

Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(21)

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) Part # 2

7. The minister or bishop must be “apt to teach”: able, capable, skillful, and qualified to teach.

While all believers are responsible to pass on the truths they have learned in God's Word, not all have gifts for preaching and teaching (1 Corinthians 12:29). Those who aspire to pastoral duty, however, must be so gifted.

What criteria identify a man as a skilled teacher?

First, as noted above, a skilled teacher must have the gift of teaching. It is not that natural ability that makes one a good teacher; *the gift of teaching is the Spirit-given enablement to teach effectively the truths of God's Word*. Timothy had the gift of teaching (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6).

Second, a skilled teacher must have a deep understanding of doctrine. “A good servant of Christ Jesus,” Paul wrote to Timothy in [1 Timothy 4:6](#), “[is] constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of... sound doctrine.”

Richard Baxter writes,

“He must not be himself a babe in knowledge that will teach men all those mysterious things which must be known in order to salvation. O what qualifications are necessary for a man who hath such a charge upon him as we have! How many difficulties in divinity to be solved! And these, too, about the fundamental principles of religion! How many obscure texts of Scripture to be expounded! How many duties to be performed, wherein ourselves and others may miscarry, if in the matter, and manner, and end, we be not well informed! How many sins to be avoided, which, without understanding and foresight, cannot be done! What a number of sly and subtle temptations must we open to our people's eyes, that they may escape them! How many weighty and yet intricate cases of conscience have we almost daily to resolve! And can so much work, and such work as this, be done by raw, unqualified men?” (*The Reformed Pastor*, 68-69).

The deeper the reservoir of doctrinal knowledge a man has, the more skilled and applicable will be his teaching.

Third, a skilled teacher must have an attitude of humility. To teach the truth with an arrogant attitude would only serve to undermine the very truths being taught. Paul reminded Timothy that: ([2 Timothy 2:24-25](#))

Fourth, a skilled teacher is marked by a life of holiness. Paul exhorted Timothy to “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness” ([1 Timothy 4:7](#)), and to “pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness” ([1 Timothy 6:11](#)).

He must be credible and live what he teaches. Paul exhorted Timothy to “Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but *rather* in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe” ([1 Timothy 4:12](#)).

The teacher must be the prototype of what he asks his people to be.

Fifth, a skilled teacher must be a diligent student of Scripture. In the familiar passage in [2 Timothy 2:15 \(NASB\)](#), Paul writes, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.”

Sixth, a skilled teacher must avoid error. This criterion is closely related to numbers three and five listed above. It is tragic when men, seeking preparation for the ministry, attend a school that doesn't honor God's Word. While they may survive with the basics of their faith intact, they will almost invariably lose their convictions. Paul repeatedly warned Timothy to avoid false doctrine ([1 Timothy 4:7](#); [1 Timothy 6:20](#); [2 Timothy 2:16](#)), wise counsel for us as well.

Finally, a skilled teacher must have *strong courage* and *consistent convictions*. He must not abandon the truth and shipwreck his faith (cf. [1 Timothy 1:18-19](#); [1 Timothy 4:11, 13](#)).

At the close of his ministry, he should be able to say with Paul, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith” ([2 Timothy 4:7 \(NASB\)](#)).