

Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(25)

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)

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

1 Timothy 3:3 (KJV)

³ Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; **but patient**, not a brawler, not covetous;

The Moral Character of a Godly Leader (continuation)

11. The minister or bishop must be “patient” (*epieikē*): gracious, kind, gentle, forbearing, reasonable, soft, and tender.

The word goes beyond treating someone with justice: it treats a person graciously and tenderly. It reaches beyond justice and touches the person with a gentle hand. (See note below, **Gentleness**— Philippians 4:5 for more discussion.) (1 Thessalonians 2:7; 2 Timothy 2:24; Titus 3:2; James 3:17)

Philippians 4:5 (NASB)

⁵ Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.

Philippians 4:5 (KJV)

⁵ Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

([Philippians 4:5](#)) **Moderation—Gentleness**: the step to peace is a strong gentleness. The word “**moderation**” (*epieikēs*) is a difficult word to translate into English. It is translated by others as **gentleness, forbearance, reasonableness, consideration, agreeableness, courtesy, patience, and softness**. There is a tendency to say that either forbearance or gentleness is the better translation.

William Barclay says that the word has the idea of justice in it, but that the meaning goes beyond and claims that there is *something better than justice—a gracious gentleness*.

1. Believers are to be gentle and forbearing in dealing with unbelievers. Note the phrase, “**all men.**” The exhortation not only deals with believers within the church, but with unbelievers.

Barclay makes an excellent exposition of this point:

“The Christian, as Paul sees it, is the man who knows that for him there is something beyond justice. When the woman taken in adultery was brought before Him, Jesus could have applied the letter of the Law, and she should, according to it, have been stoned; but He went beyond justice. As far as justice goes, there is not one of us who deserves anything but the condemnation of God, but God goes far beyond justice. Paul lays it down that the mark of a Christian in his personal relationships with his fellow-men must be that he knows when, and when not, to insist on justice, and that he always remembers that there is something which is beyond justice, and which makes a man like God” (The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, p.94.)

Thought 1. The point is well-taken: we must be gentle and forbearing in dealing with unbelievers. The last thing we must do is **criticize, condemn, censor, neglect, and ignore unbelievers**. We must reach out to the world with the gospel and treat them with a *loving gentleness*. We must be gentle, having absolutely nothing to do with harshness. Too many of us are harsh and critical or neglectful and withdrawn. Too many of us are wrapped in the cloak of religion having nothing to do with reaching out to the lost. The desperate need of the hour is for us to reach out with the gospel in a spirit of *love and gentleness*. ([Ephesians 4:2](#); [Colossians 3:13](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:7](#); [2 Timothy 2:24](#); [Titus 3:2](#); [James 3:17](#))

2. The reason we must be gentle to men is because the Lord is at hand. He is ready to come, and His coming is near. This simply means that when He comes, every one of us will need Him to treat us with gentleness. We are sinners—men and women, boys and girls—who sin too often. The Lord will have every right to be critical and condemning of us. Our only hope is that He will be gentle with us. Therefore, we must be gentle with all other men. Only if we are forgiving toward them will the Lord be forgiving toward us. ([Ephesians 4:32](#); [Matthew 6:12](#); [Matthew 6:14-15](#); [Mark 11:25](#); [Luke 6:38](#); [Luke 17:4](#))