

1 Timothy 3 Commentary

PREVIOUS

CLICK VERSE
To go directly to that verse

NEXT

- 1 Timothy 3:1
- 1 Timothy 3:2
- 1 Timothy 3:3
- 1 Timothy 3:4
- 1 Timothy 3:5
- 1 Timothy 3:6
- 1 Timothy 3:7
- 1 Timothy 3:8
- 1 Timothy 3:9
- 1 Timothy 3:10
- 1 Timothy 3:11
- 1 Timothy 3:12
- 1 Timothy 3:13
- 1 Timothy 3:14
- 1 Timothy 3:15
- 1 Timothy 3:16

GODLINESS AND PASTORAL CARE
Click chart to enlarge
Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission
Another Overview Chart - 1 Timothy - Charles Swindoll

THE PASTOR'S PRIMER: PAUL'S PRACTICAL PASTORAL INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE LOCAL CHURCH				
1 Timothy 1	1 Timothy 2-3	1 Timothy 4	1 Timothy 5	1 Timothy 6
TIMOTHY'S CHARGE...	TIMOTHY'S INSTRUCTIONS...			
Concerning Sound Doctrine	Concerning Prayer & Church	Concerning Last Days Apostasy	Concerning Widows & Elders	Concerning Conflict & Contentment
Danger of False Doctrine	Public Worship Church Officers	Antidote for Apostasy	Pastoral Duties Toward Others	Instructions for the Man of God
Warning	Worship	Wisdom	Widows	Wealth
Written in Macedonia Circa 62-64AD				

(Source: Swindoll's Insights on 1 Timothy)

Possible Route of Paul's "Farewell Tour" after release from his first Roman imprisonment. (see notes below)

1 Timothy 3:1 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.

BGT 1 Timothy 3:1 Πιστ ς λ γος. Ε τις πισκοπ ς ρ γεται, καλο ρ γου πιθυμε .

KJV 1 Timothy 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

NET 1 Timothy 3:1 This saying is trustworthy: "If someone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a good work."

CSB 1 Timothy 3:1 This saying is trustworthy: "If anyone aspires to be an overseer, he desires a noble work."

ESV 1 Timothy 3:1 The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.

NIV 1 Timothy 3:1 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.

NLT 1 Timothy 3:1 This is a trustworthy saying: "If someone aspires to be an elder, he desires an honorable position."

NRS 1 Timothy 3:1 The saying is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task.

YLT 1 Timothy 3:1 Stedfast is the word: If any one the oversight doth long for, a right work he desireth;

GWN 1 Timothy 3:1 This is a statement that can be trusted: If anyone sets his heart on being a bishop, he desires something excellent.

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:1 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.

NAB 1 Timothy 3:1 This saying is trustworthy: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task.

MIT 1 Timothy 3:1 This principle is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to become an overseer, he desires a good responsibility.

NJB 1 Timothy 3:1 Here is a saying that you can rely on: to want to be a presiding elder is to desire a noble task.

ASV 1 Timothy 3:1 Faithful is the saying, If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

DBY 1 Timothy 3:1 The word is faithful: if any one aspires to exercise oversight, he desires a good work.

BBE 1 Timothy 3:1 This is a true saying, A man desiring the position of a Bishop has a desire for a good work.

NIRV 1 Timothy 3:1 Here is a saying you can trust. If anyone wants to be a leader in the church, he wants to do a good work for God and people.

RSV 1 Timothy 3:1 The saying is sure: If any one aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task.

- **is a:** 1Ti 1:15 1 Ti 4:9 2Ti 2:11 Titus 3:8
- **the office:** 1Ti 3:2-7 Ac 1:20 Php 1:1 Titus 1:7 1Pe 2:25
- **overseer:** Ac 20:28 Heb 12:15 1Pe 4:15 5:2
- **desires:** Pr 11:30 Lu 15:10 Ro 11:13 Eph 4:12 1Th 5:14 Jas 5:19,20
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages: (the other 4 "trustworthy statements")

1 Timothy 1:15; It is a **trustworthy statement**, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.

1 Timothy 4:9 It is a trustworthy statement (1Ti 4:7-8) deserving full acceptance.

2 Timothy 2:11 It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;

Titus 3:8 This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.

Deuteronomy 1:13 'Choose wise and discerning and experienced men from your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads.'

A FAITHFUL WORD

DESCRIBING A NOBLE TASK

It is a trustworthy ([pistos](#)) statement ([logos](#)) - This specific phrase introduces an axiomatic truth. Young's Literal has "Stedfast is the word." NRSV has "the saying is sure." There were 5 trustworthy statements ([see above](#)) that would have been familiar as summaries of key doctrines. You can stake your life (in time and eternity) on this **trustworthy statement**, for it is a self-evident truth, one of great importance to believers in general and the local church in particular. **Trustworthy** means this is worthy of belief and can be fully relied upon. Paul had just used the same word [pistos](#) in stating that Christ considered him **faithful** or trustworthy (1Ti 1:12+).

[Uteley](#) has an interesting thought on **trustworthy statement** - They function syntactically like Jesus' use of an introductory "amen" or "amen, amen" (translated "truly, truly" or "verily, verily"), drawing special attention to the statement.

If any man aspires (NIV = "sets his heart" - [orego/oregomai](#) in present tense) to the office of overseer ([episkope](#)), it is a fine ([kalos](#)) work (a noble task - ESV, NIV) he desires ([epithumeo](#)) to do - Not to be chauvinistic, but notice this trustworthy statement applies to men, not women. Women have an absolutely vital role in the church, but Paul would not have them as elders of the church. So the first requirement of an elder is to be a man by gender, and in our transgender crazed culture (2022), that is not a requirement to be taken lightly! Paul substantiates this requirement for an overseer in 1Ti 3:2 with the distinctive requirement "the husband of one wife," a "one woman man," so to speak! **If** introduces a first class condition which assumes the following to be true, the conclusion being it is a fine or noble work. Paul uses this rare verb (only 3 NT uses) [orego/oregomai](#) in 1Ti 6:10 in a negative sense ("longing" for money). A man should seek for God (to be His elder), not for Gold for the rewards are commensurate, either honor for the former or grief for the latter! Dear man of God, for what are you seeking? The related noun Episkopos literally describes one who looks over closely or intently, as a shepherd might keep very close watch on his sheep. Episkopos emphasizes the fact that the leadership is charged with overseeing the local church and as such is responsible for the spiritual well-being of those in the church. The word picture of [epithumeo](#) is to set one's heart upon something and in the present tense pictures a man actively seeking this office. Clearly, if the motives are right, there is nothing sinful about seeking to be an overseer or elder. Here is the practical point dear reader -- if you possess the qualifications Paul lays out, you should consider seeking this office. "Taken together, the two terms (**aspires...desires**) describe the man who outwardly pursues the ministry because of a driving compulsion on the inside." (MacArthur)

"Ambition for office corrupts, desire for service purifies."

-- John MacArthur

THOUGHT - Notice that **aspires** and **desires**, not only rhyme, but both are in the present tense in middle voice, desires in active voice - both indicate one's will or choice is involved). So what? The fact is that no man continually (present tense) seeks after God, so if you are a man who continually (present tense) aspires and desires to be in leadership, the compulsion that energizes both verbs is supernatural, that is, a Spirit given aspiration and desire. Of course, one can aspire and desire from fleshly motives, such as for money or power, but that is not genuine aspiration and desire. Think of it this way -- a spiritual man has an inner Spirit energized urge to seek to be an overseer. A natural man might have a fleshly energized urge. Therefore, it behooves the man who senses this calling to pray Ps 139:23-24 "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way." God will answer and clarify His call to leadership.

[Samuel Logan Brengle](#) (Salvation Army) said that spiritual leadership "is not won by promotion, but by many prayers and tears. It is attained by confessions of sin, and much heart searching and humbling before God; by self-surrender, a courageous sacrifice of every idol, a bold, deathless, uncompromising and uncomplaining embracing of the cross, and by an eternal, unfaltering looking unto Jesus crucified. It is not gained by seeking great things for ourselves, but rather, like Paul, by counting those things that are gain to us as loss for Christ. That is a great price, but it must be unflinchingly paid by him who would be not merely a nominal but a real spiritual leader of men, a leader whose power is recognized and felt in heaven, on earth and in hell.(Audio book - [Soul Winner's Secret](#) by Samuel Logan Brengle)

J Vernon McGee - I believe that a man who has the qualifications ought to seek the office. He ought to want a place where he can use the gift that the Spirit of God has given him (**ED: WHILE I BASICALLY AGREE WITH MCGEE, THIS MAN MUST SEEK GOD AND TRUST HIS SPIRIT TO ENERGIZE HIS SEEKING OF THE OFFICE**). If the Spirit of God has not given him the gift and is not leading him, then it would be a tragedy indeed if a man sought the office of bishop. (**ED: ONE HAS TO WONDER IF THIS COULD BE ONE REASON FOR SUCH HIGH RATES OF "BURN OUT" FOR PASTORS? JUST WONDERING!**) (Borrow [1 Timothy in Thru the Bible, page 441](#))

Jesus the Head of the Church alluded to the qualifications for spiritual leaders in Mark 10:42-44+ "Calling them to Himself, Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise

authority over them. "But (STRONG TERM OF CONTRAST) it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all."

[Patrick Fairbairn](#) writes "The seeking here intended ... must be of the proper kind, not the prompting of a carnal ambition, but the aspiration of a heart which has itself experienced the grace of God, and which longs to see others coming to participate in the heavenly gift" ([1 Timothy 3](#))

John MacArthur - Since godly leaders have always been the backbone of the church, it is essential that they be qualified. In an unsuccessful church, the issue is all too often not poor programs or uncommitted people, but substandard leadership. Godly leaders are not produced by Bible colleges or seminaries; they merely give them the tools with which to work. Nor do pulpit committees or ordination councils make men fit for the ministry; they merely have the responsibility to recognize those who already are. Only the Holy Spirit can produce a true spiritual leader. When Saul failed to be a godly king over Israel God sought out David, "a man after His own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14)....The man truly called to the ministry is marked by both an inward consuming passion and a disciplined outward pursuit. For him the ministry is not the best option, it is the only option. There is nothing else he could do with his life that would fulfill him. Accordingly, he works diligently to prepare himself to be qualified for service. While some may be called later in life, from that point on nothing else will do.

A good reputation is earned in years
and lost in a moment!

The following poem by **George Liddell** describes what the character of these men should be -- as you read through this poem it is clear only one Man perfectly fulfills these criteria, the Man Christ Jesus. But are called walk in the same manner as He walked (1 John 2:6+). How is that possible? Certainly not naturally. That leaves only one other possibility -- supernaturally! We need to abide in the Vine (John 15:5), yielding to His Spirit (Ephesians 5:18+, Galatians 5:16+) so that the "sap" of the Spirit of Jesus' power flows to and through us to make of men and women of high (His) character.

Give me a man of God—one man,
Whose faith is master of his mind,
And I will right all wrongs
And bless the name of all mankind.

Give me a man of God—one man,
Whose tongue is touched with heaven's fire,
And I will flame the darkest hearts
With high resolve and clean desire.

Give me a man of God—one man,
One mighty prophet of the Lord,
And I will give you peace on earth,
Bought with a prayer and not a sword.

Give me a man of God—one man,
True to the vision that he sees,
And I will build your broken shrines,
And bring the nations to their knees

(From the classic work [Spiritual leadership : principles of excellence for every believer](#)
[borrow this book] by J. Oswald Sanders),

John Stott (quoted by John MacArthur) has a quote from [Hugh Latimer's "The Sermon of the Plow"](#) which relates to one of the **craftiest schemes of the devil**. Stott quotes Latimer's words...

And now I would ask you a strange question; who is the most diligent bishop and [prelate](#) in all England; that passes all the rest in doing his office? I can tell, for I know who it is; I know him well. But now I think I see you listening and hearkening that I should name him. There is one that passes all the other [sic], and is the most diligent [prelate](#) and preacher in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you—it is **the Devil**. He is the most diligent preacher of all others; he is never out of his diocese; he is never away from his cure; you shall never find him unoccupied; he is ever in his parish; he keeps residence at all times; you shall never find him out of the way; call for him when you will, he is ever at home. **He is the most diligent preacher in all the realm**; he is ever at his plough; nor lording or loitering can hinder him; he is ever applying his business; you shall never find him idle, I warrant you.... Where the devil is resident, and has his plough going, there away with books and up with candles; away with Bibles and up with beads; away with the light of the Gospel and up

with the light of candles, yea at noonday; ... up with man's traditions and his laws, down with God's traditions and his most holy Word.... Oh that our [prelates](#) would be as diligent to sow the corn of good doctrine as Satan is to sow cockle and [darnel](#)!... There never was such a preacher in England as he is. (STOTT GOES ON TO WRITE "THE CONCLUSION OF THE SERMON WENT LIKE THIS.") The [prelates](#) are lords ... and no labourers; but the devil is diligent at his plough. He is no unpreaching [prelate](#); he is no lordly loiterer from his cure; but a busy ploughman.... **Therefore, ye unpreaching [prelates](#), learn of the devil: to be diligent in doing of your office.... If you will not learn of God, nor good men, to be diligent in your office, learn of the devil.** (Borrow Stott's book page 27 - [Between two worlds : the art of preaching in the twentieth century](#))

It is a fine ([kalos](#)) work (a noble task - ESV, NIV) **he desires ([epithumeo](#)) to do** - Let us not skip over the description of the object of aspiration and desire. First Paul uses the adjective **fine ([kalos](#))** describes this supernatural work as that which has inherent excellence, intrinsic goodness and thus supplies a special, superior, advantageous benefit. The beneficiaries are the "sheep," (Jn 10:11, 27) the "little flock" of Christ (Lk 12:32+), the true believers in each local body. **Fine ([kalos](#))** is that which is inherently and genuinely beautiful and which fully conforms to its basic nature and purpose and does not refer to that which is superficial. Work is ergon, from which we derive the

Trustworthy ([4103](#)) [pistos](#) means faithful. When used of men it speaks of fidelity or faithfulness to something to which one is bound by pledge or duty & implies strict and continuing faithfulness to an obligation, trust, or duty. Fidelity is a great word picture of the Word for fidelity is the degree to which an electronic device (CD, radio, television) accurately reproduces its effect (as sound or picture). The living and active word of God can be relied on to give an accurate picture or sound, so to speak. In short [pistos](#) describes God's word as dependable and sure. We can count on it in time and throughout eternity. There is nothing else like that on this earth which is passing away!

Pistos - 64x/63v - believe(2), believer(4), believers(5), believing(1), faithful(44), faithful one(1), faithfully(1), sure(1), trustworthy(7), who believe(1). Matt. 24:45; Matt. 25:21; Matt. 25:23; Lk. 12:42; Lk. 16:10; Lk. 16:11; Lk. 16:12; Lk. 19:17; Jn. 20:27; Acts 10:45; Acts 13:34; Acts 16:1; Acts 16:15; 1 Co. 1:9; 1 Co. 4:2; 1 Co. 4:17; 1 Co. 7:25; 1 Co. 10:13; 2 Co. 1:18; 2 Co. 6:15; Gal. 3:9; Eph. 1:1; Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:2; Col. 1:7; Col. 4:7; Col. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:24; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Tim. 1:12; 1 Tim. 1:15; 1 Tim. 3:1; 1 Tim. 3:11; 1 Tim. 4:3; 1 Tim. 4:9; 1 Tim. 4:10; 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Tim. 5:16; 1 Tim. 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:11; 2 Tim. 2:13; Titus 1:6; Titus 1:9; Titus 3:8; Heb. 2:17; Heb. 3:2; Heb. 3:5; Heb. 10:23; Heb. 11:11; 1 Pet. 1:21; 1 Pet. 4:19; 1 Pet. 5:12; 1 Jn. 1:9; 3 Jn. 1:5; Rev. 1:5; Rev. 2:10; Rev. 2:13; Rev. 3:14; Rev. 17:14; Rev. 19:11; Rev. 21:5; Rev. 22:6

Aspires ([3713](#))([orego](#) in middle voice = [oregomai](#)) means to stretch out, to reach after to grasp something, to yearn for, a beautiful picture of the man of God considering eldership! "The term does not speak of internal motives, but only describes the external act. Here it describes someone who is taking steps to become an overseer" (MacArthur) Literally reach out after something, to stretch out after esp w. the hands, to snatch. Metaphorically, to covet, long after, desire, try to gain, be ambitious. Always in the middle Voice, signifying the mental effort of stretching oneself out for a thing, of longing after it, with stress upon the object desired (money in 1 Ti 6:10+, a better country in Heb 11:16). It is notable that the derivative word [\(prexis\)](#) is found once in the NT in Ro 1:27 where Paul talks about men burning in their desire for men! The idea is to stretch out and is only used in the middle voice in the NT. Literally it means to reach out for something, stretch oneself toward and figuratively means to strive for, aspire to, long for.

Used 3x in NT - 1 Tim. 3:1; 1 Tim. 6:10; Heb. 11:16.

1 Timothy 6:10+ For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for [\(orego/oregomai\)](#) in present tense) it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Desires (covet, long, lust) ([1937](#)) [epithumeo](#) from [epí](#) = upon, used intensively + [thumós](#) = passion) ([Click](#) study of noun [epithumia](#)) means literally to fix the desire upon (object could be good [Mt 13:17, Lk 22:15 used of Jesus] or bad [1Co 10:6]). It describes a compelling passion, a strong desire to do or secure something, which can refer to good (as here) or evil (Mt 5:28 translated "lust"). To desire greatly. To long for. Note that the preposition [epí](#) can express motion toward or upon and thus one lexicon defines it as to set one's heart upon. In sum, [epithumeo](#) describes a strong impulse toward something so that one's passions or affections directed toward some object, thing or person.

Epithumeo - 16x/16v - covet(2), coveted(1), craved(1), desire(1), desired(2), desires(1), gladly(1), long(3), longing(1), lust(2), sets its desire(1). Matt. 5:28; Matt. 13:17; Lk. 15:16; Lk. 16:21; Lk. 17:22; Lk. 22:15; Acts 20:33; Rom. 7:7; Rom. 13:9; 1 Co. 10:6; Gal. 5:17; 1 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 6:11; Jas. 4:2; 1 Pet. 1:12; Rev. 9:6

Fine ([2570](#)) [kalos](#) describes that which is inherently excellent or intrinsically good, providing some special or superior

benefit. **Kalos** is good with emphasis (as discussed below) on that which is beautiful, handsome, excellent, surpassing, precious, commendable, admirable. In **classic Greek kalos** was originally used to describe that which outwardly beautiful. Other secular uses of **kalos** referred to the usefulness of something such as a **fair** haven, a **fair** wind or that which was auspicious such as sacrifices. **Kalos** referred to that which was "morally beautiful" or noble and hence virtue was called "the good" (to kalon). The New Testament uses of **kalos** are similar to the secular Greek -- outwardly fair, as the stones of the temple (Lk 21:5); well adapted to its purpose, as salt ("salt is **good**" Mk 9:50); competent for an office, as deacons ("**good** servant of Christ Jesus" 1 Ti 4:6); a steward ("serving one another, as **good** stewards of the manifold grace of God", 1 Pe 4:10-note); a **good** soldier (2Ti 2:3-note); expedient, wholesome ("it is **better** for you to enter life crippled" Mk 9:43, 45, 47); morally good, noble, as works ("Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your **good** works" Mt 5:16+); conscience ("we are sure that we have a **good** conscience", Heb 13:18+). The phrase *it is good*, i.e., a good or proper thing ("It is **good** not to eat meat or to drink wine", Ro 14:21+). In the **Septuagint (LXX)** **kalos** is the most commonly used word for **good** as opposed to **evil** (e.g., see Ge 2:17; 24:50; Isaiah 5:20).

Paul uses kalos 21 times (out of total of 89 uses in NT) in the pastoral epistles (14 times in 1 Timothy)

- 1 Tim. 1:8; 1 Tim. 1:18; 1 Tim. 2:3; 1 Tim. 3:1; 1 Tim. 3:7; 1 Tim. 3:13; 1 Tim. 4:4; 1 Tim. 4:6; 1 Tim. 5:10; 1 Tim. 5:25; 1 Tim. 6:12; 1 Tim. 6:13; 1 Tim. 6:18; 1 Tim. 6:19; 2 Tim. 1:14; 2 Tim. 2:3; 2 Tim. 4:7; Titus 2:7; Titus 2:14; Titus 3:8; Titus 3:14.

