent convert to Christianity... it's just too easy to make decisions based on opinion and not based on God's word without being a seasoned Christian in the faith. It would also be really easy to become arrogant about the title rather than seeing the role as an opportunity to serve the Lord and love His people. He must have shown himself to be able to stand against the schemes of the devil by taking on the full armor of God.*
- *Well thought of by those who don't believe in Jesus because he's a man of integrity who doesn't get caught in the devil's traps. Well thought of, not because he adjusts to the outsiders' demands, but because he stands firm in his faith with gentleness and respect.*

Okay... as a believer who will never hold the office of elder in the church, is there any one of these qualifications that I should ignore? Other than not being the husband of one wife, the only part of the office that not all people are called to fill is the part about being able to teach. Not everyone will be able to teach, but all can pursue those qualities because they are the qualities of the One we want to emulate, Jesus Christ. Even the quality of being able to teach can be teaching by example, and all can desire that noble task.

Then there's the deacon... the one who leads by serving. It says "Deacons likewise..." So... in the same way as elders, they should have the following qualities. The integrity of deacons should look a lot like the elders, not demanding honor, but proving to be men of honor. In addition to all the things said about elders, these are the things that need to be true of deacons (and elders as well)...

- *Not double-tongued... not saying one thing and meaning another. This is really important. A double-tongued person is not trustworthy. They need to be trustworthy.*
- *Like the elders, they need to not be controlled by alcohol, but by the Holy Spirit.*
- *Like the elders, they need to not be greedy for selfish gain.*
- *They need to hold to the mystery of the faith with a good conscience... they're faith in Jesus must be genuine.*
- *Their faith must be tested to show if it's genuine.*

Deacons should only be put in that position if they're found to be blameless in these things. Even their wives need to have these qualities, including having integrity, not being slanderers (little devils... gossips, meddlers), sober minded, and faithful. Why is it important that the wives be found to be genuine followers of Jesus? Because they can cause enormous damage if they're not genuine. They can ruin the reputation of the deacon (and the elder). Just like

elders, deacons need to manage their household well. How can they lead in the church if they don't lead in the home? The faithfulness of deacons instills trust by the church.

All these things are so necessary for the leaders of the church. I recently had a conversation with someone who said her friend has not gone back to church for years because she once worked for the church, and she saw the leadership of the church make greedy choices and not show a genuineness of faith. I said to my friend, "Sadly, the problem with that is not in THE church, it's in THAT church. It doesn't mean don't go to church. It means don't go to THAT church." But the devil knows that he can do a lot of damage in the church if he can get to just a few leaders who are in charge. This is why it's so important that I continue to pray for the leaders in our church. They're not perfectly without sin. No one is. But their hearts are genuinely seeking to honor Jesus. So I need to pray for them. I also need to seek to have the same qualities as them, not so that I can get a position in the church, but so that I can honor the Lord. The "noble task" is honoring the Lord. O Lord, I desire to do that. Please make that true in me.

*Blessings,
Jonna*