

Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(24)

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 3:3 (NASB)

³Not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

The Moral Character of a Godly Leader (continuation)

10. The minister or bishop must not be a lover of worldly gain or possessions. (This is the meaning of filthy lucre.)

The minister must be a person who has given all he is and has (money) to minister to people. He must not be a person who has entered the ministry as a profession or as a livelihood. He *must be supported* and given a livelihood by the church *but he is not* to be in the ministry in order to get a livelihood.

He must not be a person who is *out to get*, but a person who is *committed to giving*. He must live of the gospel—God's people must support him so that he can preach the gospel—but he must be dead to the *love of money* and material possessions. He must

give all that he is and has to the cause of Christ—to meet the dire needs of the *desperate* and *dying* men, women, and children of this earth.

Finally, a leader must be **free from the love of money**. It is a perverse corruption of the ministry to be in it for money. Love of money is what is at the heart of all motivation for false teachers (cf. [1 Thessalonians 2:5](#); [1 Peter 5:2](#); [2 Peter 2:1-3, 14](#); [Jude 16](#), etc.).

Paul reminded Timothy that godliness actually is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

“For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.” ([1 Timothy 6:6-10](#))

Paul was **free from the love of money**. He assured the Ephesian elders that, during his three years of ministry in their city, he had **“coveted no one’s silver or gold or clothes”** ([Acts 20:33](#); cf. [1 Corinthians 9:1-16](#); [2 Corinthians 11:9](#); [2 Corinthians 12:15-16](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:5](#)).

A leader must not be greedy, stingy, or financially ambitious. **“The earth-bound desires of a covetous spirit always clip the wings of faith and love”** (Geoffery B. Wilson, *The Pastoral Epistles* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1982], 50).

Those aspiring to an overseer’s role in the church must be measured against these moral qualities before they are ordained to serve. May God give us morally qualified men to lead the church through these dark times.

Remember: the following warnings were written to professing Christians.

1 Timothy 6:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ **For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.**

James 5:3 (NASB)

³ **Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust [storing, banking] will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!**