Office of overseer (1984) episkope from **epi** = upon, intensifying already existing idea in verb + **skopeo** = regard, give attention to) describes the act of watching over with special reference to being present. Therefore it can mean inspection, superintendence, investigation, or visitation. **Episkope** is used by Jesus in Luke 19:44+ describing the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD declaring "they (ROMAN ARMIES LED BY GENERAL TITUS) will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your **visitation**." (Described down to the day in Daniel 9:25+) The implication of Jesus' declaration is the Jews could have and should have recognized their visitation (not just Daniel's prophecy but prophesied over 300 times in the OT). Tragically, most of the Jews in first century Palestine refused to receive Jesus as their Messiah in His **visitation** (Jn 1:11+) -- Jesus lamented over Jerusalem because it did not know the time of its visitation crying out "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and (HERE IS THE KEY PHRASE) you were unwilling." Mt 23:37) Jerusalem (which stands for the Jewish nation in this context) did not realize that the Messiah had come to provide redemption from sin and not redemption from the Romans! In Acts 1:20+ **episkope** refers to a office or position of responsibility of caring for and protecting others. In the next paragraph episkope is used in a technical sense describing the position or function of an ecclesiastical leader. Here in **1 Timothy 3:1** episkope refers to those men who have oversight and supervision of the local church, emphasizing this leader's management responsibilities and appears to be synonymous with **elder** (presbuteros; 1Ti 5:17+; 1 Peter 5:1+) **Vine** writes that **episkope** "primarily signifies a visiting, or visitation; then, oversight. In this respect the Scripture lays stress not upon the function, but upon the character of the service; not upon the position, but upon devotion to the work. ([Collected writings of W. E. Vine](#)) **Thayer** writes that **episkope** "In biblical Greek...(is) that act by which God looks into and searches out the ways, deeds, character, of men, in order to adjudge them their lot accordingly, whether joyous or sad; inspection, investigation, visitation (Vulgate usually *visitatio*): so universally, *en* episkope, *psuchon*, when He shall search the souls of men, i.e., in the time of divine judgment, **Vincent** says "The radical idea of the word (episkope) is that of observing or inspecting. Hence episkopos, an overseer or bishop. Visiting grows naturally out of this, as visitare from visere, to look at attentively. See Introduction, on Peter's emphasis upon sight; and compare behold, in this verse. The "day of visitation" is the day of looking upon."

Episkope - 4x - Lk. 19:44; Acts 1:20; 1 Tim. 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:12

Episkope in Septuagint - Gen. 50:24; Gen. 50:25; Exod. 3:16; Exod. 13:19; Exod. 30:12; Lev. 19:20; Num. 4:16; Num. 7:2; Num. 14:29; Num. 16:29; Num. 26:22; Num. 26:43; Job 6:14; Job 7:18; Job 10:12; Job 24:12; Job 29:4; Job 31:14; Job 34:9; Ps. 109:8; Prov. 29:13; Isa. 10:3; Isa. 23:17; Isa. 24:22; Isa. 29:6; Jer. 6:15; Jer. 10:15; Ezek. 7:22

Work (2041)(ergon) gives us our English word "erg," a unit of work or energy, equal to the work done by a force of one dyne when its point of application moves one centimeter in the direction of action of the force. **Friberg** defines **ergon** - (1) generally work; (a) active, anything done or to be done = deed, work, action (Jn 3:21); (b) passive, anything achieved or made as the product of an action or process = workmanship, deed, accomplishment (1Cor 3:13); (2) in contrast to rest = work, activity (Heb 4:3, 4); deed (1Jn 3:18) in contrast to word (lo,goj); as a corollary or complement to faith, as a practical demonstration or proof of it work(s), deed(s) (James 2:18); (3) as God's activity in the world work(s), deed(s), act(s) (Jn 5:20); (4) as human duties and occupations = work, task (Acts 14:26); (5) in a weakened sense = matter, thing, undertaking (Acts 5:38) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#)) **Gingrich** adds "1. deed, action Lk 24:19; Col 3:17; 2 Th 2:17; Heb 4:3, 4, 10; Jas 2:14ff. Manifestation, practical proof, practice Ro 2:15; Eph 4:12; 1 Th 1:3; 2 Th 1:11; Jas 1:4. Deed, accomplishment Mt 11:2; Mk 14:6; Lk 11:48; Jn 3:19, 20f; 6:28f; 7:3, 21; 10:25, 37f; Acts 9:36; Ro 3:20, 28; Col 1:10; Heb 6:1; Jas 3:13; Rev 15:3.—2. work, occupation, task Mk 13:34; Jn 17:4, Ac 14:26; 15:38; 1 Cor 15:58; 2 Ti 4:5.—3. work in the passive sense, indicating what is produced by work Acts 7:41; 1 Cor 3:13, 14,

15; Heb 1:10; 2 Pet 3:10; 1 Jn 3:8.—4. thing, matter Acts 5:38; (Borrow [Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#) by Gingrich, F. Wilbur.) (For more borrow Spiros Zodhiates [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#)).

Ergon - 169x om 158v - action(1), behavior(1), deed(13), deeds(52), doing(1), effectual(1), labor(1), result(1), task(1), what...done(1), work(34), works(62). Matt. 5:16; Matt. 11:2; Matt. 11:19; Matt. 23:3; Matt. 23:5; Matt. 26:10; Mk. 13:34; Mk. 14:6; Lk. 11:48; Lk. 24:19; Jn. 3:19; Jn. 3:20; Jn. 3:21; Jn. 4:34; Jn. 5:20; Jn. 5:36; Jn. 6:28; Jn. 6:29; Jn. 7:3; Jn. 7:7; Jn. 7:21; Jn. 8:39; Jn. 8:41; Jn. 9:3; Jn. 9:4; Jn. 10:25; Jn. 10:32; Jn. 10:33; Jn. 10:37; Jn. 10:38; Jn. 14:10; Jn. 14:11; Jn. 14:12; Jn. 15:24; Jn. 17:4; Acts 5:38; Acts 7:22; Acts 7:41; Acts 9:36; Acts 13:2; Acts 13:41; Acts 14:26; Acts 15:38; Acts 26:20; Rom. 2:6; Rom. 2:7; Rom. 2:15; Rom. 3:20; Rom. 3:27; Rom. 3:28; Rom. 4:2; Rom. 4:6; Rom. 9:11; Rom. 9:32; Rom. 11:6; Rom. 13:3; Rom. 13:12; Rom. 14:20; Rom. 15:18; 1 Co. 3:13; 1 Co. 3:14; 1 Co. 3:15; 1 Co. 5:2; 1 Co. 9:1; 1 Co. 15:58; 1 Co. 16:10; 2 Co. 9:8; 2 Co. 10:11; 2 Co. 11:15; Gal. 2:16; Gal. 3:2; Gal. 3:5; Gal. 3:10; Gal. 5:19; Gal. 6:4; Eph. 2:9; Eph. 2:10; Eph. 4:12; Eph. 5:11; Phil. 1:6; Phil. 1:22; Phil. 2:30; Col. 1:10; Col. 1:21; Col. 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:3; 1 Thess. 5:13; 2 Thess. 1:11; 2 Thess. 2:17; 1 Tim. 2:10; 1 Tim. 3:1; 1 Tim. 5:10; 1 Tim. 5:25; 1 Tim. 6:18; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:21; 2 Tim. 3:17; 2 Tim. 4:5; 2 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:18; Tit. 1:16; Tit. 2:7; Tit. 2:14; Tit. 3:1; Tit. 3:5; Tit. 3:8; Tit. 3:14; Heb. 1:10; Heb. 2:7; Heb. 3:9; Heb. 4:3; Heb. 4:4; Heb. 4:10; Heb. 6:1; Heb. 6:10; Heb. 9:14; Heb. 10:24; Jas. 1:4; Jas. 1:25; Jas. 2:14; Jas. 2:17; Jas. 2:18; Jas. 2:20; Jas. 2:21; Jas. 2:22; Jas. 2:24; Jas. 2:25; Jas. 2:26; Jas. 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:17; 1 Pet. 2:12; 2 Pet. 2:8; 2 Pet. 3:10; 1 Jn. 3:8; 1 Jn. 3:12; 1 Jn. 3:18; 2 Jn. 1:11; 3 Jn. 1:10; Jude 1:15; Rev. 2:2; Rev. 2:5; Rev. 2:6; Rev. 2:19; Rev. 2:22; Rev. 2:23; Rev. 2:26; Rev. 3:1; Rev. 3:2; Rev. 3:8; Rev. 3:15; Rev. 9:20; Rev. 14:13; Rev. 15:3; Rev. 16:11; Rev. 18:6; Rev. 20:12; Rev. 20:13; Rev. 22:12

1 Timothy 3:1-7

Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. - Hebrews 13:17

TODAY IN THE WORD It can be argued that there is no organization on earth that has a higher standard for its leaders than the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus handpicked the twelve men who became His apostles and the earliest leaders of the church. Even though the office of apostle ended with the death of John (the last survivor of the Twelve), the apostle Paul maintained a high standard for church leadership when he wrote these instructions to Timothy. It's good for us to step back once in a while to refresh ourselves on the qualifications for leadership in the body of Christ. The writer of Hebrews wanted us as believers to give our leaders the respect and cooperation they need to carry out their service, for which they are accountable to God. Paul saw to it that the leaders selected were worthy of the respect demanded of God's people.

The word ""elder"" here could be translated as ""bishop"" or ""overseer."" The more common word for elder, from which the English word ""presbyter"" comes, is used elsewhere to describe the same office. It involves giving direction and spiritual oversight to the church, especially including the work of preaching and teaching the Word.

Someone might look at the demands of spiritual leadership, and the accountability required, and wonder why anyone would want the job of elder. But Paul encourages those who feel that God is calling them to this work.

These verses concerning elders contain fifteen separate qualifications. They range widely across the span of a man's life from the church to his home to his relationships with other people, including unbelievers. A person holding this office should also be ""hospitable"" and ""able to teach"" (v. 2).

Along with his gifts, the elder in any local church--whether pastor or lay leader--needs control and balance in his personal and family life so that he is not vulnerable to falling into some area of temptation. It takes time for someone to establish these kinds of credentials, and it takes maturity not to be carried away by the power associated with leadership. This explains why the elder needs to have a good ""track record"" in the faith.

APPLY THE WORD Any parent who has had to deal with a cantankerous, contrary child knows why the writer of Hebrews urges us not to make things hard for our pastors.

QUESTION - [What are the qualifications of elders and deacons? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

ANSWER - The Bible has a clear set of qualifications for a deacon and an elder and their positions in the body of believers. The office of deacon was developed to deal with a practical issue in the church: "So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, 'It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables'" (Acts 6:2). The word translated "wait on" is the Greek word *diakonein*, which comes from a word meaning "attendant, waiter, or one who ministers to another." To "deacon" is to serve. The first deacons were a group of seven men in the Jerusalem church who were appointed to work in the daily

food distribution. A deacon, therefore, is one who serves others in an official capacity in the church.

The Greek word translated "[bishop](#)" is *episkopos* (the source of our English word *episcopal*). The bishop is the superintendent, the [overseer](#), or the officer in general charge of the congregation. In the Bible bishops are also called "elders" (1 Timothy 5:19) and "pastors" (Ephesians 4:11).

The qualifications of the bishop/elder/pastor are found in 1 Timothy 3:1–7:

"Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap."

Paul also instructs Timothy on the things that exemplify the teaching of a good minister. Beginning in 1 Timothy 4:11 and continuing through 6:2, Paul gives Timothy twelve things that he should "command and teach."

The apostle Paul repeats the qualifications of a bishop/elder/pastor in his letter to Titus.

"An elder must be blameless, [faithful to his wife](#), a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it" (Titus 1:6–9).

The qualifications of a deacon are similar to those of a bishop/elder/pastor:

"In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 3:8–13).

The word translated "deacon" in this passage is a form of the same Greek word used in Acts 6:2, so we know we are talking about the same office.

These qualifications are simple and straightforward. Both the deacon and the bishop/elder/pastor should be a male, the husband of one wife, of sterling character, and one who rules his own home in a biblical way. These qualifications also presuppose that one seeking such an office is a born-again believer and walks in submission to God's Word. The only substantial difference between the two sets of qualifications is that the bishop/elder/pastor must be "able to teach," whereas teaching is not mentioned as necessary for deacons.

The Lord Jesus Himself is called the "[Shepherd](#) and Overseer of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25). The titles are interesting. The word *Shepherd* is a translation of the Greek word *poimen*, translated "pastor" elsewhere (e.g., Ephesians 4:11). This *poimen* is someone who tends herds or flocks and is used metaphorically of Christian pastors because pastors should guide the "flock" of God and feed them the Word of God. The word translated "Overseer" is the same word, *episkopos*, used by the apostle Paul in 1 Timothy and Titus.

Clearly, the offices of elder and deacon are important in the church. Ministering to God's people in word and deed is a serious responsibility for a man to take on, and it should never be done lightly. A biblically unqualified individual should not occupy either the office of elder or deacon; the church deserves better.

Related Resources from Gotquestions.org

- [What is the biblical pattern of church leadership?](#)
- [What are the qualifications of elders and deacons?](#)
- [What is a bishop, biblically speaking?](#)
- [What are the responsibilities of deacons in the church?](#)

- [What does the Bible say about the form of church government \(polity\)?](#)
 - [Can women serve as deacons in the church?](#)
-

QUESTION - [What is an overseer in the church? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

ANSWER - In the Bible, the terms *overseer*, *bishop*, and *elder* all refer to the same position in the church. Different English translations of the Bible use alternate terms to describe this leadership position in 1 Timothy 3:1. The New International Version and English Standard Version use *overseer*, while the King James Version uses *bishop*, and the New Living Translation merely translates the Greek term as “church leader.” The Greek word is *episcopo* and comes from a root word that means “to inspect” and by implication “to look out or look after.” The overseer is tasked with looking out for the church.

Only two church offices are mentioned in Scripture: that of overseer (bishop or elder) and that of deacon (1 Timothy 3:8; Philippians 1:1). The office of overseer in the church is that of the pastor(s) and elders, who are the spiritual leaders or shepherds of the congregation (Acts 20:28).

Not just anyone can assume the role of overseer in the church. Specific qualifications for overseers are provided in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9. The position is reserved for men. 1 Timothy 3:2 specifically says that the overseer is to be “faithful to his wife.” This assumes he is a man. Elsewhere in Scripture we see that God has instituted an authority structure within the church, wherein the primary leadership position of maintaining doctrinal integrity and providing spiritual shepherding to the congregation is to be held by a man. See, for example, 1 Timothy 2:11–14. This is merely a matter of role or function, not one of value or importance. Women are made in the image of God just like men (Genesis 1:27). Women come to Christ the same way men do (Galatians 3:26–29). Women are of equal worth with men. In fact, Peter tells husbands to be considerate of their wives “as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life” (1 Peter 3:7). So, it is not a matter of value but one of orderliness, based on the order of creation (1 Timothy 2:15). God has organized His church in such a way that a male is to assume the primary position of spiritual teaching authority.

However, not every man will be qualified for the position of overseer in a church. In fact, relatively few may be. To be an overseer or elder is a “noble task” (1 Timothy 3:1) and a weighty responsibility (James 3:1). Below are some of the specific qualifications for an overseer in the church, based on 1 Timothy 3:2–7 and Titus 1:6–9:

1. Above reproach and blameless (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6).
2. The husband of one wife, i.e., faithful to his wife (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6).
3. Temperate (1 Timothy 3:2).
4. Self-controlled (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8).
5. Respectable (1 Timothy 3:2).
6. Hospitable (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8).
7. Able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2).
8. Holding firmly to Scripture so as to encourage others and refute false doctrine (Titus 1:9).
9. Not given to drunkenness (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7).
10. A gentle man not given to violence (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7).
11. Not quarrelsome or eager to start a fight (1 Timothy 3:3).
12. Not greedy or a “lover of money” (1 Timothy 3:3).
13. Not seeking after dishonest gain (Titus 1:7).
14. A good manager of his own family, whose children obey him (1 Timothy 3:4–5; Titus 1:6).
15. Not a new believer (1 Timothy 3:6).
16. Having a good reputation with outsiders (1 Timothy 3:7).
17. A lover of good, who acts in a way that is upright, holy, and disciplined (Titus 1:8).

Overseers are given the serious task of overseeing the flock that has been entrusted to them. Peter instructed fellow elders to “be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:2–3).

Those in the leadership position of overseer should follow the example of Jesus, who “did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). Leadership, according to the Bible, is not about puffing oneself up or lording power over others, but rather about serving those who have been entrusted to one’s care (Matthew 20:26; Mark 10:43). The overseer who humbles himself as a servant will be rewarded by Christ at His return (Matthew 23:12; 1 Peter 5:4).

To summarize, the role of overseer is a leadership position in the church, tasked with the care of the congregation. [Women](#) cannot occupy the position of overseer, since the role requires teaching and having spiritual authority over men. There are many biblical qualifications a man who desires to be an overseer/pastor/elder must meet. An overseer’s duties involve proper teaching and

handling of Scripture, maintaining a good Christian witness, and being a good example to his family and congregation. Biblically, being in the leadership role of a pastor requires humility and a heart of servanthood.

Stephen Olford - "A good work." – 1 Timothy 3:1

Paul calls the office of a bishop (or overseer) "a good work." The qualifications for this office are interesting and important to note.

Positive

- Without reproach • The husband of one wife
- Temperate • Sober-minded
- Orderly • Given to hospitality
- Able to teach • Ruling his house well
- Having a good testimony from those without
- Gentle

Negative

- Not given to wine • Not violent
- Not quarrelsome • Not a lover of money
- Not a novice

There are then ten positive qualifications and five negative. Truly, a high standard, yet it is God's standard. The secret of a well-behaved church lies in the moral qualities as well as spiritual qualities of the oversight. God calls this work "a good work."

No matter my role in the church, Lord, let me always demonstrate these godly characteristics.

1 Timothy 3:1-7

If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. - 1 Timothy 3:1

TODAY IN THE WORD How does one get to be a leader? "Leaders aren't born, they're made," said football coach Vince Lombardi. "And they are made just like anything else, through hard work." What are the secrets to good leadership? Former President Dwight Eisenhower advised, "You do not lead by hitting people over the head—that's assault, not leadership." Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair noted, "The art of leadership is saying no, not yes. It is very easy to say yes."

Today's reading kicks off a six-day examination of what the Bible says about church leadership. Yesterday's devotional already taught us that leaders must help build up the body of Christ toward maturity and a fuller expression of spiritual unity. Only two specific leadership offices, overseer and deacon, are mentioned in Scripture, though different churches use different names (pastor, elder, bishop, etc.). Overseers are responsible for teaching, preaching, and evangelism, and deacons are responsible for practical service. Today's passage is one of two main passages laying out the qualifications for the "noble task" of the overseer (v. 1). These qualifications can be examined under three headings. First, an overseer must have excellent moral and spiritual qualities. He should be a person of integrity, faithful in marriage, self-disciplined, and with priorities in the right order.

Second, an overseer should manage his own family well before he can be considered for church leadership. The care of the home is explicitly said to be an analogy and preparation for caring for the local congregation. As individualistic Americans, we might resist this line of thinking, but Paul was quite clear here that children's behavior reflects on their parent.

Third, an overseer must have spiritual maturity. Specifically, he should not be a recent convert, but old enough in the faith to resist pride and be able to teach sound doctrine. He should also have a "good reputation with outsiders," especially given that Satan delights in bringing down church leaders.

APPLY THE WORD Do you know how your church or denomination is governed? What roles do overseers and deacons play, and what terms does your church use? How much authority do pastors hold? On what issues does the congregation vote (if applicable)? How are leaders held accountable? How do ordinary church members learn about leadership decisions? Ways to find out about these matters include reading the church constitution, talking to your pastor, or taking a church membership class.

AMBITION

You can't really blame Albert Malone for trying to get ahead in his military career. Wanting to get a better job, he went to law school and applied for the JAG (Judge Advocate General's) Corp but was turned down because of poor eyesight. Oh, did I mention that

when he was in the Navy, his primary job was to "sight guns?" —Reader's Digest, Nov 2004, p. 66.

Steven Cole - "Who's in charge of the church?" Most American Christians would answer, "The pastor is." And many American pastors are burning out or dropping out because they're overwhelmed with the responsibility of running the church (in many cases, the church is running them!). They feel like a chipmunk running inside the spinning cage-wheel, getting nowhere except exhausted. As a church grows, the pastor's role often changes imperceptibly into a business manager rather than a pastor-teacher. To prevent these problems, we need to answer from the Bible, "Who is in charge of the church?"

Furthermore, most American churches are run like American government. Democracy is assumed. Members have a vote and they use that vote to exercise control. If they don't like the way the pastor or the church board is doing things, they organize a movement to vote them out of office. That's the American way! But it's not necessarily the biblical way. We need to answer clearly from the Bible, "Who is in charge of the church?" so that we don't just do things the American way.....

Christ exercises headship over His church through spiritually mature elders who shepherd His flock.

1. The basic principle of church government is that Jesus Christ is the Head of His church.

Who is in charge of the church? Jesus Christ is! It is His church; He bought it with His blood. The local church does not belong to the pastor, to the elders, or to the congregation. It belongs to Jesus Christ who alone is the Head (see Eph. 1:20-23). No one dare proclaim, "This is my church!" It doesn't belong to any of us. It belongs to Christ the Lord. Never in the New Testament are the leaders of the local church referred to as "head" of the church. Neither is the church viewed as a democratic organization, where the members are free to vote their own minds on issues. The key question in church government is not, "What is the mind of the members?" but, "What is the mind of Christ?"....

