

Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13 (17)

1 TIMOTHY: DUTIES AND ORDER IN THE CHURCH, 1 Timothy 2:1-3:13 The Overseers of the Church, 1 Timothy 3:1-7

(1 Timothy 3:1-7) **Introduction:** the office of *bishop* is probably the same office as elder or presbyter or minister in the New Testament. All three words refer to the same person, to the minister of the gospel and of the church.

- 1) What are the qualifications of the minister?
- 2) Who should be preaching the gospel and filling the pulpits of the Lord's church?
- 3) Who should be considering the ministry—what kind of person?

Before discussing the individual qualifications against which all pastors are to be measured, however, Paul gives some helpful insight into the call to spiritual leadership.

1. The office of minister or bishop (v.1).
2. Personal qualifications (v.2-3).
3. Family qualifications: the minister or bishop must rule his own home (v.4-5).
4. Spiritual qualifications (v.6).
5. Community qualifications (v.7).

2. (1 Timothy 3:2-3) Minister— Bishop— Elder: the minister or bishop of God must be qualified; he must meet some personal qualifications; he must be a person of great Christian character.

1 Timothy 3:2-3 (NASB)

²An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, **temperate**, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

The Moral Character of a Godly Leader (continuation)

3. The minister or bishop must be “**vigilant**” (*nēphalion*): **temperate, self-controlled, and watchful.**

He must be vigilant, watch over, and control his own life and the lives of his dear people.

A leader in God's church must also be **temperate**. *Nēphalios* (**temperate**) literally means “**wineless**,” or “**unmixed with wine**.” While it is true that wine “**makes man's heart glad**” (Psalm 104:15), it also has the potential for great harm.

That is why it was commonly diluted with water in biblical times. Even so, it retained its potential for harm to those who drank it unmixed or to excess. [Proverbs 20:1](#) warns: [Proverbs 23:29-35](#) graphically describes one snared by wine:

Noah ([Genesis 9:20-27](#)) and Amnon ([2 Samuel 13:28-29](#)) are examples of those affected by wine.

[Leviticus 10:9](#) forbids priests from drinking wine when performing their priestly duties.

Those taking a Nazirite vow also could not drink wine ([Numbers 6:3](#)).

Kings and other rulers were to abstain from drinking ([Proverbs 31:4](#)), because it could dull their senses and affect their judgment.

In a metaphorical sense, *nēphalios* means “alert,” “watchful,” “vigilant,” or “clear-headed.” That may be its primary sense in this passage. A leader must be one who thinks clearly. He must possess the inner strength to refrain from any excess that would dull his alertness.

William Hendriksen writes, “His pleasures are not primarily those of the senses... but those of the soul” (*New Testament Commentary: The Pastoral Epistles* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981], 122).

Temperate men are desperately needed in today’s church. They will be to her what the sons of Issachar in [1 Chronicles 12:32](#) were to Israel, “**men who understood the times, with knowledge of what Israel should do.**” ([Matthew 26:41](#); [Acts 20:31](#); [1 Corinthians 10:12](#); [1 Corinthians 16:13](#); [1 Peter 5:8](#)).