While the Bible doesn't put any age requirement on the office, I would say that an elder under 30 should be an exception (Jesus began His ministry around that age). Once in a while you see a Spurgeon come along, who began pastoring at 17 and was a godly example and a superb Bible expositor from the start. But that is rare.

THE RIGHT PERSON IN THE RIGHT JOB 1 TIMOTHY 3:1 [NIV, Once-A-Day: Walk with Jesus: 365 Days in the New Testament](#)

Prospective employers often seem more concerned with outward achievement than with inward character. In the business world, quality of life often takes a back seat to accomplishments.

Not so in the family of God! There, what you are counts for more than what you have achieved. The work of the ministry demands more than good businessmen, good civic leaders, good politicians. It demands good people.

Patrick Fairbairn discusses the importance of good character in the selection of godly leaders in the church.

WALK WITH PATRICK FAIRBAIRN

"The apostle's list of qualifications is predominantly moral and consists of attributes of character rather than gifts and endowments of mind. The latter are included only as they might be required to form clear perceptions of truth and duty, to distinguish between things that differ, and in difficult or perplexing circumstances to discern the right and know how to maintain and vindicate it.

"Yet it is the characteristics which go to constitute the living, practical Christian, the man or woman of God, that are here brought into view.

"And whatever the church finds necessary to add to the number, in order to render her leaders fit for the varied work and service to which they are called, the grand moral characteristics specified here must still be regarded as the primary and more essential elements in the qualifications of a true spiritual overseer."

WALK CLOSER TO GOD

Father, as I seek to minister to others in your name, make me conscious that serving you is more than doing the right things; it is being the right person—your Christlike child.

Build into my life those qualities that make serving you not simply a job but rather a lifestyle. In the name of him whose hands and heart were never in conflict. Amen.

Warren Wiersbe - Character Matters 1 Timothy 3:1

If a man's own children cannot obey and respect him, then his church is not likely to respect and obey his leadership. For Christians, the church and the home are one.

We should oversee both of them with love, truth, and discipline. The pastor cannot be one thing at home and something else in church. If he is, his children will detect it, and there will be problems. The words rule and ruleth in 1 Timothy 3:4–5 (KJV) mean “to preside over, to govern,” and suggest that a pastor is the one who directs the business of the church. (Not as a dictator, of course, but as a loving shepherd, 1 Peter 5:3.)

The word translated “take care of” in 1 Timothy 3:5 (KJV) suggests a personal ministry to the needs of the church. It is used in the parable of the good Samaritan to describe the care given to the injured man (Luke 10:34–35). No pastor ever feels that he is all he ought to be, and his people need to pray for him constantly. It is not easy to serve as a pastor/elder, but it is much easier if your character is all God wants it to be.

Something to Ponder - What are you doing to develop character that is Christlike? How will this help you in any leadership roles you have? (See [Be Faithful - Page 51](#))

1 Timothy 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

BGT 1 Timothy 3:2 δε ο υ τ υ π σ κ ο π ο ν ν ε π λ η μ π τ ο ν ε ν αι , μ ι ς γ υ ν α ι κ ι ς ν ὄ ρ α , ν η φ λ ι ο ν σ φ ρ ο ν α κ σ μ ι ο ν φ ι λ ξ ε ν ο ν δι δ α κ τ ι κ ο ν ,

KJV 1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

NET 1 Timothy 3:2 The overseer then must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, an able teacher,

CSB 1 Timothy 3:2 An overseer, therefore, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, self-controlled, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an able teacher,

ESV 1 Timothy 3:2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

NIV 1 Timothy 3:2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

NLT 1 Timothy 3:2 So an elder must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach.

NRS 1 Timothy 3:2 Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher,

RSV 1 Timothy 3:2 Now a bishop must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher,

YLT 1 Timothy 3:2 it behoveth, therefore, the overseer to be blameless, of one wife a husband, vigilant, sober, decent, a friend of strangers, apt to teach,

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach;

NJB 1 Timothy 3:2 That is why the presiding elder must have an impeccable character. Husband of one wife, he must be temperate, discreet and courteous, hospitable and a good teacher;

NAB 1 Timothy 3:2 Therefore, a bishop must be irreproachable, married only once, temperate, self-controlled, decent, hospitable, able to teach,

ASV 1 Timothy 3:2 The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

MIT 1 Timothy 3:2 To qualify, an overseer must be beyond reproach, a one-woman man, serious, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, competent to teach,

DBY 1 Timothy 3:2 The overseer then must be irreproachable, husband of one wife, sober, discreet, decorous, hospitable, apt to teach;

GWN 1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop must have a good reputation. He must have only one wife, be sober, use good judgment, be respectable, be hospitable, and be able to teach.

BBE 1 Timothy 3:2 The Bishop, then, is to be a man of good name, the husband of one wife, self-controlled, serious-minded, having respect for order, opening his house freely to guests, a ready teacher;

- **An overseer**, : Titus 1:5-9
- **above reproach**, : 1Ti 3:10 Lu 1:6 Php 2:15
- **the husband of one wife**,: 1Ti 4:3 5:9 Heb 3:14
- **temperate, prudent, respectable**,: Isa 56:10 1Pe 4:7 5:8
- **hospitable**: Ro 12:13 Titus 1:8 Heb 13:2 1Pe 4:9
- **able to teach**: 2Ti 2:24
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Titus 1:5-9+ For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint **elders** ([presbuteros](#)) in every city as I directed you, 6 namely, (NOTE CRITERIA PARALLEL THAT OF "OVERSEERS") if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. 7 For the **overseer** (Episkopos) must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, 9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that (TERM OF PURPOSE - WHAT IS PURPOSE OF OVERSEER HOLDING FAST THE FAITHFUL WORD) he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. (WHY IS THE OVERSEER SO CRITICAL? Titus 1:10 begins with "FOR" a term of explanation).

THE REQUIREMENTS OF AN OVERSEER

An overseer (see [episkopos](#)) - This man is not responsible so much for the business of the church as for the spiritual integrity of the church members. Too often someone is made an elder because he is a successful businessman (I have seen this repeatedly in a Bible based church!) This can have disastrous results, for he may be able to watch over his business, but has no spiritual, Spirit given, Scripture founded ability to watch over the sheep and the doctrine the sheep are fed (and I have seen this failure lead to church splits and/or exodus of large numbers of sheep!) And do not fall into the trap of choosing a man who is a "natural leader," which can be very tempting! On the other hand, a "natural leader" who checks off the boxes Paul lists would make a fine overseer. Notice also that Paul says nothing about the giftedness of these men, with the one exception possibly that thy be able to teach.

[Pastor David Guzik](#) adds that "Going to seminary doesn't make one qualified for spiritual leadership. Being a good talker doesn't make one qualified for spiritual leadership. Natural or spiritual gifts in themselves do not qualify one for spiritual leadership. What one gives in money or volunteer time does not qualify them for spiritual leadership. What qualifies a man for spiritual leadership is godly character – and godly character established according to these clear criteria."

NET Note - Although some see the article with overseer as indicating a single leader at the top of the ecclesiastical structure (thus taking the article as monadic), this is hardly necessary. It is naturally taken generically (referring to the class of leaders known as overseers) and, in fact, finds precedent in 1Ti 2:11–12 ("a woman," "a man"), 1Ti 2:15 ("she"). Paul almost casually changes between singular and plural in both chapters.

Paul emphasizes the sovereignty of God in the selection of **overseers** (God's Sovereignty, Man's Responsibility = God chooses, Man aspires/desires) in one of the other NT uses of [episkopos](#) charging the elders at Ephesus (his last words to them) **'Be on guard** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) for **yourselves** (DON'T MISS THIS PRONOUN [cf [Baxter's quote below](#)] - WATCH OVER **YOUR** HEART FIRST SO THAT YOU CAN WATCH OVER OTHER'S HEARTS! - cf Pr 4:23+) and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made (AS NOTED ABOVE THIS IS KEY) you **overseers**, to shepherd (feed, guard) the church of God which He purchased with His own blood." (Acts 20:28+) I know 2 men who it was clear God's Spirit was calling to be overseers, but instead of aspiring for God, they both aspired for "Gold." (1Ti 6:10+). One man died very sad that he had resisted the Spirit's call as a young man. I do not know the outcome of the other man except that he was in the early years of Dell Computers and became what we called a "Dell-ionaire!" Rich man, poor man (monetarily, spiritually)! Here is the take away -- if you sense God is calling you to be an overseer, DO NOT RESIST THE SPIRIT. God's Spirit will not strive with you forever! This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, an opportunity that is "out of this world" (so to speak)! Don't miss it and later live with that sad regret like my

friend who is now with Jesus.

John MacArthur has an interesting comment on these qualifications - Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery was perhaps Britain's greatest military leader during World War II. He was thus eminently qualified to list the qualities necessary to a leader in war. According to Montgomery, such a leader should see the big picture and not become bogged down in details. He must not be petty. He must choose men well. He should trust those under him and let them get on with their jobs without interference. He must have the power of clear decision. He should inspire confidence. Finally, he must have a proper sense of religious truth and acknowledge it to his troops (Bernard L. Montgomery, [Memoirs of Field-Marshal Montgomery](#) [borrow this book - Cleveland: World, 1958], 74–83.). From a different perspective [John R. Mott](#), a world leader in student circles in the early part of this century, gave the following list: Does he do little things well? Has he learned the meaning of priorities? How does he use his leisure? Has he intensity? Has he learned to take advantage of momentum? Has he the power of growth? What is his attitude toward discouragements? How does he face impossible situations? What are his weakest points? (Basil Matthews, John R. [Mott: World Citizen](#) [borrow this book - New York: Harper & Brothers, 1934], 332–98). Those lists, and many others like them, contain qualities every church overseer should possess. But pastoring God's people demands far more because the issue is not just leadership, but moral and spiritual example. (See [1 Timothy Commentary](#))

Then, must be (dei) above reproach (anepileptos) - Greek of **above reproach** = "not able to be held." Note Paul does not say it is preferable (etc), but **must (dei)** (first word in Greek sentence for emphasis) which speaks of absolute necessity of all the qualifications. **Above reproach** is a single Greek word, the derivation of which gives us a good sense of the meaning, for the base verb epilambano is modified by "a" (not) and so pictures a man not to be taken hold of or grasp, e.g., so as to be arrested. Figuratively, he is irreproachable. inculpable: blameless, beyond criticism, unimpeachable. The word implies not only that the man is of good report, but that he is deservedly so. He is one who has nothing which an adversary could seize upon with which to base a charge. "One who cannot be laid hold upon." not open to censure. Clearly this does not describe [sinless perfection](#), but that he lives in such a way that reproach will not come to him justifiably when he stands under the scrutiny of judicial examination by God (or men); and thus he cannot be indicted. To say it another way, he has no overriding, controlling character defect. The upshot is that his life and character are such that they do not give the enemies of the church reason to attack its reputation (cp to Titus 2:6-8+) "No overt, flagrant sin can mar the life of one who must be an example for his people to follow (cf. 1Ti 3:10; 4:16; 5:7; Ps 101:6; Php 3:17; 2Th 3:9; Heb 13:7; 1Pe 5:3). This is the overarching requirement for elders; the rest of the qualifications elaborate on what it means to be blameless." (MacArthur) The overseer must be of such a spotless character that no one can lay hold upon anything in his life which would be of such a nature as to cast reproach upon the cause of the Lord Jesus. He presents to the world at large such a Christian life that he furnishes no grounds for accusation. **Trench** writes that "It is not enough for him to be not criminal; he must be one against whom it is impossible to bring any charge of wrong doing such as could stand impartial examination. He must be without reproach, irreprehensible."

Adam Clarke add an interesting note that [anepileptos](#) is "a metaphor, taken from the case of an expert and skilful pugilist, who so defends every part of his body that it is impossible for his antagonist to give one hit."

J Vernon McGee - The thing that must be understood is that you will be blamed for things if you hold an office, any office, in the church. What is important is that the accusation must not be true. An elder must be blameless in the sense that he will not be found guilty of anything of which he might be accused. Shortly after I had been called to a pastorate in downtown Los Angeles, I met Dr. James McGinley in Chicago. He asked me, "How do you like being pastor in that great church?" "Well," I said, "it's a marvelous opportunity, but I find myself in a very unique place: I am accused of many things, and I can't defend myself. You cannot spend all your time answering everybody, so I've determined to just preach the Word of God and not try to answer them." Dr. McGinley said, "Just rejoice that the things you are accused of are not true." It is nice to be in that position, and that should be the position of a bishop -- blameless: accused, but not guilty. (Borrow [1 Timothy in Thru the Bible, page 441ff](#))

MacArthur rightly points out that "Pastors must take great care to remain above reproach for several reasons. First, they are the special targets of Satan, and he will assault them with more severe temptation than others. Those on the front lines of the spiritual battle will bear the brunt of satanic opposition. Second, their fall has a greater potential for harm. Satan knows that when a shepherd falls, the effect on the sheep is devastating. Third, leaders' greater knowledge of the truth, and accountability to live it, brings greater chastening when they sin. Fourth, elders' sins are more hypocritical than others' because they preach against the very sins they commit. (See [1 Timothy Commentary](#))

A life without blame is the overarching requirement for leadership in the church.

-- John MacArthur

MacArthur quotes the Puritan writer [Richard Baxter](#) in his classic book [The Reformed Pastor](#) -

Take heed to yourselves, lest your example contradict your doctrine (**ED**: AKA "HYPOCRITE!"), and lest you lay such stumbling-blocks before the blind, as may be the occasion of their ruin; lest you unsay with your lives,

what you say with your tongues; and be the greatest hinderers of the success of your own labours.... One proud, surly, lordly word, one needless contention, one covetous action, may cut the throat of many a sermon, and blast the fruit of all that you have been doing (**ED: WOE!!!**). **Take heed to yourselves**, lest you live in those sins which you preach against in others, and lest you be guilty of that which daily you condemn. Will you make it your work to magnify God, and, when you have done, dishonour him as much as others? Will you proclaim Christ's governing power, and yet [contemn](#) it, and rebel yourselves? Will you preach his laws, and wilfully break them? If sin be evil, why do you live in it? if it be not, why do you dissuade men from it? If it be dangerous, how dare you venture on it? if it be not, why do you tell men so? If God's threatenings be true, why do you not fear them? if they be false, why do you needlessly trouble men with them, and put them into such frights without a cause? Do you 'know the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death (Ro 1:32KJV+);' and yet will you do them? 'Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery,' or be drunk, or covetous, art thou such thyself? 'Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?' (cf Ro 2:21, 23) What! shall the same tongue speak evil that speakest against evil? Shall those lips censure, and slander, and backbite your neighbour, that cry down these and the like things in others? **Take heed to yourselves**, lest you cry down sin, and yet do not overcome it; lest, while you seek to bring it down in others, you bow to it, and become its slaves yourselves: 'For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage.' (2Pe 2:19+) 'To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.' (Ro 6:16KJV+) O brethren! it is easier to chide at sin, than to overcome it.

The following qualifications in a sense help understand what it means to be a man above reproach.

The husband of one wife - Greek is "a one woman man." NEB has "faithful to his one wife." The meaning is debated - it could simply mean one at a time (that's enough for most men!), or that he should be married, or that he not have more than one wife or that he not have been divorced. MacArthur adds one other interpretation below.

J Vernon McGee - "The husband of one wife." This can be interpreted two ways. It could mean that he ought to be married. I feel that Paul had this in mind. You may say, "Well, Paul was not married." I take the position that Paul had been married and his wife had died. He could not have been a member of the Sanhedrin without being married. He simply had not married again, perhaps because of his travels as an apostle. When I first became a pastor I was not married and I was frequently kidded by a friend who said I had no right to be a pastor if I wasn't married. Using this verse, he would say, "You should be the husband of one wife." However, I think that the primary meaning here is that the bishop or elder should not have two wives. Polygamy was common in Paul's day, and bigamy was certainly prevalent. The officer in the church should be the husband of one wife. (Borrow [1 Timothy in Thru the Bible, page 441ff](#))

MacArthur sees a meaning in this qualification which is different than most of the other commentators - The issue is not the elder's marital status, but his moral and sexual purity. This qualification heads the list, because it is in this area that leaders are most prone to fail (**ED: EXCELLENT POINT!**). Various interpretations of this qualification have been offered. Some see it as a prohibition against polygamy—an unnecessary injunction since polygamy was not common in Roman society and clearly forbidden by Scripture (Gen 2:24), the teaching of Jesus (Mt 19:5, 6; Mk 10:6-9), and Paul (Eph 5:31). A polygamist could not even have been a church member, let alone a church leader. Others see this requirement as barring those who remarried after the death of their wives. But, as already noted, the issue is sexual purity, not marital status. Further, the Bible encourages remarriage after widowhood (1Ti 5:14; 1Co 7:39). Some believe that Paul here excludes divorced men from church leadership. That again ignores the fact that this qualification does not deal with marital status. Nor does the Bible prohibit all remarriage after divorce (see Mt 5:31, 32; 19:9; 1Co 7:15). Finally, some think that this requirement excludes single men from church leadership. But if that were Paul's intent, he would have disqualified himself (1Co 7:8). A "**one-woman man**" is one totally devoted to his wife, maintaining singular devotion, affection and sexual purity in both thought and deed. To violate this is to forfeit blamelessness and no longer be "above reproach" (Titus 1:6, 7). Cf. Pr 6:32, 33. *(Borrow - see page 1864 [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Guzik adds "This means that the Biblical leader is not a playboy, an adulterer, a flirt, and does not show romantic or sexual interest in other women, including the depictions or images of women in pornography."

Temperate ([nephaios](#)) - CSB - "self-controlled." ESV - "sober-minded." KJV has "vigilant" which certainly is a good attitude to have in moral matters. In English **temperate** means calm, showing moderation or self-restraint, moderate in any indulgence, sensible, even tempered. A **temperate** person avoids excess, extravagance and over-indulgence of appetites and passions. The idea is that this man refrains from any excesses that might cloud his thinking and judgment. Thus he exercises sober, sensible judgment in all things. Someone has well said that we should never expect to govern others until we have learned to govern ourselves! "The elder should be calm and not credulous. He should be a man who knows how to keep his cool." ([McGee](#))

Prudent ([sophron](#)) - KJV = "sober." NET, ESV, NIV = "self-controlled." The English dictionary defines **prudent** as acting with or showing care and thought for the future. This is the man who is intent on the what, the how, and the when of doing what should be done. He is a sensible person and in control of his mind, including what he thinks about and what he does. He is balanced in his opinions and actions. This man follows sound reason, and is not under the control of passion, but by the Spirit has his desires and passions well regulated. This man has a sound or healthy mind and thus possesses the power (the indwelling Spirit) and the ability to curb desires and impulses so as to produce a measured and orderly life. This does not mean this man is not to have a healthy sense of humor.

The Christian office-bearer must be a man who wisely controls every instinct.

MacArthur adds that this man "does not allow circumstances or the immorality or foolishness of the world to distract him and gain his attention and interest. He not only does not become involved in things that are outright immoral and unspiritual but also avoids things that are trivial, foolish, and unproductive. He knows his priorities and is devoted to them." ([MacArthur. Titus: Moody Press](#))

Euripides called [sophron](#) "the fairest gift the gods have given to men." **Socrates** called it "the foundation stone of virtue." **Xenophon** said that it was that spirit which shunned evil, not only when evil could be seen but even when no one would ever see it. **Trench** defined **sophron** as "entire command over the passions and desires, so that they receive no further allowance than that which the law and right reason admit and approve. (Synonyms of the New Testament)

Respectable ([kosmios](#)) - **Respectable** implies well-ordered demeanor, the orderly fulfillment of all duties, and the ordering of the inner life from which these spring. In the only other use Paul had just charge women to adorn themselves "**modestly**" (*kosmios*).

Hospitable ([philoxenos](#)) - **Hospitable** is literally "lover of strangers."

Steven Cole - The Greek word means, literally, "a lover of strangers." Again, this is a quality that every Christian must strive for (Ro 12:13; 1Pe 4:9), but it is especially incumbent on elders. If elders are not friendly and warm towards others, the entire church will reflect that indifference and selfishness. Hospitality means taking a genuine interest in others and making them feel welcomed and at ease. It should begin here when the church gathers. If you're talking with someone you know and see a visitor all alone, don't keep talking to each other. Go to the visitor and make him feel welcome!. ([Read the full sermon](#))

Able to teach is one word in Greek and simply stated calls these men to be skillful in teaching.

QUESTION - [What does it mean to be above reproach / blameless?](#)

ANSWER - The dictionary defines *reproach* as "shame or disgrace or that which brings rebuke or censure upon a person." The Bible speaks of being "above reproach" or "blameless" as one of the distinctive marks of those who aspire to the [office of elder or deacon](#) within the church (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6–7). Their work for the church, as well as their interactions with others, are to be of such moral quality that they do not bring shame or in any way disgrace the body of Christ or the name of Jesus. This holds true not only within the church but outside it as well.

The qualifications for the elder, sometimes called "overseer," and deacon are outlined by the apostle Paul. He wrote, "Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach" (1 Timothy 3:2; cf. Titus 1:6–7). The word *must* is emphasizing that this particular quality of being "above reproach" is an unconditional prerequisite for a leadership role in the church.

Above reproach, however, does not mean without sin. No Christian lives an [entirely sinless life](#), nor will we until we reach the glorified state in heaven. Above reproach means that the overseer's life is free from sinful habits or behaviors that would impede his setting the highest Christian standard and model for the church to emulate (Hebrews 13:7; 1 Peter 5:3). Similarly, the overseer must not give cause for those outside the church to impugn its reputation. Being above reproach means that no one can honestly bring a charge or accusation against him (Acts 25:7; 1 Peter 3:16).

In essence, the church's overseers must be men whose character is unimpeachable, who are esteemed highly within their community. Such men are known for their wholesome life and untarnished [integrity](#). Elders and deacons are to be men of good character and reputation. Though Paul, in his letters to Timothy and Titus, is addressing the distinguishing marks of those who desire to be church leaders, it certainly does not diminish the need for all Christians to aspire to the same qualities. Being above reproach should be an ongoing aim of all believers (Colossians 3:7–10). [GotQuestions.org](#)

Related Resources:

- [What are the biblical qualifications of a pastor? | GotQuestions.org](#)

- [Can restoration occur after a pastor has been caught in a scandal? | GotQuestions.org](#)
 - [Can a man who is married to a divorced woman serve in church leadership? | GotQuestions.org](#)
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QUESTION - [1 Timothy 3:2 What does the "husband of one wife" phrase in 1 Timothy 3:2 mean?](#)

ANSWER - There are at least three possible interpretations of the phrase *husband of one wife* in 1 Timothy 3:2 (ESV). 1) It could simply be saying that a polygamist is not qualified to be an elder, a deacon or a pastor. This is the most literal interpretation of the English rendering of the phrase, but seems somewhat unlikely considering that polygamy was quite rare in the time that Paul was writing. 2) The Greek could literally be translated as "one-woman man." In other words, a bishop must be absolutely loyal to the woman he is married to. This interpretation acknowledges that the original text focuses not on marital status but on moral purity. 3) The phrase could also be understood to declare that, in order to be an elder/deacon/pastor, a man can only have been married once, other than in the case of a remarried widower; in other words, a pastor cannot be a divorcee.

Interpretations 2 and 3 are the most prevalent today. Interpretation 2 seems to be the strongest, primarily because Scripture allows for divorce in exceptional circumstances (Matthew 19:9; 1 Corinthians 7:12–16). It is also important to differentiate a man who was divorced and remarried before he became a Christian from a man who was divorced and remarried after becoming a Christian. An otherwise qualified man should not be excluded from church leadership because of his actions prior to coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. Although 1 Timothy 3:2 does not necessarily exclude a divorced or remarried man from serving as an elder/deacon/pastor, there are other issues to consider.

The first qualification of an elder/deacon/pastor is to be "above reproach" (1 Timothy 3:2). If the [divorce and/or remarriage](#) had no biblical grounds, then the man has damaged his testimony in the church and community; the "above reproach" qualification will exclude him from the pastorate rather than the "husband of one wife" requirement. An elder/deacon/pastor is to be a man whom the church and community can look up to as an example of Christlikeness and godly leadership. If a past divorce and/or remarriage detracts from this ideal, then he should not serve in the position of elder/deacon/pastor. It is important to remember that, even though a man is disqualified from serving as an elder/deacon/pastor, he is still a valuable member of the body of Christ. Every Christian possesses spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4–7) and is called to participate in edifying other believers with those gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7). A man who is disqualified from the position of elder/deacon/pastor can still teach, preach, serve, pray, worship, and play an important role in the church. [GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

Related Resources:

- [Is a man who divorced and remarried before coming to Christ eligible to pastor a church? | GotQuestions.org](#)
 - [The Meaning of the Husband of One Wife](#) - Pastor Andy Woods - 23 page paper (includes 2 pages of Bibliography).
 - [Can an unmarried man be a deacon or elder?](#) GotQuestions.org
-

1Ti 3:2,4 A bishop then must be...one who rules his own house well.

A boy was given a world globe for his birthday. He liked it so much that he kept it beside his bed. One night his father wanted to study the globe. Thinking his son was asleep, he tiptoed into his room, picked it up, and started for the door. He had just about reached it when the child, sitting up in bed, called out, "Hey, Dad, what are you doing with my world?"

Most of us are not in positions to influence world affairs. Every father, however, can make a tremendous difference in his own home—his children's "world." It is his privilege and responsibility to make it the best place possible for their development. Fathers are to create an environment that provides a sense of belonging. They are to exercise loving discipline that reflects the care of the heavenly Father for His children.

If your child asked, "Hey, Dad, what are you doing with my world?" what would you have to say?—RWD

HAPPY IS THE HOME WHERE JESUS' NAME IS SWEET TO EVERY EAR.

Paul Enns - WHO CAN BE AN ELDER? (1 Timothy 3.2)

In a day when pastors are being ordained in their teens, married three times, and seeking salaries of more than \$100,000 a year, we need to return to the biblical qualifications for church leaders as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

These qualifications impinge on elders and pastors, depending on how a church is organized. They are not optional but obligatory. The text testifies, "An overseer [elder or pastor] must be ..." We ought not to take casually what God takes seriously. An elder must be "above reproach." He is one who can't be censured. Opponents are unable to bring a charge against him.

He is the "husband of one wife." He has proved himself a model of faithfulness in marriage. Infidelity disqualifies a man from the pastorate just as cutting off a finger would disqualify the Old Testament priest from functioning as a priest.

He is "temperate," meaning sober in judgment. He is also "prudent," namely, discreet. He doesn't act unwisely. He is "respectable," suggesting a well-balanced behavior in his habits. (He doesn't spend four days a week on the golf course.) Like Will Rogers, he knows no strangers; he is "hospitable."

He has skill in "teaching," being able to lead new believers from milk to the meat of the Word. He is "not addicted to wine." Nor is he a fighter; he is "not pugnacious." Instead, he is "gentle," a reasonable person. He is "uncontentious," refusing to insist on his rights. He is not moved by "mon-ey" (he isn't constantly being "called" to a higher salaried church).

He has an exemplary family, reflecting his ability to rule four hundred in the church because he can rule four at home. He is not a "new convert"; he is mature and has developed in maturity over a period of time. He even has a "good reputation with unbelievers." His testimony extends beyond the church yard.

For the church to be effective, it is imperative that leaders follow the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and that believers in the church demand those qualifications from their leaders.

LESSON: For the church to be pure, mature, and effective, it is imperative that its leaders reflect the qualifications of I Timothy 3:1-7.

Do You Qualify to Lead? 1 Timothy 3:2 - J Oswald Sanders

First Timothy 3 spells out qualifications for spiritual leadership. With respect to relationships within the church, the leader is to be above reproach. If a charge is laid against him, it would fail, because his life would afford no grounds for reproach or indictment or wrongdoing. His adversary finds no opening for a smear campaign, rumor mongering, or gossip.

With respect to relationships outside the church, the spiritual leader should enjoy a good reputation. I knew an elder businessman who often took preaching appointments on the Lord's Day. His employees used to say that they could tell when he had been preaching on Sunday because of his ill-temper on Monday, perhaps due to the extra work of preparation. Those outside the church can see plainly when our lives fall short of our testimony. We cannot hope to lead people to Christ by living an example of such contradiction.

Outsiders will criticize; nonetheless, they respect the high ideals of Christian character. When a Christian leader full of high ideals lives a holy and joyful life in front of unbelievers, they will want a similar experience of the benefits. The character of the elder should command the respect of unbelievers, inspire their confidence, and arouse their aspiration. Example is much more potent than precept.

Moral principles common to the Christian life are under constant, subtle attack, and none more so than sexual faithfulness. The Christian leader must be blameless on this vital point. Faithfulness to one marriage partner is the biblical norm. The spiritual leader should be someone of unchallengeable morality.

The spiritual leader must be temperate, not addicted to alcohol. To be drunk is to show a disorderly personal life. Excessive drinking is a disgrace anywhere, and much more so when it captures a Christian. A leader cannot allow a secret indulgence that would undermine public witness.

A leader must be prudent, a person with sound judgment. This principle describes "the well-balanced state of mind resulting from habitual self-restraint"—the inner character that comes from daily self-discipline. The ancient Greeks, who valued this quality, described it as a disciplined mind not swayed by sudden impulse or flying to extremes. Christian leaders who possess sound minds have control of every part of their personality, habits, and passions. A well-ordered life is the fruit of a well-ordered mind. The life of a leader should reflect the beauty and orderliness of God. (SL)

Must (ought) (1163) **dei** from **deo** = to bind or tie objects together, put in prison and also root of **doulos**, bond-servant) refers to what is not optional but needful (binding) out of intrinsic necessity or inevitability. The word speaks of logical necessity according to the needs or circumstances. **Dei** refers to inward constraint which is why it is often translated "must". **Dei** describes that which is under the necessity of happening or which must necessarily take place, and as stated above, conveys a sense of inevitability. To express the sense of necessity **dei** is translated "one ought", "one should", "one has to" or "one must". In English dictionaries **must** means to be obliged and expresses both physical and moral necessity or insistence. **Must** speaks of something that should not be overlooked or missed. **Must** is used to indicate requirement by immediate or future need or purpose.

Dei in the Pastoral Epistles - 1 Tim. 3:2; 1 Tim. 3:7; 1 Tim. 3:15; 2 Tim. 2:6; 2 Tim. 2:24; Titus 1:7; Titus 1:11

Above reproach (without reproach, unrebukeable) (423) [anepileptos](#) from **a** = without + **epilambáno** = to seize, to lay firm hold) is an adjective which literally describes that which cannot be seized. Not able to be held as one would a criminal because there is nothing for which he might be accused. It is one who cannot be laid hold upon, so to speak, which metaphorically describes one who is inculpable, cannot be criticized (above criticism), inviolable (i.e., not tarnished, eg, as to one's honor, character, etc), unassailable (i.e., not liable to personal attack or question of character), irreprehensible (i.e., not to be blamed or censured; free from fault). Plutarch used the word to describe the character of one who teaches children The **anepileptos** individual is one who has nothing in their words, actions or deeds upon which an adversary could seize to make a charge. This person demonstrates conduct which is irreproachable, above criticism, without fault. He has a higher morality on which no blame can be found to base an accusation. As an aside (overseers, potential overseers and saints in general, for what is good for the shepherds is good for the sheep) do not attempt to obey this lofty charge in your own strength! Cast off any sense of self reliance and rely wholly on the Holy Spirit of Christ to give you both the **desire** and the **power** to live **without reproach** (Php 2:13NLT+).

Anepileptos only in the Pastoral Epistles - 3x - 1 Tim. 3:2; 1 Tim. 5:7; 1 Tim. 6:14. No uses in the Septuagint.

Temperate (3524) [nephaliós](#) from [nepho](#) = to be sober, free of intoxicants, wineless and thus sober in judgment) strictly speaking means "holding no wine" (without wine). The word originally connotes abstinence from alcohol, but here it has a wider, metaphorical sense. Figuratively nephaliós speaks of complete clarity of mind, clear headed, thus resulting good judgment. It describes one who is watchful to remain free from the intoxicating effects of liquor, but even more of the intoxicating effects of the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#) and therefore they seek to continually remain circumspect, sober, and vigilant. A temperate attitude is to be the older man's lifestyle. Old men should have learned what are and what are not godly (God pleasing) pleasures. They should have learned by now that the passing pleasures of sin (He 11:25+) and of self-indulgence cost far more than they are worth. The "dividends" of vice are not worth the "investment" **Ralph Earle** writes that **nephaliós** "was first used literally to describe drink which was "unmixed with wine." The ancient Greeks used to give to the Muses offerings of water, milk, and honey. It was forbidden to mix wine with these. The prohibitions went a step further: the wood burned with the sacrifices must not include the twigs of grapevines. There must not be the slightest contact with that which caused drunkenness. (Borrow [Word meanings in the New Testament](#)) **Vincent** adds "The kindred verb nephein means *to be sober* with reference to drink, and, in a metaphorical sense, *to be sober and wary; cool and unimpassioned*."

The **temperate** man is able to discern more clearly which things are of the greatest importance and value. He uses his time, his money, and his energy more carefully and selectively than when he was younger and less mature. His priorities are in the right order, and he is satisfied with fewer and simpler things. In this area of "self mastery" or self control, there is always the subtle danger of falling into the trap of legalism. Along that line I think **D G Kehl's** advice is spot on "The beginning of self-mastery is to be mastered by Christ, to yield to His Lordship. True spiritual self-discipline holds believers in bounds but never in bonds; its effect is to enlarge, expand and liberate." Saying "Yes" to Jesus (and His Spirit) each morning makes it much easier to say "No" to the variegated fiery missiles of temptation which fly into our eyes, ears, heart and mind each day. In fact, if we would guarding our hearts well, we must begin with assiduously guarding our eyes and ears.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones once said that "The great need in the Christian life is for self-discipline. This is not something that happens to you in a meeting; you have got to do it!" And I would add that you do it ("work out your salvation in fear and trembling" - Php 2:12+) because the indwelling Spirit of God gives you the desire and the power to do it! (Php 2:13+) Don't try to become self-disciplined by your SELF, but in dependence on the Spirit! Yes, you are **100% responsible** to develop self-discipline but you are **100% dependent** on the Spirit's enabling power! Mysterious? Yes! But it is sound doctrine which will nourish your soul and grow you in Christ-likeness!

W E Vine says "**nephaliós** primarily has to do with abstinence from strong drink; it acquired, however, the more general sense of soberness in disposition... It conveys partly the idea of watchfulness, but the meaning is that of freedom from excitability as well as from credulity. ([Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Augustine who had entered into the Spirit given victory over sexual lusts ([see note](#)) said "*Conquer yourself and you have conquered the world.*"

Nephaliós - 3x - 1 Tim. 3:2; 1 Tim. 3:11; Titus 2:2

Prudent (4998) [sophron](#) from **sozo** = to save + **phren** = mind) is literally a "saved mind" and so describes the man whose thoughts are saving thoughts. He is sane, sober minded, cool-headed, discreet and always using good judgment, in control of self (curbing his desires and impulses), prudent (showing the ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason), avoiding extremes and

giving careful consideration to responsible actions.

Sophron - 4v - 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8; Titus 2:2; Titus 2:5

Respectable (2887) (**kosmios** from **kosmos** = adorning or order, ornament, decoration, adornment) means orderly, well-arranged referring to persons who are disciplined, honorable, respectable. It refers to dress characterized by respectability and thus that which is modest, sensible (1Ti 2:9)

Hospitable (5382) (**philoxenos** from **phílos** = friend, to be friendly to one or to wish him well, beloved, dear + **xenos** = stranger, unknown, foreign or foreigner, alien, guest) is literally "stranger loving" or a friend of strangers, showing them care and kindness.

Practically **philoxenos** means fond of guests and so hospitable or given to (lover of) hospitality. It describes one who is given to generous, welcoming and cordial reception of visitors, guests or strangers. It means to give practical help to anyone who is in need (friend or stranger, believer or unbeliever) Hospitality was a highly valued Greek and Jewish virtue. It was absolutely necessary for the expansion of the gospel and necessary for the maintenance of the fellowship within the church as well as the image of the church from without.

Hospitable is from Medieval Latin *hospitāre* = to receive as a guest which in turn is from Latin *hospes* = guest.

The **hospitable** man gives practical help to anyone who is in need, friend or stranger, believer or unbeliever, freely offers his time, his resources, and his encouragement to meet the needs of others.

Philoxenos - 3v - 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:9

Able to teach (apt to teach) (1317) **didaktikos** from **didaktos** = pertains to that which is taught or instructed from **didasko** [from **dáo** = know or teach; see study of related noun **didaskalia**] means to provide instruction or information in a formal or informal setting. = provide instruction in a formal or informal setting by imparting positive truth; English = **didactic** = designed or intended to teach, particularly in having moral instruction as an ulterior motive) ([Click](#) word study on related word **didaskalía**) is one who is highly skilled in teaching and able to communicate truth. **Didaktikós** does not refer so much to possessing vast knowledge as to one who has the ability to communicate effectively whatever knowledge and understanding they might have. Though truth can seem harsh, carrying with it conviction or judgment of sin, it must be delivered with compassion and kindness because God always works for the restoration or repentance of the sinner. An overseer or elder who is not able to teach is like a surgeon who can't use a scalpel. Are the elders in your church able to teach and are they actively utilizing this gift to edify and equip your local body?

Overseer (bishop, guardian) (1985) (**episkopos** from **epi** = over or upon + **skopos** = goal or end one has in view = English "**scope**" as in microscope or telescope) is literally one who looks over closely or intently, who views carefully. Interesting derivation helps understand the meaning > **epi** (upon) + **skopos** (watchman, "scope") <> **skeptomai** (peer about ~"skeptical"; sentry, scout). In the Septuagint it was used of one who watches over something or someone, guardian, supervisor, inspector. These are the men who were the guardians of the church at Philippi and were to care for them not as dictators but as spiritual leaders who provided godly examples (1Pe 5:1,2,3, 4-notes). **What an overseer should be doing...** visiting the Sunday School classes, small group fellowships, etc...any place where ravenous wolves might arise and bring in unsound doctrine. He needs to make sure the sheep are getting fed sound (healthy) doctrine which means he needs to be eating the same fare! (cp Titus 1:9, Heb 5:14). **Click** for some additional insights on **episkopos**. The **episkopos** describes one who superintends, exercises oversight or watches over others, thus an "overseer" (one looking over another). The Latin equivalent is *super-visus*, someone who "looks over" things, a manager. From *super-visus* comes the English supervisor. **Episkopos** properly means an inspector, overseer, or guardian, and was given to the ministers of the gospel because they exercised this care over the churches or were appointed to oversee their interests. In the NT the overseers had the responsibility of oversight of the body of Christ, serving as the guardians who were to watch over God's "flock" and lead the sheep by their godly example. It is important to note that Paul here uses the term in the plural and that elsewhere this term is used interchangeably with "elder" (**presbuteros**). (Titus 1:5+) God's people are like sheep (see study of Jehovah Roi for discussion of sheep) and in need of shepherds to watch over them, protect them, and lead them. Pray for your spiritual leaders that they might more and more be what God wants them to be. Oden rightly states that "**Episkopos** implies vigilance far more than hierarchy. (Borrow Thomas Oden's [Pastoral theology : essentials of ministry](#)) In the early Church Fathers **episkopos** was used to denote function rather than the status of anyone who exercised supervision or control, as well as to denote a member of a body exercising oversight and government in a church, equivalent to *presbuteros*.

Episkopos was originally a secular title, designating commissioners appointed to regulate a newly-acquired territory or a colony. It was also applied to magistrates who regulated the sale of provisions under the Romans. In the [Septuagint](#) (Greek translation of the Hebrew OT) **episkopos** signifies "inspectors, superintendents, taskmasters," (2Ki 11:19; 2Chr 34:12,17) or "captains, presidents," (Neh 11:9,14,22). In the ancient Greek culture **episkopos** was often used of pagan gods, who supposedly watched over worshipers and over their nations and also the pagan priests who represented a false deity.

Episkopos 5x - Acts 20:28; Php 1:1; 1Ti 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1Pe 2:25

13x Septuagint (LXX) (Nu 4:16; 31:14; Jdg. 9:28; 2 Ki. 11:15, 18; 12:11; 2 Chr. 34:12, 17; Neh. 11:9, 14, 22; Job 20:29; Isa. 60:17). Here are two representative uses in the Septuagint...

2 Chronicles 34:17 "They have also emptied out the money which was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hands of the supervisors (Hebrew = paqad = attend, visit, look after; Lxx = episkopos) and the workmen."

Isaiah 60:17 "Instead of bronze I will bring gold, And instead of iron I will bring silver, And instead of wood, bronze, And instead of stones, iron. And I will make peace your administrators, And righteousness your overseers."

MacArthur - Some have suggested that **episkopos** derives its sense from the city administrator, inspector, or financial manager of Greek culture. Its New Testament usage, however, more closely parallels that of the Essene Jews of the Qumran community. The overseers among the Essenes preached, taught, presided, exercised care and authority, and enforced discipline. Those functions more closely mirror that of the New Testament overseer than the more narrow use of the term in Greek culture. What are the responsibilities of the overseer? They are to rule (1Ti 5:17), to preach and teach (1Ti 5:17), to pray for the sick (Js 5:14), to care for the church (see notes 1 Peter 5:1; 5:2), to be examples for others to follow (1Pe 5:1,2-note), to set church policy (Acts 15:22ff.), and to ordain other leaders (1Ti 4:14).

Wuest adds that "The word ([episkopos](#)) came originally from secular life, referring to the foreman of a construction gang, or the supervisor of building construction, for instance. Thayer defines the word; "an overseer, a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian, or superintendent." The word was taken up by the Church, and designated an overseer of any Christian church. The responsibilities of this office have to do with the oversight and direction of the spiritual life of the local church. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used by permission)

In 1 Peter 2:25 we see the ultimate "Overseer", where **episkopos** is used of the Lord Jesus to describe His care over the souls of His sheep "For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. (see [note 1Peter 2:25](#))

As emphasized above, **Overseers** were selected by the Holy Spirit in (Acts 20:28) Paul commanding the spiritual leaders of the church at Ephesus to "**Be on guard (present imperative = command to do this continually)** for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers (episkopos)**, to shepherd (tend flocks like a shepherd - oversight, protecting, leading, guiding, feeding) the church of God which He purchased (more literally "acquired" as His Own possession) with His own blood.

Paul explained to **Titus** that it was vital "For the **overseer (episkopos)** must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain (See [note Titus 1:7](#))

Having oversight of the church is no trivial or light matter, but rather a sobering responsibility, the writer of Hebrews warning leaders they will be held responsible to God for how faithfully they have led the sheep "**Obey** (this command is to the "sheep" = present imperative) your leaders, and **submit** (again the present imperative commands continuous placing of oneself under the leadership of the spiritual leaders) to them; for they keep watch (literally remain sleepless, picturing the effort necessary to remain on the alert and vigilant) over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. (Heb 13:17+)

James adds that because they teach they face a stricter judgment "**Let** not many of you **become** (present imperative) teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment. (Jas 3:1+).

Barclay adds these thoughts on **episkopos**:

"**Episkopos** is a word with a great history. In Homer's Iliad, Hector, the great champion of the Trojans, is called the episkopos who, during his lifetime, guarded the city of Troy and kept safe its noble wives and infants.

Episkopos is used of the gods who are the guardians of the treaties which men make and of the agreements to which men come, and who are the protectors of house and home. Justice, for instance, is the episkopos, who sees to it that a man shall pay the price for the wrong that he has done.

In Plato's Laws the Guardians of the state are those whose duty it is to oversee the games, the feeding and the education of the children that "they may be sound of hand and foot, and may in no wise, if possible, get their natures warped by their habits." The people whom Plato calls market-stewards are the episkopoi who

“supervise personal conduct, keeping an eye on temperate and outrageous behavior, so as to punish him who needs punishment.”

In Athenian law and administration the episkopoi were governors and administrators and inspectors sent out to subject states to see that law and order and loyalty were observed. In Rhodes the main magistrates were five episkopoi who presided over the good government and the law and order of the state.

Episkopos is, therefore, a many-sided but always a noble word. It means the protector of public safety; the guardian of honor and honesty; the overseer of right education and of public morals; the administrator of public law and order. So, then, to call God the episkopos of our souls is to call him our Guardian, our Protector, our Guide, and our Director." Barclay goes on to state that "The Septuagint, the Greek version of the Hebrew scriptures, uses it to describe those who were the taskmasters, who were over the public works and public building schemes (2Chr 34:17). The Greeks use it to describe the men appointed to go out from the mother city to regulate the affairs of a newly founded colony in some distant place. They use it to describe what we might call commissioners appointed to regulate the affairs of a city. The Romans use it to describe the magistrates appointed to oversee the sale of food within the city of Rome. It is used of the special delegates appointed by a king to see that the laws he had laid down were carried out.

Episkopos always implies two things; first, oversight over some area or sphere of work and second, responsibility to some higher power and authority." ([1 Timothy 3 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#)) ([1 Peter 2 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#)) ([1 Peter 4 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

Related Resources

- [Overseer - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)
- [Overseer - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Bishop - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible](#)
- [Bishop, Elder, Presbyter - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Overseer](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Overseer](#) [Overseer](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Overseer](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Overseer](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Overseer \(2\)](#) [Overseer](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Bishop](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Bishop](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Bishop](#)

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

BGT 1 Timothy 3:3 μ π ροινον μ πλ κτην, λλ πικ μαχον φιλ ργυρον,

KJV 1 Timothy 3:3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;

NET 1 Timothy 3:3 not a drunkard, not violent, but gentle, not contentious, free from the love of money.

CSB 1 Timothy 3:3 not addicted to wine, not a bully but gentle, not quarrelsome, not greedy--

ESV 1 Timothy 3:3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

NIV 1 Timothy 3:3 not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

NLT 1 Timothy 3:3 He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money.

NRS 1 Timothy 3:3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money.

RSV 1 Timothy 3:3 no drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and no lover of money.

YLT 1 Timothy 3:3 not given to wine, not a striker, not given to filthy lucre, but gentle, not contentious, not a lover of money,

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:3 not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not

covetous;

NJB 1 Timothy 3:3 not a heavy drinker, nor hot-tempered, but gentle and peaceable, not avaricious,

NAB 1 Timothy 3:3 not a drunkard, not aggressive, but gentle, not contentious, not a lover of money.

ASV 1 Timothy 3:3 no brawler, no striker; but gentle, not contentious, no lover of money;

MIT 1 Timothy 3:3 not addicted to wine, not violent but gentle, not contentious, not avaricious,

DBY 1 Timothy 3:3 not given to excesses from wine, not a striker, but mild, not addicted to contention, not fond of money,

GWN 1 Timothy 3:3 He must not drink excessively or be a violent person, but he must be gentle. He must not be quarrelsome or love money.

BBE 1 Timothy 3:3 Not quickly moved to wrath or blows, but gentle; no fighter, no lover of money;

- **Not addicted to wine:** 1Ti 3:8 Lev 10:9 Isa 5:11,12 28:1,7 56:12 Eze 44:21 Mic 2:11 Mt 24:45-51 Lu 12:42-46 21:34-36 Eph 5:18 Titus 1:7 2:3
- **pugnacious:** 2Ti 2:24,25 Titus 1:7
- **not greedy of filthy lucre** (only in KJV) - Pr 1:19 15:27 Isa 56:11 Jude 1:11 1Ti 3:8 1Sa 8:3 Titus 1:7,11 1Pe 5:2
- **gentle:** 1Ti 6:11 Ec 7:8 1Th 5:14 2Ti 2:24 Rev 1:9
- **pugnacious:** Titus 3:2 Jas 4:1
- **free from the love of money:** 1Sa 2:15-17 2Ki 5:20-27 Jer 6:13 8:10 Mic 3:5,11 Mal 1:10 Mt 21:13 Joh 10:12,13 12:5,6 Ac 8:18-21 20:33 Ro 16:18 2Pe 2:3,14,15 Rev 18:11-13
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Titus 1:7+ For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,

1 Peter 5:2-3 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

MORE NEGATIVE AND POSITIVES FOR ELDERS

Paul continues the list of character qualities (not just skills or reputation in the church or business acumen) to ensure that church leaders model Christlikeness, not just organizational competence. Paul's emphasis here is not on skills but character. The character of the leader's inner life will reflect the quality of their outer leadership.

Not addicted to wine ([paroinos](#)) - They were not to be addicted to wine like those who sit long (*para* - means alongside) at their wine or who are slaves of drink. Paul is not absolutely prohibiting the drinking of wine, just no addiction or overuse and no drinking to point of inebriation or drunkenness. Wine was actually used as a substitute where good drinking water was scarce. Adherence to this trait reflects an elder's self-control, which is ultimately a fruit of the Spirit and by extension would indicate that this man is generally walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16+) as a Spirit filled individual (Eph 5:18+). Failure to adhere to this rule would indicate a fleshly man who clearly would not be a good elder!

Or pugnacious ([plektes](#)) - Literally "not a giver of blows." With either hand or tongue! Not a bully! Note the close association with wine, for excessive wine often leads to fighting. They were not to men who were "itching for a fight." He is not to be a man who assaults others. This could refer to physical violence but also included verbal violence. Church leaders must not be hot-tempered or threatening, even when provoked and such a quality again suggests a Spirit controlled man. **Barclay** adds he is not to be one who "browbeats his fellow-men," adding that "The man who abandons love and resorts to violence of action or of speech is not fit to be an office-bearer of the Christian Church."

*Men who are constantly stirring up trouble in a church
should never be selected as church officers.*

-- J Vernon McGee

Barclay on pugnacious adds "It would be most unlikely that any Christian leader today would strike another Christian, but the fact remains that blustering, bullying, irritable, bad-tempered speech or action is forbidden to Christians."

Phillip Towner on pugnacious - The degrees and modes of violence that the word might express are numerous (bullying, verbal abuse, angry pushing and shoving), and the prohibition should be regarded as widely as possible.

Lenski on pugnacious - A striker is one who is quick tempered, carries a chip on his shoulder, is ready with his fists. (Borrow [The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon](#))

Steven Cole on pugnacious - Being **pugnacious** means physically hitting others. But it may legitimately be expanded to refer to a man who is verbally combative. It should be needless to say that an elder should never strike anyone, especially his wife or children. If he must spank his child, he exercises control and does not abuse the child. I think that it is always wrong to strike a child in the face or to spank when you're angry. The older the child, the more you use reason and the less you use spanking. The point is, an elder should not be a man who solves conflict by hitting others or being an aggressive bully. ([sermon](#))

But - Term of contrast. This marks a clear "change of direction" from sinful to godly behavior which gives a good Christian testimony.

Gentle (epieikes) - This is a difficult word to translate into English but the general idea is reasonable, mild, fair, gracious and forbearing. Epieikēs describes the person who is considerate, genial, forbearing, and gracious, who easily pardons human failure. It carries the sense of forbearing patience, and willingness to yield or be merciful, rather than insist on strict justice. Such a person does not keep a list of all the wrongs done to him, or hold a grudge. Many men leave the ministry because they can't accept criticism. A leader, when wronged, must have no thought of retaliation. The ultimate model of gentleness is Christ. The elder should be one you can feel comfortable speaking with about various matters.

Lenski on gentle says "this is not the yieldingness of a slave or of an inferior but of a superior in a noble and generous spirit. The Christian keeps his high nobility, he condescends; he considers the weak and the needy and also the pitifulness of the world's haughty and tyrannical. He has that purest and noblest grace which few are able to resist. All of this lies in this term epieikeia. Let it shine out from your joyous hearts! (Borrow [The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon](#))

Peaceable (amachos) describes a man who is not contentious, not quarrelsome, and avoids fighting and disputing. Leaders are to be men who are careful to avoid strife, unnecessary arguments and division and instead should seek peace. They are to be friendly and peaceful toward the lost rather than quarrelsome and belligerent. In an ungodly, immoral society it is easy to become angry with those who corrupt it, condemning them and writing them off as hopeless and beyond the pale of God's grace. But we have no right to become hostile when unbelievers act like unbelievers!

MacArthur - To have a contentious person in leadership will result in disunity and disharmony, seriously hindering the effectiveness of that leadership team.

Free from the love of money (aphilarguros) - This man is not greedy, covetous or money hungry. He is not putting pursuit of wealth above everything else (cf making money his idol). Leaders must not be avaricious, for, as Paul warned, avarice (philarguria) is a root of all sorts of evil (1 Timothy 6:10). In other words in church business especially, he is not one who would do things for the sake of making a profit. As Barclay says "He will know that there are values which are beyond all monetary value."

The way a church officer handles his money can lead him into a great deal of trouble -- either his own money or the church's money.
— J. Vernon McGee.

MacArthur - Love of money is what is at the heart of all motivation for false teachers (cf. 1 Thess. 2:5; 1 Peter 5:2; 2 Peter 2:1–3, 14; Jude 16, etc.)....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).

The upshot is that overseer's life should reflect Christ's heart -- self-controlled, patient, gracious, and above reproach. Leaders must avoid the common traps of the world -- addiction, anger, greed, and power struggles. These traits are essential because leaders set the tone for the church, serve as examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:3) and reflect the gentle and humble leadership of Christ (Mt. 11:29). True spiritual leadership flows from the inside out. Paul's vision is not for powerful rulers, but for Christlike shepherds—gentle, peaceable, content. This is the kind of leadership that nurtures healthy churches and glorifies Christ.

Addicted to wine (3943) paroinos from **para** = alongside, beside, near + **oinos** = wine) is literally "tarrying at wine" (Vine), one who stays near, continually alongside or in the presence of wine. The picture is of a man who always has a bottle (wineskin) on the table,

which is an indication that he is not having a casual drink but that he is addicted. **Paroinos** although literally referring to over-indulgence widened in meaning eventually describing all conduct which was outrageous. It was used to describe the one who tends to be quarrelsome because he habitually drinks too much. To paraphrase **Marvin Vincent**, this is the man one who behaves ill at wine or who treats others with drunken violence. The Jews used it of the conduct of fellow Jews who married Midianite women. It describes the character of the man who, even in his sober moments, acts with the outrageousness of a drunken man!

Barclay - He must not be given to drunken and outrageous conduct. The word is *paroinos*, which literally means given to over-indulgence in wine. But the word widened its meaning until it came to describe all conduct which is outrageous. The Jews, for instance, used it of the conduct of Jews who married Midianite women; the Christians used it of the conduct of those who crucified Christ. It describes the character of the man who, even in his sober moments, acts with the outrageousness of a drunken man. ([Titus 1 Commentary - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

Pugnacious (4131) (**plektes** from **plesso** = to strike) is literally a striker (one who hits another with force), a fist fighter and figuratively one who is a violent, contentious and quarrelsome. The Greeks widened the meaning to include not only physical violence, but also "violence" in speech so that **plektes** came to mean one who "browbeats" others -- isn't it true that words often strike harder than fists! It is possible to hurt a person more deeply and permanently with cruel words than with a fist. So true!

One would think that this prohibition to retaliate would be unnecessary but apparently it was not uncommon in NT times for grown men to settle disputes with their fist fights. As **Barclay** says "He must not be a man ready to come to blows. The word is **plektes**, which literally means a striker. It would seem that in the early Church there were over-zealous bishops who chastised erring members of their flock with physical violence, for the Apostolic Canons lay it down: "We order that the bishop who strikes an erring believer should be deposed." Pelagius says: "He cannot strike anyone who is the disciple of that Christ who, being struck, returned no answering blow." The Greeks themselves widened the meaning of this word to include, not only violence in action, but also violence in speech. ([Daily Study Bible](#))

Gentle (1933) **epieikes** from **epí** = upon, on [intensifies meaning] + **eikós** = fair, equitable - but see [note by Vincent below](#) is a Greek word that is difficult to translate. This word includes the ideas of **gentle** (free from harshness, sternness, or violence), **forbearing** (holding oneself back from especially with an effort; controlling oneself when provoked), yielding, **equity** (freedom from bias or favoritism), **lenient** (mild and tolerant disposition, exerting a soothing or easing influence), unassertive, fair, fitting, appropriate, suitable, proper.

Epieikés conveys the idea that one is satisfied with less than what is due. Are you convicted? I am! And remember this "sweet reasonableness" is to be lived out in the midst of a society filled with "liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons"! (see [Titus 1:12+](#)).

Epieikés describes the ability to extend to others kindly consideration we would wish to receive ourselves. This man or woman knows when it is actually wrong to apply the strict letter of the law, knows how to forgive when justice gives the right to condemn, knows how to make allowances, knows when not to stand upon their rights, knows how to temper justice with mercy and remembers there are greater things in world than rules and regulations.

Vincent writes that "A common derivation of this word is from *eiko*, to yield. Hence the meaning, mild, yielding, indulgent. But the true derivation is from **eikós**, reasonable; and the word implies rather the not being unduly rigorous: "Wherein not strictness of legal right, but consideration for one another, is the rule of practice" (Alford). Compare Phil 4:5, where, for moderation (to *epieikes*) RSV gives forbearance, with gentleness in margin. According to Aristotle, the word stands in contrast with *akribodikaíos* one who is exactly just, as one who is **epieikés** is satisfied with less than his due. (Vincent, M. R. Word studies in the New Testament . Vol. 1, Page 3-647)"

Barclay says that **epieikes** "describes the man who does not stand upon the letter of the law. Aristotle said of this word that it denotes "indulgent consideration of human infirmities" and the ability "to consider not only the letter of the law, but also the mind and intention of the legislator." The man who is *epieikes* is ever ready to avoid the injustice which often lies in being strictly just." ([Daily Study Bible](#))

Spicq - The person characterized by *epieikeia* is reasonable, a respecter of social norms. Sometimes the emphasis is on exactitude, loyalty, and fidelity in the accomplishment of a task; much more often on mildness; hence its connection with goodness (1 Pet 2:18), peace (Jas 3:17; 1 Enoch 6.5, Greek frag.), and mildness—leniency (*praytēs*). So it becomes apparent that Hellenistic *epieikeia* is first and foremost a virtue of the heart—open, conciliatory, and trusting toward one's neighbor (Strabo 6.3.9). Not only is it opposed to wickedness

(Josephus, Ant. 10.83) and to violence (Philo, Cherub. 37), but being thoroughly mild and kind (cf. Philo, Virtues 81, 125, hēmeros), it can be persuaded, and bends and even resigns itself when wronged. Positively, it is hard to distinguish from chrēstotēs, from an accommodating attitude, and from “philanthropy,” the “habitual inclination of character in the direction of friendliness toward people” (Ps.-Plato, Def. 412 e). Finally, NT epieikeia is not only moderation and measure, but goodness, courtesy, generosity. Furthermore, it suggests a certain amiability, good grace. Frag. 427 of Sophocles places epieikēs and charis in parallel.²³ According to Origen, if Mary, greater in grace than Elizabeth, took the initiative to visit her, and when they met was the first to utter a greeting, the reason is that the Virgin Mary was “full of thoughtfulness (epieikēs) toward others.”²⁴ So I suggest translating the neuter adjective epieikes used substantively as “friendly equilibrium”²⁵ in Phil 4:5, where the Vulgate uses the word modestia: “Let your friendly, well-balanced character be known to all.” This favorable reputation and especially this attractiveness are self-evident.²⁶ They remind us of the possession of the earth by the praeis (Matt 5:4).

Peaceable (269) (**amachos** from **a** = without + **mache** = battle) according to Vine originally meant “invincible” (incapable of being conquered, overcome or subdued) but then came to mean a “non fighter”, one who is reluctant to fight and who is not always looking for a fight (especially of a verbal nature). **Not quarrelsome** (not apt or disposed to quarrel in an often petty manner = stresses an ill-natured readiness to fight without good cause). This person is **not contentious** and so does not exhibit an often perverse and wearisome tendency (even a fondness) for arguing, quarreling and disputing. You usually know who these folks are! **Wuest** says that **amachos** “describes a person who does not go about with a chip on his shoulder. ([Word Studies](#))

Amachos refers not so much to physical violence as to a quarrelsome person. To have a contentious person in leadership will result in disunity and disharmony, seriously hindering the effectiveness of that leadership team.

Barclay writes that **uncontentious** “does not mean that the good citizen will not stand for the principles which he believes to be right, but that he will never be so opinionated as to believe that no other way than his own is right. He will allow to others the same right to have their convictions as he claims for himself to have his own. ([Daily Study Bible](#))

Free from the love of money (866) (aphilarguros - **a** = negates + **philarguros** = loving money) means not loving money, not greedy, not avaricious. It is attested in inscriptions and certain papyri dating to the Second Century B.C. The only other use is Heb 13:5 “free from the love of money.” There are no uses in the Septuagint.

A test showed that 42 percent of all paper money carries infectious organisms, giving new meaning to Paul's description of “filthy lucre” (1 Timothy 3:3).

1 Timothy 3:4 *He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity*

BGT 1 Timothy 3:4 το ὁ οὐ οὐ καλ ῶς προῖστ μενον, τ κνα χοντα ν ποταγ , μετ π σης σεμν τητος

KJV 1 Timothy 3:4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

NET 1 Timothy 3:4 He must manage his own household well and keep his children in control without losing his dignity.

CSB 1 Timothy 3:4 one who manages his own household competently, having his children under control with all dignity.

ESV 1 Timothy 3:4 He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive,

NIV 1 Timothy 3:4 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect.

NLT 1 Timothy 3:4 He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him.

NRS 1 Timothy 3:4 He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way--

RSV 1 Timothy 3:4 He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way;

YLT 1 Timothy 3:4 his own house leading well, having children in subjection with all gravity,

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence

NJB 1 Timothy 3:4 a man who manages his own household well and brings his children up to obey him and be well-behaved:

NAB 1 Timothy 3:4 He must manage his own household well, keeping his children under control with perfect dignity;

ASV 1 Timothy 3:4 one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

MIT 1 Timothy 3:4 one who manages his own home well, having his children under control with complete respectability.

DBY 1 Timothy 3:4 conducting his own house well, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

GWN 1 Timothy 3:4 He must manage his own family well. His children should respectfully obey him.

BBE 1 Timothy 3:4 Ruling his house well, having his children under control with all serious behaviour;

- **who manages:** 1Ti 3:12 Ge 18:19 Jos 24:15 Ps 101:2-8 Ac 10:2 Titus 1:6
- **with all dignity:** Php 4:8 Titus 2:2,7
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

1 Timothy 2:11+ A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness ([hupotage](#)).

MANAGEMENT OF HOUSEHOLD INDICATOR OF ABILITY TO MANAGE GOD'S HOUSE

He must - Added by translators to emphasize necessity of this quality, another character and relational marker. He shifts the focus to how an overseer leads at home, because how he leads his household reflects how he will shepherd the church. In essence, Paul views the family as the primary training ground for church leadership. If a man cannot shepherd and care for his own small "flock," how can he shepherd God's larger flock?

Be one who manages ([proistemi](#) - superintends) **his own** ([idios](#)) **household** ([oikos](#)) **well** ([kalos](#) - excellent, commendable, upright way) - **Manages** is present tense calling for this to be his habitual practice. Literally the verb means placed in front of, to stand before and by extension to manage. In that culture the authority of the father was exceedingly great. It is the same verb used in 1Ti 5:17+ describing "elders who rule well ([kalos](#))". In fact, [proistemi](#) is used 3 times in chapter 3 (1Ti 3:4, 5, 12). Household obviously is not just the physical house but family members and domestic affairs. His own **household** indicates it is his main responsibility as an elder. While he can help heads of other households, he must primarily take care of his own.

An elder should have the authority in his own home

-- *without being a dictator.*

-- J. Vernon McGee.

Manages would include providing for the family (1Ti 5:8), leading with love, not authoritarian control and most importantly giving spiritual oversight, leading in prayer, Biblical teaching, spiritual discipline.

R C H Lenski opines that "Any Christian man should be able to function well as the head of his own home; one who fails in so simple a requirement is not fit to be elevated to the ministry. Unfortunately, this test cannot now be applied for entrance into the ministry when unmarried or newly married seminary graduates are called. This excellent superintendence is most evident in the case of such children as one may have, hence "having children" is not coordinate with "superintending" but subordinate to it. The requirement is not that an "overseer" must have children, that a childless man could not be chosen, but that, when he has a family as most men have, any children, whatever their age (τ κνᾱ is thus anarthrous), be "in subjection with all dignity," "subjection" as in 1Ti 2:11. (Borrow [The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon](#))

Keeping (present tense - continually having) **his children** ([teknon](#)) **under** (en = in) **control** ([hupotage](#)) **with all** (no exceptions) **dignity** ([semnotes](#)) - **RSV** = "keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way." **GWN** = "His children should respectfully obey him." The children's behavior is a measure that he is managing his household beautifully, commendably, honorably. His wife is not mentioned here but presumably he is loving her as Christ loved the church! Obviously Paul is not calling for the elder to have perfect children, but children who are generally respectful and responsive to their father's leadership.

John Phillips on control (subjection) - The word for "subjection" here is the same word used in 1Ti 2:11+ to describe the subjection of women in the church to the authority of men. As noted before, it is primarily a military term. It is a simple scriptural principle that children are to learn obedience in the home, where parents are to exercise authority and rule over their offspring. When children are defiant, argumentative, and self-willed and are allowed to get away with disobedience and temper tantrums, it is evident that their parents have lost control. (See [Exploring the Pastoral Epistles: An Expository Commentary - Page 86](#))

Dignity implies that one should be able to distinguish between that which is important and that which is trivial. [Semnotes](#) describes the man who carries himself with the perfect blend of dignity and courtesy, independence and humility to his fellowmen. The word avoids the suggestion of sternness yet retains the idea of natural respect. The elder should not rule with harshness, anger, or ridicule, but with a mature, honorable spirit. **Dignity** ([semnotes](#)) describes the characteristic of the one who carries himself with the perfect blend of dignity and courtesy, independence and humility toward his fellow men. The word avoids the suggestion of sternness yet retains the idea of natural respect.

John Phillips on dignity - It is the quality that inspires respect and awe in children as they contemplate their fathers. Such a response, of course, has to be earned. A father does not earn respect by bullying or beating his children. Firmness and fairness are more effective. (See [Exploring the Pastoral Epistles: An Expository Commentary - Page 86](#))

William MacDonald - The argument here is clear. Unless a man shows fitness to rule his own home, how will he ever expect to take care of the church of God? In his own home, the number of persons is comparatively small. They are all related to him, and most of the members are very much younger than he. In the church, on the other hand, the numbers are apt to be much greater, and with this increase in numbers there goes a corresponding diversity of temperaments. It is obvious that if a man is unfit to rule in the smaller sphere, he would be clearly disqualified for the larger. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Jon Courson - Jesus' disciples were His family. Conversely, your family members are your disciples. The validation of your ministry will not be the size of your church or the degrees after your name. According to Paul's charge to Timothy, the validity of ministry lies in the family. If a man cannot rule, lead, or direct his home in spiritual matters, then he shouldn't try to oversee the church. Such a stand is not legalism—it's wisdom. (Borrow [Jon Courson's Application Commentary](#))

The upshot of this quality is that one's spiritual leadership is intimately related to one's relational leadership. In other words, being able to teach or preach is not enough. The elder must live what he teaches, modelling godly leadership in his marriage, parenting, and home life. This is a warning against public success but private failure. If a man is faithful, gracious, and steady at home, he is more likely to lead well publicly. So it is not just what he achieves, but how he leads, with honor, maturity, and love.

THOUGHT - If you are an aspiring leader, ask yourself "Am I cultivating a Christ-centered, peaceful home?" And for the church, if you elect elders, choose elders who lead their families with gentleness, fairness, and stability. God does not separate public ministry from private life. What a man is at home is what he truly is. To serve God faithfully, we must tend first to the relationships closest to us — leading with love, wisdom, and dignity.

Manages (leads, rules) ([4291](#)) **proistemi** from **pro** = before, over + **hístemi** = place, stand) literally means to put over or before and describes one who is "standing before or over." The figurative sense means to exercise a position of leadership (Ro 12:8, 1Ti 3:4-5). To place in a position of authority or superintendence. To lead, to preside over to conduct, to direct, to govern, to superintend or to take over the direction of the people. According to the TDNT **proistemi** also conveys the ideas of to be a protector or guardian, to give aid, to assist, to care for or to be active in helping.

Friberg on proistemi - intransitively in the NT; (1) middle put oneself (responsibly) at the head, lead, direct, rule (1Ti 5:17); (2) active, of a protective leadership care for, help, give aid (1Th 5:12); (3) of responsible preoccupation with something devote oneself to, engage in, strive for (Titus 3:8) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

The related derivative noun form **prostatis** means not only a leader but was also used by Plutarch for the Latin patronus, a patron, a defender of a lower person. The word denoted those in Athens who were the patrons, who had the responsibility of seeing to the welfare of resident strangers and aliens who were without civic rights. Thus gifted leaders also protect and care for those they lead.

PROISTEMI - 8V - **engage(2), have charge over(1), leads(1), manage(1), managers(1), manages(1), rule(1)**. Rom. 12:8; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:4; 1 Tim. 3:5; 1 Tim. 3:12; 1 Tim. 5:17; Tit. 3:8; Tit. 3:14

Well ([2573](#)) **kalos** adverb related to [kalos](#) adverb; well (Mk 7:37; Lk 6:48; Gal 5:7); rightly (Mk 7:6); as exclamation well said! (Mk

12:32; Ro 11:20); used ironically (2 Cor 11:4). Do good (Mt 12:12; Lk 6:27), but do what is right (1Co 7:37f; Jas 2:8, 19. Be in good health (Mk 16:18_

Friberg - beautifully, well; (1) of things done in the right way = fitly, well, appropriately (1Co 14.17); (2) in a moral sense commendably, honorably, well (Heb 13.18); (3) of behavior rightly, correctly, well (Mk 12.28; 3Jn 6); (4) as an exclamation expressing a positive evaluation well said! quite right! that is true! (Ro 11.20); (5) idiomatically k. e;cein literally have well, i.e. be in good health, be well (Mk 16.18); (6) as acting beneficially k. poiein do good (Mt 12.12); (7) as characterized by value of importance in a good place (possibly Jas 2.3); (8) as making a polite request please! (possibly Jas 2.3) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

KALOS (ADVERB) - 37X/37V - beautifully(1), commendably(1), correctly(1), experts(1), good(4), honorably(1), kind enough(1), quite right(1), recover*(1), right(2), rightly(5), very well(1), well(16), well enough(1). Matt. 12:12; Matt. 15:7; Mk. 7:6; Mk. 7:9; Mk. 7:37; Mk. 12:28; Mk. 12:32; Mk. 16:18; Lk. 6:26; Lk. 6:27; Lk. 6:48; Lk. 20:39; Jn. 4:17; Jn. 8:48; Jn. 13:13; Jn. 18:23; Acts 10:33; Acts 25:10; Acts 28:25; Rom. 11:20; 1 Co. 7:37; 1 Co. 7:38; 1 Co. 14:17; 2 Co. 11:4; Gal. 4:17; Gal. 5:7; Phil. 4:14; 1 Tim. 3:4; 1 Tim. 3:12; 1 Tim. 3:13; 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:18; Jas. 2:3; Jas. 2:8; Jas. 2:19; 2 Pet. 1:19; 3 Jn. 1:6

KALOS IN SEPTUAGINT - Gen. 26:29; Gen. 32:12; Lev. 5:4; 2 Sam. 3:13; 1 Ki. 2:18; 1 Ki. 8:18; 2 Ki. 25:24; 2 Chr. 6:8; Est. 2:9; Est. 8:12; Ps. 33:3; Ps. 128:2; Prov. 23:24; Prov. 30:29; Isa. 23:16; Jer. 1:12; Jer. 4:22; Hos. 2:7; Mic. 1:11; Zeph. 3:19; Zech. 8:15

Control (obedience, submissiveness) (5292) **hupotage** from **hupotasso** = to submit, be under obedience) is a noun which means subordination, subjection, submission, obedience. **Wuest** adds that **hupotage** "denotes a voluntary act, not one imposed from without." **BDAG** - "only passive the state of submissiveness, subjection, subordination, as opposed to setting oneself up as controller."

Vine - hupotagē, used again in 2 Corinthians 9:13 of the submission of Christians to Christ; in 1 Timothy 2:11 of the position of women in the church; and in 1 Timothy 3:4 of the relationship between children and their parents. "Submission" is to be preferred to "subjection" here, inasmuch as to submit is to yield oneself, whereas to subject is to cause another person to yield. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary](#))

Hupotage - 4x in 4v (no uses in Septuagint): control(1), obedience(1), subjection(1), submissiveness(1) 2 Co. 9:13; Gal. 2:5; 1 Tim. 2:11; 1 Tim. 3:4

Dignity (4587) **semnotes** from **semnós** = venerable) refers to decency, gravity, venerableness (calling forth respect through age, character, and attainments; conveying an impression of aged goodness and benevolence), dignity and a seriousness that is fixed on God and honors whatever honors Him. **Semnotes** could be translated "moral earnestness" and refers to moral dignity and holy behavior before men. It describes a serious and worthy conduct that earns reverence and respect. It describes that behavior which is befitting and implies a measure of dignity leading to respect. Strong/Thayer Lexicon describes **semnotes** as the characteristic of a thing or person which entitles it to reverence and respect, dignity, majesty, sanctity.

SEMNOTES -3x in 3v in NASB -1Ti 2:2; 3:4; Titus 2:7

Vine correctly notes that **semnotes** "is a necessary characteristic of the life and conduct of Christians" The significance of the Greek word is that of gravity combined with dignity, with freedom alike from moroseness and from levity. A life which exhibits these qualities gives a consistent witness to the person and name of Christ, and to the truth and validity of the gospel." ([Vine's Expository Dictionary](#))

Semnotes is "a manner or mode of behavior that indicates one is above what is ordinary and therefore worthy of special respect. Of human beings: dignity, seriousness, probity (Ed note: adherence to the highest principles and ideal indicating uprightness of character or action) (BORROW [Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#))

Aristotle defined **semnótes** as the average of a virtue that lies between the extremes of arrogance on one hand and attempting to please everyone on the other hand. Therefore, **semnótes** stands between caring to please nobody and endeavoring at all costs to please everybody. It is the ability not only to perform well one's duties as a citizen, but also to adhere to the highest principles and ideals of earth and heaven, and thus drawing respect and approval.

1 Timothy 3:5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),

BGT 1 Timothy 3:5 (ε ὁ τις το ὁ οὐ οὐκου προστ ναὶ ο κ ο δ εν, π ς κκλησ ας θεο πιμελ σεται;),

KJV 1 Timothy 3:5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

NET 1 Timothy 3:5 But if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for the church of God?

CSB 1 Timothy 3:5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of God's church?)

ESV 1 Timothy 3:5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?

NIV 1 Timothy 3:5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)

NLT 1 Timothy 3:5 For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?

NRS 1 Timothy 3:5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?

RSV 1 Timothy 3:5 for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church?

YLT 1 Timothy 3:5 (and if any one his own house how to lead hath not known, how an assembly of God shall he take care of?)

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);

NJB 1 Timothy 3:5 how can any man who does not understand how to manage his own household take care of the Church of God?

NAB 1 Timothy 3:5 for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of the church of God?

ASV 1 Timothy 3:5 (but if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

MIT 1 Timothy 3:5 If anyone does not know how to manage his own household, how would he be able to take care of God's church?

DBY 1 Timothy 3:5 (but if one does not know how to conduct his own house, how shall he take care of the assembly of God?)

GWN 1 Timothy 3:5 (If a man doesn't know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)

BBE 1 Timothy 3:5 (For if a man has not the art of ruling his house, how will he take care of the church of God?)

- **but a man:** 1Sa 2:29,30 3:13
- **the church:** 1Ti 3:15 Ac 20:28 Eph 1:22 5:24,32
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Titus 1:6 namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.

1 Peter 5:2-3 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

Acts 20:28 "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Luke 16:10 "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

UNABLE TO MANAGE HOUSE = UNABLE TO MANAGE GOD'S HOUSE

Paul gives the reason for the rule in 1Ti 3:4.

But if a man does not know ([eido](#) - beyond a shadow of a doubt) **how to manage** ([proistemi](#) - govern) **his own** ([idios](#)) **household** ([oikos](#)) - Note the **IF** is not "iffy" but is a condition of first class, assumed as true -- He does know how to manage his own household. In short, the home life of an elder is his testing ground for leadership of God's house. The home is a microcosm of the church. If he is faithful (trustworthy) at home, the chances are excellent that he will be faithful (trustworthy) as an elder.

*God values character over charisma, and
private faithfulness over public applause.*

How will he take care of ([epimeleomai](#)) **the church** ([ekklesia/ecclesia](#)) **of God**? - This is a rhetorical question expecting negative answer. He is using the argument from the lesser to the greater, and the answer is clearly "HE CANNOT." If a man cannot lead, shepherd, and care for the small, intimate unit of his own home, how can he possibly handle the larger, more complex, spiritual family of God's people? Note the little phrase "**of God**." Why is that notable? It signifies God owns the local church, not a powerful minister or group of wealthy members! And remember God is a jealous God so it is best not to attempt to usurp His ownership! The verb **take care of** ([epimeleomai](#)) implies an increased emphasis of the elder's tender care. One thinks of a shepherd who gives tender care to his stupid sheep!

William MacDonald on **take care of** - Verse 5 is important because it defines the work of an elder. It is **totake care of the church of God**. Notice it does not say "to rule" the church of God. An elder is not a despot, or even a benevolent ruler, but rather one who guides the people of God as a shepherd guides the sheep. The only other time the expression "take care of" is used in the NT is in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:34). The same tender, compassionate care shown by the Good Samaritan to the victim of the robbers should be shown by the elder who cares for the church of God. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

John Phillips - When God looks for elders to whom He can entrust the oversight of His church, He looks for men like Abraham. Abraham was one of the greatest men in the Old Testament. Great in terms of his faith, he became "the father of all them that believe" (Rom. 4:11). He was also great in terms of his future, both temporal (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:18) and eternal (Heb. 11:8-10). And he was great in terms of his family. God could reveal future events to Abraham for this very reason. He said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do...? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (Gen. 18:17-19). (See [Exploring the Pastoral Epistles: An Expository Commentary - Page 86](#))

Bob Utley - Leadership can be seen at home. Any kind of difficulty between husband and wife or children or grandparents or in-laws was a basis for disqualification in this early church setting. "No handle for criticism" is the main concern. How one rules his home will show one's tendencies in leading the church (cf. 1 Tim. 3:5, which is a parenthetical question expecting a "no" answer). Oh, my, this would disqualify many modern ministers if taken literally and to the letter. The many positive as well as negative characteristics mentioned in 1 Tim. 3:2-3 are revealed in the home environment. "Check the home first" is good advice for personnel committees!

Take care of ([1959](#)) [epimeleomai](#) (from **epi** = upon, direction of care towards + **melo** = to be an object of care) (See also [epimeleia](#)) means care for, take care of, look after. To exercise concern for. Luke uses it to describe the "Good Samaritan" (Lk 10:34-35+)

EPIMELEOMAI - Only 3x - Lk 10:34-35; 1 Tim. 3:5. Twice in the Septuagint - Gen. 44:21; Prov. 27:25

G Campbell Morgan — 1 Tim 3.5

These words were used by the Apostle when he was giving Timothy instructions as to the orderly government of the Church; and their first application was to those who were to exercise oversight, that is, to be bishops or overseers. They contain a principle which applies to the whole field of Christian service. It may be said that every Christian witness is a centre around whom concentric circles are drawn in which his or her witness will operate. We may illustrate by saying that in the ordinary life of every Christian believer, the circles are those of home, church, city, nation, race. While the influence of a life may not seem to affect all these, it certainly does so in a measure. Necessarily it is more evident in the first circles. Now the principle involved in this statement is that we are only able to

exert the true influence in the wider circles as we do so in the first. The question of the Apostle has a self-evident answer. If a man is not able to regulate the affairs of his own household, if his own children are unruly, he cannot guide and guard the Church of God so as to ensure its orderliness and power. That is so for two reasons. First, that he lacks the power to rule. If he possessed it, he could rule his own house. Second, that his failure in his own house must negative any attempt he may make in the Church, for men will only obey an authority which is evidenced by results. We may pass back to the central fact, and say that fitness for the guidance of others, in home or Church, or anywhere, is created by the control of one's own life as it is wholly under the sway of the Lord.

1 Timothy 3:6 and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

BGT 1 Timothy 3:6 μὴ νεφύτον, να μὴ τυφώθῃς ἐξ ἐκρμα μπισ το διαβλου.

KJV 1 Timothy 3:6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

NET 1 Timothy 3:6 He must not be a recent convert or he may become arrogant and fall into the punishment that the devil will exact.

CSB 1 Timothy 3:6 He must not be a new convert, or he might become conceited and fall into the condemnation of the Devil.

ESV 1 Timothy 3:6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.

NIV 1 Timothy 3:6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.

NLT 1 Timothy 3:6 An elder must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall.

NRS 1 Timothy 3:6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.

RSV 1 Timothy 3:6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil;

YLT 1 Timothy 3:6 not a new convert, lest having been puffed up he may fall to a judgment of the devil;

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:6 not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.

NJB 1 Timothy 3:6 He should not be a new convert, in case pride should turn his head and he incur the same condemnation as the devil.

NAB 1 Timothy 3:6 He should not be a recent convert, so that he may not become conceited and thus incur the devil's punishment.

ASV 1 Timothy 3:6 not a novice, lest being puffed up he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

MIT 1 Timothy 3:6 He should not be a recent convert, lest becoming conceited, he would fall into condemnation by the accuser.

DBY 1 Timothy 3:6 not a novice, that he may not, being inflated, fall into the fault of the devil.

GWN 1 Timothy 3:6 He must not be a new Christian, or he might become arrogant like the devil and be condemned.

BBE 1 Timothy 3:6 Not one newly taken into the church, for fear that, through his high opinion of himself, he may come into the same sin as the Evil One.

- **new convert** 1Co 3:1 Heb 5:12,13 1Pe 2:2
- **fall into:** De 8:14 17:20 2Ki 14:10 2Ch 26:16 32:25 Pr 16:18,19 18:12 Pr 29:23 Isa 2:12 1Co 4:6-8 8:1 2Co 12:7 1Pe 5:5
- **condemnation:** Isa 14:12-14 Lu 10:18 2Pe 2:4 Jude 1:6
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

1 Timothy 6:3-5+ If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, 4 he is **conceited** ([tuphoo](#) - puffed up, very proud) and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, 5 and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

Isaiah 14:12-15+ (**DEVIL'S PRIDE CAUSED HIS FALL**) "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! 13 "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. 14 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' (COUNT ALL THE "I's" IN V13-14. WHAT'S THE MIDDLE LET OF PRIDE? HOW ABOUT SIN?) 15 (THE DEVIL'S CONDEMNATION) "Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit.

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling.

And (added by translators) **not a new convert** is a [hapax legomenon](#), used only here in Scripture and is the Greek word neophutos ([neos](#) = young, new + [phuo](#) = to bring forth, produce - English - [neophyte](#)) referring literally to that which is newly planted, as newly planted trees! Figuratively, in this context it speaks of one newly become a part of the Christian church newly converted, one who is newly planted in the Christian community and is only beginning as a Christian. Note that Paul is not saying a young man cannot be placed in a position of leader, because some young men came to Christ at an early age and have walked with Christ for many years. So the restriction speaks to spiritual age, not physical age.

This picture of a "newly planted" **convert** reminds me of Paul's description in 1 Corinthians 3:6+ where he declares

"I planted (Lxx - [phuteuo](#)), Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth."

I like the secular use of neophutos of newly planted trees for it reminds me of the man in Psalm 1:1-3

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 **He will be like a tree firmly planted** (Lxx - [phuteuo](#)) by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.

John MacArthur has an interesting comment - That this qualification is absent from the list in Titus 1:7-9+ may reflect the fact that the churches on Crete were relatively new, made up of new believers. In that case, placing younger converts in leadership would not so readily lead to pride, since their fellow elders would be relatively new. An elder, then, is to be drawn from the most spiritually mature in the congregation, but that maturity must be viewed in relationship to each individual congregation. (See [1 Timothy Commentary](#)).

J Vernon McGee - Sometimes a man is converted one week, and the next week he is made a church officer or asked to give his testimony. He is not ready for it. This is a caution that needs to be heeded today. I had the privilege for several years of teaching a Bible study group of Christians in Hollywood. It was natural for them to want to push to the front some prominent personality who had recently made a decision for Christ. However, the cause of Christ is hurt when those who are young in the faith attempt to speak on matters of doctrine about which they are not knowledgeable. (See [Thru the Bible](#)) I can echo McGee's caution about even giving one's testimony too soon after being saved! One reason is we need be sure they are fruit bearing and truly saved. Another reason is that they (from my experience) tend to place more emphasis on their sins prior to being saved than on their Savior. I will never forget how defiled I and many others felt by a man who owned a strip club and (ostensibly) was saved, giving lurid details about some of his sinful encounters prior to supposedly being saved. This testimony was actually given at his baptism in front of 500+ people. I was horrified as was my wife! And then in the next hour he came to the Bible class I was teaching and set in the front row and was argumentative as we divided the word literally. I was very uncomfortable as were many in the class. Needless to say, he never returned to my Bible class!

So that ([hina](#)) (term of purpose/result) -- What is a possible result if a babe in Christ is appointed to the position of elder? Paul will explain.

He will not become conceited ([tuphoo](#) - puffed up, very proud) - **Become conceited** is passive voice which means the pride comes not from the person's new creation in Christ (cf 2Co 5:17+), but most likely from their fallen flesh, the old Adam who still has life and power in our body (as all of us know only too well!). The literal picture is one becoming "smoke blinded." The **new convert** who is appointed a new elder is in danger of a new way of thinking, specifically of thinking more highly of himself than he ought! Pride is the "weed" that can grow up in this "newly planted" saints cardiac garden! The Greek verb [tuphoo](#) means literally "to raise a

smoke" which is a great word picture because smoke draws attention to itself but is wholly without substance. Woe! Vincent adds the word pictures this individual as in "a *beclouded* and stupid state of mind as the result of pride."

And fall into (empipto) the condemnation (krima) incurred by the (definite article = the actual devil) **devil (diabolos)** - The verb **fall into (empipto)** is the picture of falling into a sudden trap or snare. The newborn babe in Christ has not had sufficient time in the pure milk of the Word to grow in respect to salvation (1Pe 2:2) and has not taken in "solid food (which) is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil." (Heb 5:14). In other words, the new convert does not have spiritual senses trained to recognize good and evil. The devil's pride was the cause of his fall from grace and the presence of the Lord (see [Isaiah passage above](#)). He wants to draw others into the same trap he fell into. So the devil comes in with a counterfeit (that looks like the real thing) and the new convert fails to see the danger and falls into the devil's trap and into the same **condemnation** or judgment that fell on the devil. Do not misunderstand the phrase **the condemnation incurred by the devil** for it does not mean the devil might judge this new convert if he falls prey to pride, for the devil is never given authority to judge others!

John MacArthur notes that "The antidote to pride is humility, which is the mark of a spiritually mature leader (Matt. 23:11–12). The church must not lift up those whom the Lord will later have to cut down." (See [1 Timothy Commentary](#)).

John Phillips - An inexperienced person (**ED: SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING**) is simply not qualified to be a church leader. He might be well established in business; he might be a learned man by the world's standards and competent in many ways; but if he has only recently been saved, he is disqualified from being an overseer in the church. (See [Exploring the Pastoral Epistles: An Expository Commentary - Page 86](#))

The takeaway is do not promote new converts into positions of responsibility in church.

William MacDonald on **not a new convert** - A recent convert to Christianity, or a person who is young in the faith, is not qualified to be a bishop. The work requires men of experience and understanding in the faith. The danger is that a novice might become **puffed up with pride** and then **fall into the same condemnation as the devil**. **Condemnation of the devil** does not mean the judgment which Satan brings on a man, but rather the judgment which fell on Satan himself because of his pride. He sought a high position for which he was not qualified, and as a result, he was brought low. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Jon Courson has a pithy comment - Paul warns Timothy not to place a novice in a position of leadership because novices tend to think that if anything good happens through them it's because they're a skilled speaker or a clever person. Only someone who has walked with the Lord awhile understands that if anything good happens through him it's not *because* of him, but rather *in spite* of him! (Borrow [Jon Courson's Application Commentary](#))

Conceited (5187) **tuphoo** from **tuphos [typhos]** = smoke) means literally to literally wrap in smoke or mist and so to becloud. Figuratively (as with all three NT uses) it means to be puffed up or conceited. Some secular Greek sources actually use **tuphoo** to describe one as mentally. The verb **tuphoo** means wrapped or enveloped by smoke, so that what is outside one's circumscribed world of self cannot be seen. The man who is "swollen with conceit" is really just "filled with smoke" for all his accomplishments will be reduced to nothing more than smoke and ashes one day. (2Pe 3:10⁺)

TUPHOO - conceited(3). 1 Tim. 3:6; 1 Tim. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:4

Fall into (1706) **empipto** (from en = in + pipto = fall) means literally to fall into something, as into a pit (Mt 12:11⁺). Figuratively **empipto** means to experience something suddenly, to be beset by, or to encounter as "the man who fell into the robbers' hands?" (Lk 10:36⁺) In Ge 14:10 (Lxx) of those who "fled and fell into" tar pits.

EMPIPTOMatt. 12:11; Lk. 6:39; Lk. 10:36; 1 Tim. 3:6; 1 Tim. 3:7; 1 Tim. 6:9; Heb. 10:31

EMPIPTO IN SEPTUAGINT - Gen. 14:10; Exod. 21:33; Jdg. 15:18; Jdg. 18:1; 1 Sam. 29:3; 2 Sam. 24:14; 2 Ki. 7:4; 2 Ki. 25:11; 1 Chr. 21:13; Ps. 7:15; Ps. 57:6; Prov. 12:13; Prov. 13:17; Prov. 17:12; Prov. 17:16; Prov. 17:20; Prov. 22:14; Prov. 26:27; Prov. 28:10; Prov. 28:14; Eccl. 10:8; Isa. 10:4; Isa. 24:18; Isa. 47:11; Jer. 48:44; Dan. 2:1; Dan. 7:2; Amos 5:19;

A W Tozer - I CHOOSE TO WORSHIP 1 Timothy 3:6 [Mornings with Tozer: Daily Devotional Readings](#)

Strange things are happening all around us in Christian circles because we are not truly worshipers.

For instance, any untrained, unprepared, unspiritual empty rattletrap of a person can start something "religious" and find plenty of followers who will listen and promote it! Beyond that, it may become very evident that he or she had never heard from God in the first place.

All of the examples we have in the Bible illustrate that glad and devoted and reverent worship is the normal employment of human beings. Every glimpse that is given us of heaven and of God's created beings is always a glimpse of worship and rejoicing and praise—because God is who He is!

Because we are not truly worshipers, we spend a lot of time in the churches just spinning our wheels—making a noise but not getting anywhere.

What are we going to do about this awesome, beautiful worship that God calls for? I would rather worship God than do any other thing I know of in all this wide world!

QUESTION - [How can an elder come under the same condemnation as the devil \(1 Timothy 3:6\)? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

ANSWER - 1 Timothy 3 gives the [qualifications for overseers](#). "Elder" and "overseer" are two descriptions of the same office of church leader. One emphasizes activity (overseer), and one emphasizes maturity (elder). One of the requirements for an elder is that he is "not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Timothy 3:6KJV).

In the passage, *novice* (KJV) simply means "recent convert" (NIV, ESV). The idea seems to be that elevating a recent convert would make him more susceptible to [pride](#), whereas someone who has been a believer for some time might be less susceptible to this sin. The word *condemnation* in the KJV makes it sound as though a church elder could do something that would cause him to wind up in the same place of final condemnation as the devil—the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10).

The word translated "condemnation" in the KJV is simply the word for "judgment," which may, in some contexts, mean final condemnation, but the word does not require that meaning. There could be other forms of judgment in view.

There are two ways that 1 Timothy 3:6 is normally understood, and the differences turn on the meaning of the phrase *of the devil*. The first understanding is that the "condemnation of the devil" is a judgment that is in some way similar to what the devil will experience. The second understanding is that the "condemnation of the devil" is a judgment at the hand of the devil, perhaps similar to what Paul means when he says that he hands an unrepentant man "over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh" (1 Corinthians 5:5).

The following outline seems to capture the various options for the meaning of 1 Timothy 3:6:

1. The elder commits the sin of pride in the same way as the devil, and he will be condemned to the [lake of fire](#) along with the devil. In this case either
 - a. The sin is so grievous that the elder loses his salvation OR
 - b. The elder was never a believer in the first place.
2. The elder sins in a way similar to the devil and will receive some sort of judgment for his pride, but it will fall short of the lake of fire, as the elder is a true believer and will ultimately be saved.
3. The elder will be "turned over to Satan" to receive the due consequences of his pride, but, since he is a true believer, he will ultimately be saved.

It is our firm conviction that Scripture promises that a true believer can never sin so grievously as to lose salvation; therefore, 1a is ruled out as contrary to the plain teaching of the Bible—Scripture will not contradict Scripture. If interpretation 1 is to be maintained, then 1b would be the only possible conclusion—the overweening pride of the elder would be a demonstration that he was not a true believer. However, interpretation 1b also seems suspect, as the passage describes him as a "new convert." The thrust of the passage is that elevating a new believer too soon to a position of leadership makes him susceptible to pride. If he were an unbeliever, it is his unbelief that would condemn him along with the devil, whether he was proud or not. Thus, 1b, although possible, seems to be foreign to the context. If another interpretation fits well within the context, it is to be preferred.

Interpretation 2 rests on the fact that, since "judgment" can mean something less than final condemnation, it is possible for a true believer to come under judgment. Because of his pride, the [devil was disqualified](#) from his position as a messenger of God and his role of bringing glory to God. Certainly, a prideful elder would also be disqualified from those roles in the church. Therefore, interpretation 2 is a viable option that is not foreign to the context.

Interpretation 3 is also a viable option. The next verse mentions that the overseer must have a good reputation or else he may fall into the trap of the devil (1 Timothy 3:7). This seems to be clear that the devil is laying a trap for elders and would like to abuse them if at all possible. The emphasis in verse 7 might lend some contextual weight to interpretation 3—the context seems to be the devil's interaction with the overseer. Scholars who disagree point out that in the New Testament it is God, not the devil, who metes out judgment.

In the final analysis, both interpretations 2 and 3 have exegetical merit, and, in some sense, both may be true—although perhaps interpretation 2 is the more likely. If a new believer is elevated to a position of leadership too quickly, he may become prideful and thus disqualify himself from that position, just as the devil was disqualified from his position.

In any case, the application of 1 Timothy 3:6 is the same. An overseer should be a mature believer, not a new convert, if for no other reason than it is not good for the new convert to face the temptations and/or spiritual attack that invariably come with being an elder.

Deep Roots By Dr. Larry Osborne

SCRIPTURE: 1 Timothy 3:6

INTRODUCTION: Paul's instructed Timothy not to place a new convert in leadership, something many churches unfortunately do all too often. Why do we err in this way, and how can we be sure someone is well-rooted and ready for leadership?

1. The Faulty Rationale:
 - A. We Mistake Enthusiasm for Maturity (Rom. 10:1–3; Matt. 13:18–23).
 - B. We Mistake Spirituality for Maturity (Heb. 5:11–14; Eph. 4:11–15).
 - C. We Assume High Profile People Should Be Discipled Not Discipled (1 Tim. 3:6; James 2:1–4).
2. The Tragic Results: Pride and Spiritual Collapse (Prov. 8:13; 11:2; 27:21).
3. What It Takes to Dig to Deep Roots:
 - A. Time (Col. 2:6–7; Ex. 23:28–30; Acts 7:23–24).
 - B. Trials (James 1:2–4; 1 Pet. 1:5–7; Acts 14:22; Prov. 10:25; 24:10).
 - C. Thirst (Prov. 19:27; Phil. 3:13–15).

CONCLUSION: As a church, let's commit to dig deep and commission leaders that will represent Christ well.

Bragging about Dad

Three little guys were doing what little boys do so well: bragging about their dads.

One said, "My dad owns a factory."

Another said, "So what! My dad owns a farm."

The third boy, a preacher's kid, said, "That's nothing. My father owns hell."

"Oh, yeah," said one of the boys "How can a man own hell?"

"Well," the pastor's son said, "I heard my mother tell my grandmother that the deacons of our church gave my dad 'hell' last night."

1 Timothy 3:7 And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

BGT 1 Timothy 3:7 δε ὁ καὶ μαρτυρᾶν καλὴν ἔχειν πρὸς ἑξωθεν, να μὴ εἰς νειδισμὸν μπισκαπαγῶς τοῦ διαβόλου.

KJV 1 Timothy 3:7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

NET 1 Timothy 3:7 And he must be well thought of by those outside the faith, so that he may not fall into disgrace and be caught by the devil's trap.

CSB 1 Timothy 3:7 Furthermore, he must have a good reputation among outsiders, so that he does not fall into disgrace and the Devil's trap.

ESV 1 Timothy 3:7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

NIV 1 Timothy 3:7 He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

NLT 1 Timothy 3:7 Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil's trap.

NRS 1 Timothy 3:7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil.

RSV 1 Timothy 3:7 moreover he must be well thought of by outsiders, or he may fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

YLT 1 Timothy 3:7 and it behoveth him also to have a good testimony from those without, that he may not fall into reproach and a snare of the devil.

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:7 Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

NJB 1 Timothy 3:7 It is also necessary that he be held in good repute by outsiders, so that he never falls into disrepute and into the devil's trap.

NAB 1 Timothy 3:7 He must also have a good reputation among outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, the devil's trap.

ASV 1 Timothy 3:7 Moreover he must have good testimony from them that are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

MIT 1 Timothy 3:7 He necessarily also must have a good reputation with outsiders, lest he fall into disgrace in a trap set by the devil.

DBY 1 Timothy 3:7 But it is necessary that he should have also a good testimony from those without, that he may fall not into reproach and the snare of the devil.

GWN 1 Timothy 3:7 People who are not Christians must speak well of him, or he might become the victim of disgraceful insults that the devil sets as traps for him.

BBE 1 Timothy 3:7 And he is to have a good name among those outside the church, so that nothing may be said against him and he may not be taken by the designs of the Evil One.

- a good: 1Ti 5:24,25 1Sa 2:24 Ac 6:3 10:22 22:12 3Jn 1:12
- them: 1Co 5:12 Col 4:5 1Th 4:12
- lest: 1Ti 5:14 1Co 10:32 2Co 6:3 8:21 1Th 5:22 Titus 2:5,8 1Pe 4:14-16
- the snare: 1Ti 6:9 2Ti 2:26
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

1 Timothy 3:2+ An overseer, then, must ([dei](#) - present tense - continually) be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

1 Timothy 6:9+ But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and **asnares** ([pagis](#) - trap) and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

2 Timothy 2:26+ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.



A Snare...A Trap

And he must ([dei](#) - present tense - continually) **have** (present tense - continually) **a good** ([kalos](#) - excellent, commendable) **reputation** ([marturia](#) - testimony) **with those outside the church** (added by translators) - In regard to overseers the verb "**must**" ([dei](#)) expresses the moral fitness that is absolutely **necessary** in order for one to qualify to lead the local church. I

So that - Always pay attention to this [great hinge word](#) which is a term of purpose or result and always begs a question -- You should train yourself to ask "What is the the purpose or result?" Sometimes the answer is easy but other times it requires a little more detective work.

He will not fall into ([empipto](#)) **reproach** ([oneidismos](#)) **and the snare** ([pagis](#) - trap) **of the devil** ([diabolos](#)) - This is the second time in this section Paul warns about falling into something (1Ti 3:6). Here the warning is about falling into (1) reproach and (2) the snare

of the devil. Paul warns elders that bad conduct will bring them into disrepute and make them easy victims of the devil's wiles, so that they will be unfit for further service.

A T Robertson - The **snare of the devil** (pagida tou diabolou). Here subjective genitive, snare set by the devil. Pagis, old word from pēgnumi, to make fast. So a snare for birds (Luke 21:35), any sudden trap (Romans 11:9), of sin (1 Tim. 6:9), of the devil (1 Tim. 3:7; 2 Tim. 2:26). Ancients used it of the snares of love. The devil sets special snares for preachers (conceit 1 Tim. 3:6, money 1 Tim. 6:9, women, ambition).

The Wycliffe Bible Commentary - Pride was the cause of Satan's fall, and is the snare he sets for men (1 Jn 2:16).

William MacDonald - A bishop is a man who **must have a good** reputation in the community. **Those who are outside** refers to unsaved neighbors. Without this **good testimony**, he becomes subject to the accusations of men **and the snare of the devil**. The accusations may come from believers and unbelievers alike. **The snare of the devil** is the trap which Satan lays for those whose lives are not consistent with their profession. Once he has caught men in this trap, he holds them up to ridicule, scorn, and contempt. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Reputation (3141) ([marturia/martyria](#) related to [martureo](#) = to witness <> [martus/martys](#) = a witness) is that which furnishes evidence or proof. **Marturia** can be the witness per se. A witness is one who has first hand knowledge and so the purpose of John the Baptist was to bear witness of Messiah (the Light) so that all might believe through Him (Jn 1:7). **Marturia** in other contexts can refer to the content of what the witness speaks - testimony, evidence (Mk 14:55). In 1Ti 3:7 the sense of **marturia** is that of one's reputation (think of it as the "witness" of their life and their character before others). A witness does not speak on his own behalf, though he may share his own experience, but primarily the purpose of the witness is to tell about another. As an aside the frequent cost of such a "**witness**" is pointed up by the fact that we derive our English word "**martyr**" from this Greek word.

MARTURIA - 28V - reputation(1), testimony(30), witness(1). Mk. 14:55; Mk. 14:56; Mk. 14:59; Lk. 22:71; Jn. 1:7; Jn. 1:19; Jn. 3:33; Jn. 5:31; Jn. 5:32; Jn. 5:34; Jn. 5:36; Jn. 8:13; Jn. 8:17; Jn. 21:24; Acts 22:18; 1 Tim. 3:7; Tit. 1:13; 1 Jn. 5:9; 1 Jn. 5:10; 1 Jn. 5:11; Rev. 1:2; Rev. 1:9; Rev. 6:9; Rev. 11:7; Rev. 12:11; Rev. 12:17; Rev. 19:10; Rev. 20:4

Reproach (3680) [oneidismos](#) from [oneidizo](#) = to defame, find fault in a way that demeans another [Mt 5:11] <> from **oneidos** = disgrace, insult, Lk 1:25) is a noun which means reproach, which is an expression of rebuke or disapproval. It means to insult, abuse, disgrace. The idea in some contexts (Ro 15:3, He 10:33, 11:26, 13:13) is that the insult or reviling represents unjustifiable verbal abuse inflicted on someone. In other contexts it describes justifiable disgrace or reproach (1Ti 3:7). Look at some of the uses of **oneidismos** in the Septuagint (see verse list below) to see other saints who suffered reproach (e.g., Neh 1:3, 4:4, etc; see also what suffered reproach in Jer 6:10!). The narrow "way of the Cross" has always been the way of reproach, even before the Cross! **BDAG** says **oneidismos** is an "act of disparagement that results in disgrace, reproach, reviling, disgrace, insult".

ONEIDISMOS - 5V - reproach(3), reproaches(2). Rom. 15:3; 1 Tim. 3:7; Heb. 10:33; Heb. 11:26 (Moses = "considering the **reproach** of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward."; Heb. 13:13

Snare (trap) (3803) [pagis](#) from [pegnumi](#) = set up, fix) is a trap (as that which is fixed or fastened by a noose or notch) and which can fall unexpectedly or suddenly (so that wild animals and birds are caught by surprise). **Pagis** was used in Greek for a "net" (a piece of equipment for a bird-catcher), a "snare" or a "mousetrap." In short a **pagis** is that which causes one to be suddenly endangered or unexpectedly brought under control of a hostile force. **Pagis** describes a trick or stratagem (temptation). It pictures that which comes unexpectedly, suddenly even as a snare entices birds or beasts who are caught unaware. This describes that which fastens or holds one fast. Figuratively **pagis** was often used in Greek in connection with seductive women, Solomon writing of the lad who follows the seductress "Until an arrow pierces through his liver. As a bird hastens to the **snare**, so he does not know that it will cost him his life. (Proverbs 7:23) **The Trojan horse** was called a "wooden **pagis**." A religious phrase is "to be caught in the net of Ate" (delusion or perdition or guilt). **TDNT** on **pagis** - This word means "what fastens" or "holds fast." It is often used for a "net" or "snare," as well as for a "mousetrap."

Pagis is found 5 times in the NT (Luke 21:35; Ro 11:9; 1Ti 3:7; 6:9; 2Ti 2:26) and is translated **snare** (4x) and **trap** (1x) in the NASB.

Devil (Latin diabolus) (1228) [diabolos](#) from [diá](#) = through, between + [ballo](#) = to cast, throw) means a **false accuser**, **slanderer** (one who utters false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation), **backbiting** (malicious comment about one not present), one given to malicious gossip or **acalumniator** (one who utters maliciously false statements, charges, or imputations about, this term imputes malice to the speaker and falsity to the assertions). **Diabolos** is the noun form of the verb [diaballō](#) which describes not only those who bring a false charge against one,

but also those who disseminate the truth concerning a man, and do so maliciously, insidiously and with hostility. Notice how the root words (**diá** = through + **bállō** = throw) picture what the devil does. He constantly throws between seeking to divide whether it be between a husband and wife, a child and parent, a church, etc. Resist his divisive, condemnatory accusations firm in your faith. **Diabolos** is applied some 34 times to **Satan**, the god of this world, and in each case has the definite article in the Greek (**the** = defining a specific entity) and is never in the plural (the three uses below in the pastoral epistles are all plural) as when applied to men who, by opposing the cause of God, may be said to act the part of the devil or to side with him. **Wuest** has an interesting comment that the literal meaning of "to throw through" means "to riddle one with accusations." ([Wuest Word Studies](#))

DIABOLOS - 37X- Matt. 4:1, 5, 8, 11; 13:39; 25:41; Lk. 4:2, 3, 6, 13; 8:12; Jn. 6:70; 8:44; 13:2; Acts 10:38; 13:10; Eph. 4:27; 6:11; 1Ti 3:6, 7, 11; 2Ti 2:26; 3:3; Titus 2:3; Heb. 2:14; James. 4:7; 1Pe 5:8; 1Jn 3:8, 10; Jude 1:9; Rev. 2:10; 12:9, 12; 20:2, 10

Related Resource:

- In depth study on [Schemes of the devil](#)

1 Timothy 3:7 In The Spotlight

Rosa Parks' refusal in 1955 to give her bus seat to a white man in Montgomery, Alabama, was a turning point in the civil rights struggle. So in 1994, the public was stunned when 80-year-old Rosa was robbed and mugged in her home by an intruder. A short time later, an alert citizen recognized the suspect from a police photo and with a friend held Rosa's mugger until police could arrive.

But the public spotlight was not good for the new hero. After he gave a TV interview, FBI agents recognized him as a fugitive from the law. They arrested him for driving the getaway car in a 1991 robbery of an automatic teller machine.

This incident illustrates the truth that unresolved sin can rob a person of the honor of being known for doing good. This is why Paul emphasized in 1 Timothy 3 how important it is for church leaders to have a good conscience and a blameless record of dealing with their own sin. Those who want to be known for walking with Christ must face and deal with anything that would disqualify them from receiving that honor.

Living with a good conscience isn't just a religious and moral obligation. It's the only way to be able to walk with Christ in the spotlight of a watching world. By Mart De Haan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

"Be sure your sin will find you out,"

The warning is for you;

But if you're quick to deal with sin,

Your witness will ring true.

—Hess

You can't put your sins behind you until you're ready to face them.

1 Timothy 3:8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain,

BGT 1 Timothy 3:8 Διακ νους σα τως σεμνο ς, μ διλ γους, μ ο ν πολλ προσ χοντας, μ α σχροκερδε ς,

KJV 1 Timothy 3:8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

NET 1 Timothy 3:8 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not two-faced, not given to excessive drinking, not greedy for gain,

CSB 1 Timothy 3:8 Deacons, likewise, should be worthy of respect, not hypocritical, not drinking a lot of wine, not greedy for money,

ESV 1 Timothy 3:8 Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain.

NIV 1 Timothy 3:8 Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.

NLT 1 Timothy 3:8 In the same way, deacons must be well respected and have integrity. They must not be heavy drinkers or dishonest with money.

NRS 1 Timothy 3:8 Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money;

RSV 1 Timothy 3:8 Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for gain;

YLT 1 Timothy 3:8 Ministrants -- in like manner grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not given to filthy lucre,

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:8 Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money,

NJB 1 Timothy 3:8 Similarly, deacons must be respectable, not double-tongued, moderate in the amount of wine they drink and with no squalid greed for money.

NAB 1 Timothy 3:8 Similarly, deacons must be dignified, not deceitful, not addicted to drink, not greedy for sordid gain,

ASV 1 Timothy 3:8 Deacons in like manner must be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

MIT 1 Timothy 3:8 Deacons likewise must have good character, not telling one thing to one party and something else to another, not being addicted to much wine, not greedy for wealth,

DBY 1 Timothy 3:8 Ministers, in like manner, grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not seeking gain by base means,

GWN 1 Timothy 3:8 Deacons must also be of good character. They must not be two-faced or addicted to alcohol. They must not use shameful ways to make money.

BBE 1 Timothy 3:8 Deacons, in the same way, are to be serious in their behaviour, not false in word, not given to taking much wine or greatly desiring the wealth of this world;

- **the deacons:** Ac 6:3-6 Php 1:1
- **be:** 1Ti 3:4
- **double tongued:** Ps 5:9 12:2 50:19 52:2 Ro 3:13 Jas 3:10
- **Or addicted to much wine:** 1Ti 3:3 Lev 10:9 Eze 44:21
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Titus 1:7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,

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

1 Timothy 6:9 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. 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.

Proverbs 12:22 **Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD**, But those who deal faithfully are His delight.

1 Peter 5:2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and **not for sordid gain**, but with eagerness;

GOD'S STANDARDS FOR CHURCH SERVANTS

While elders focus primarily on spiritual oversight and teaching, deacons are servant-leaders tasked with practical needs, such as handling resources, helping the poor, and supporting the work of the elders (see Acts 6:1–6). In verse 8, Paul begins outlining the moral and spiritual character required of deacons.

Deacons ([diakonos](#) - one who serves) **likewise** (in like manner) - What is **likewise** referring to? Clearly to the previous description of

the elders. Paul's point is that deacons are called to a high standard just as are elders. Note that the following character traits focus on "being" not "doing"! Too many saints seek to be **DOING** when they have neglected giving attention to their **BEING** (so to speak). God cares more about who leaders **ARE**, and not just what they **DO**. Deacons may handle physical tasks, but their spiritual integrity is crucial.

Must be (added by translators but implied) **men of dignity** ([semnos](#)) - These are respectable, honorable men, whose lives evoke respect from others. The thought is that deacons must carry themselves in a way that earns respect and be serious-minded, not foolish or frivolous.

John MacArthur adds "A deacon must not be a silly, flippant person, one who makes light of serious matters. Although not a cold, joyless person, a deacon understands the seriousness of life." (See [1 Timothy Commentary](#))

Paul begins by zeroing in on areas that often trip up leaders speech and money, for both reveal the heart. How do they talk (truthfully or deceitfully)? How do they handle resources (honorably or greedily)?

Not double-tongued - The Greek word used only here ([hapax legomenon](#)) is **dilogos** with literally means saying same thing twice and by extension refers to speaking one thing and meaning another, which describes one as hypocritical, insincere or deceitful. A deacon's speech must be characterized by integrity, consistency, and honesty. They are not to be saying different things to different groups to be accepted under false pretenses, which is essentially a form of lying and falsehood. The point is that they are to be truthful. Truthfulness marks a trustworthy leader.

[A T Robertson](#) - One placed between two persons and saying one thing to one, another to the other. Like [Bunyan's Parson "Mr. Two-Tongues."](#)

John MacArthur adds that "A man who tells different stories to different people will quickly lose their confidence, and manifest a duplicitous and manipulative motive." (See [1 Timothy Commentary](#))

Or addicted to much wine ([oinos](#)) - Literally "not given to much wine," where "given" translates [prosecho](#) which means they continually (present tense) "pay attention," "to turn one's mind to," or "keep on the lookout for" wine! Note adjective "**much**." Paul is not against a sip of wine (see Paul's advice to Timothy in 1Ti 5:23+), but is against "**much**" wine. Deacons must master their appetites, not be mastered by them. Self-control and moderation are Paul's point. Deacons must not be enslaved by substances, appetites, or cravings, but must reflect the fruit of the Spirit, especially self-control. It follows that deacons are to be Spirit filled (Eph 5:18+) men, men who are as their lifestyle walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:16+), in order to guard their heart and mind and manifest the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23+). In the initial mention of deacons in the NT, in Acts 6:3+ we learn that deacons are first to be "of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom." And so the church "chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 6:5+)!

THOUGHT - Do you desire to be a deacon? Perhaps you are already a deacon. Are you continually Spirit filled, continually walking in the Spirit? Of course, we are speaking of "direction," not perfection! God is not looking for flashy, charismatic leaders. He's looking for humble, dignified, trustworthy Spirit filled servants. Whether you hold a formal title or not, God's call to truthfulness, self-control, and integrity applies to you.

Homer Kent points out that "It is extremely difficult for the twentieth-century American to understand and appreciate the society of Paul's day. The fact that deacons were not told to become total abstainers, but rather to be temperate, does not mean that Christians today can use liquor in moderate amounts. The wine employed for the common beverage was very largely water. The social stigma and the tremendous social evils that accompany drinking today did not attach themselves to the use of wine as the common beverage in the homes of Paul's day. Nevertheless, as the church grew and the Christian consciousness and conscience developed, the dangers of drinking came to be more clearly seen. The principle laid down elsewhere by Paul that Christians should not do anything to cause a brother to stumble came to be applied to the use of wine. Raymond states it this way:

If an individual by drinking wine either causes others to err through his example or abets a social evil which causes others to succumb to its temptations, then in the interests of Christian love he ought to forego the temporary pleasures of drinking in the interests of heavenly treasures. (Irwin Woodworth Raymond, SEE [NO RESTRICTIONS] [The Teaching of the Early Church on the Use of Wine and Strong Drink \[New York: Columbia Univ., 1927\]. 88\)](#)

Certainly in present-day America, the use of wine by a Christian would abet a recognized social evil, and would set a most dangerous example for the young and the weak. To us, Paul would undoubtedly say, "No wine at all." (BORROW [The Pastoral Epistles : studies in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus](#))

Or fond of sordid gain ([aischrokerdes](#)) - Literally not pursuing shameful gain. Remember it is not money, but love of money that is a root of all kinds of evil. Deacons often handled church funds or distributed aid, so they must be free from love of money and

financial corruption. Handling church resources demands a heart free from greed.

A T Robertson ([aischrokerdes](#)) - Old word from aischros (Eph 5:12) and kerdos (Phil. 1:21). "Making small gains in mean ways" (Parry). Not genuine in 1 Tim. 3:3. In N.T. only here and Titus 1:7 (of bishops).

MacArthur - They (DEACONS) would distribute money to widows, orphans, and others in need. The temptation would always be there to steal from those funds, as did Judas (John 12:4–6+). It was essential, then, that deacons be free from any love of money that could compromise their honesty (See [1 Timothy Commentary](#))

Bob Utley on not **fond of sordid gain** - This refers to the business honesty of these bi-vocational church leaders. If money is priority (cf. 1 Tim. 6:9-10) then Jesus cannot be!

William MacDonald - The apostle now moves on from bishops to **deacons**. In the NT, a deacon is simply one who serves. It is generally understood that a deacon is one who cares for the temporal affairs of the local church, whereas bishops care for its spiritual life. This understanding of the duties of deacons is largely based on Acts 6:1-5, where men were appointed to care for the daily distribution of funds to widows in the church. Actually, the noun "deacon" is not used in this passage, but the verb form is used in verse 2: "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve (literally 'deacon') tables." The qualifications for **deacons** are very similar to those of bishops, although not quite as strict. One notable difference is that it is not required that a deacon should be apt to teach. **Deacons must be reverent**, dignified, and worthy of respect. They must **not** be **double-tongued**, that is, they must not give conflicting reports to different persons or at different times. They must be consistent. They must **not** be **given to excess wine**. The NT does not forbid the use of wine for medicinal purposes, or as a beverage in those countries where the water supply is polluted. But even though the moderate use of wine is permitted, the Christian must also consider his testimony in regard to this matter. Whereas in some countries it might be perfectly all right for a Christian to drink wine without having any adverse effect on his testimony, in other countries it might cause an unbeliever to stumble, should he see a Christian indulging in wine. Thus, although the use of wine might be lawful, it might not be expedient. Deacons must **not** be **greedy for money**. As has been mentioned, one of the functions of a deacon might be to handle the funds of the local church. This exposes him to special temptation if he has a lust for money. He might be tempted to help himself. Judas was not the last treasurer to betray his Lord for mere money! (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Deacons (servants, ministers) ([1249](#)) [diakonos](#) see related words [diakoneo](#), [diakonia](#)) is of uncertain origin. Some say it is from **dia** (through) + **konis** (dust) which denotes one who hurries through the dust to carry out his service. (**Thayer** and others doubt this derivation for technical reasons). **Diakonos** has the idea of "serviceability," or "usefulness." Those who serve Christ are called to excellence in their usefulness to His cause. **Diakonos** refers to a servant in relationship to his activity, one who renders a service to another for the benefit of the one being served. Unlike the word for slave (doulos) diakonos implies the thought of voluntary service. It is used of the "servants" at the wedding in Cana (John 2:5, 7, 9). They were individuals who had voluntarily assumed this activity out of good will for the bride and groom.

Vine says that **diakonos** is probably from **diako** which means to hasten after, to pursue and so to run on errands. "Then the root idea is one who reaches out with diligence and persistence to render a service on behalf of others. This would imply that the deacon reaches out to render love-prompted service to others energetically and persistently." (Hiebert) This word group ([diakonos](#), [diakoneo](#), [diakonia](#)) focuses on the rendering or assistance or help by performing certain duties, often of a humble or menial nature, and including such mundane activities as waiting on tables or caring for household needs, activities that to many would seem to be without dignity (not true of course in God's eyes, [Pr 15:3](#), [Rev 22:12-note](#)). In summary, the basic idea of this word group is that of humble, submissive, personal service, with less emphasis on a specific office or a particular function. As Matthew Henry once said "Those whom God will employ are first struck with a sense of their unworthiness to be employed." A good picture of the meaning of this word group is found in the use of **diakoneo** to describe Peter's mother-in-law who was healed by Jesus "and she immediately got up and **waited** (**diakoneo**) on them." (Lk 4:39+)

DIAKONOS - 29X/27V - **deacons(3)**, **minister(7)**, **servant(10)**, **servants(9)**. Matt. 20:26; Matt. 22:13; Matt. 23:11; Mk. 9:35; Mk. 10:43; Jn. 2:5; Jn. 2:9; Jn. 12:26; Rom. 13:4; Rom. 15:8; Rom. 16:1; 1 Co. 3:5; 2 Co. 3:6; 2 Co. 6:4; 2 Co. 11:15; 2 Co. 11:23; Gal. 2:17; Eph. 3:7; Eph. 6:21; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:7; Col. 1:23; Col. 1:25; Col. 4:7; 1 Tim. 3:8; 1 Tim. 3:12; 1 Tim. 4:6

Dignity ([4586](#)) [semnos](#) means honorable, august (marked by majestic dignity or grandeur), venerable (stresses the impressiveness and dignity of great age), reverent or behaving with reverent propriety. It refers to the character that evokes special respect. The behavior of these men is **serious** in the right way. It does not describe the demeanor of a person who is a gloomy killjoy, but the conduct of the man who knows that he **lives in the light of eternity**, and that before very long he will leave the fallen race of men

for the glorious presence of God (**THOUGHT**- DOES THIS REALITY CHARACTERIZE YOU BELOVE? cf 2Co 4:18+). The dignified person is not frivolous, trivial, or superficial. He or she does not laugh at immorality, vulgarity, or anything else that is sinful and ungodly. Nor does he laugh at that which is tragedy or at the expense of others. These men have learned the value of time and opportunity.

SEMPOS - 4V - Phil. 4:8; 1 Tim. 3:8; 1 Tim. 3:11; Tit. 2:2

Fond of sordid gain (146) **aischrokerdes** from **aischros** = filthy, shameful, indecent, dishonorable + **keros** = gain, profit) is shamelessly greedy, avaricious (excessively acquisitive especially in seeking to hoard riches), a seeker of gain in disgraceful ways. It describes a man who does not care how he makes money so long as he makes it. Overseers and deacons are not to be not given to improper gain for selfish purposes and specifically is not to use their office as a means of accumulating unjust gain. To be sure, the laborer is worthy of his hire, but church leadership is never to be used to make money. The overseer or deacon is not to be eager for gain, especially gain that degrades his moral character. He is not to be like those who, without honesty or integrity, seek wealth and financial prosperity at any cost.

Barclay - He must not be a seeker of gain in disgraceful ways. The word is **aischrokerdes**, and it describes a man who does not care how he makes money so long as he makes it. It so happens that this was a fault for which the Cretans were notorious. Polybius said: "They are so given to making gain in disgraceful and acquisitive ways that among the Cretans alone of all men no gain is counted disgraceful." Plutarch said that they stuck to money like bees to honey. The Cretans counted material gain far above honesty and honour. They did not care how much their money cost them; but the Christian knows that there are some things which cost too much. The man whose only aim in life is to amass material things, irrespective of how he does so, is not fit to be an office-bearer of the Christian Church. ([Titus 1 Commentary - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

AI SCHROKERDS - 2X - 1 Tim. 3:8; Tit. 1:7

1 Timothy 3:8-15

TODAY IN THE WORD Bible teacher Chuck Swindoll once described a neighborhood kids' club that had a humorous, but wise, list of rules for its members. The rules were beautiful in their simplicity: "'Nobody act big. Nobody act small. Everybody act medium.'"

That's a list of rules anyone can keep! Those children may not have read 1 Timothy 3, but their club membership rules come very close expressing the New Testament standard for the body of Christ.

No members of the body should be inflated with pride because they consider themselves bigger or more important than others. Nor does God want His people dropping their heads and shuffling through life with a false idea of humility that someone has aptly termed "'worm theology.'"

Acting "'medium'" is a good standard after which to strive. Paul described it as evaluating ourselves with balanced judgment (Ro 12:3). The office or ministry of deacon is a good example of the balance the Bible wants us to have.

Clearly, this office is subordinate to that of elder in the administration of the church. The "'prototypes'" of the deacon's ministry were the seven men chosen by the church to help administer aid to the church's dependent widows in Jerusalem so the apostles could concentrate on prayer and preaching the Word (Acts 6:1-7).

But while the deacon's role is one of service, there is nothing second-rate about the qualifications needed for the office. Deacons need to be committed to the truth, which means they need to know God's Word. Personal integrity and a solid marriage and home life are also high on the list.

Deacons who do their jobs well are worthy of "'excellent standing'" in the body of Christ. This is not a self-conferred honor, but respect from the church that is given to people who take their spiritual responsibilities seriously and show others an appropriate way to behave in God's work.

APPLY THE WORD Whatever term your church may apply to the people who keep the facilities in good shape and perform other physical services, chances are your congregation couldn't function without these servants. The deacons of Acts 6 were not only good administrators. Stephen and his friends were also men of the Word. If your church is blessed with people like this, they are worthy of your respect. Why not also encourage one of these special servants with a note or word of appreciation this Sunday? Expressing thanks seems to be our calling this month!

1 Timothy 3:8-15

TODAY IN THE WORD In the months surrounding last November's election, we heard a lot about "vetting." The two presidential candidates vetted potential running mates, then President-elect Obama vetted his choices for Cabinet and other leadership positions. "Vetting" indicates close and thorough investigation and evaluation. Politically speaking, it involves exhaustive background checks and interviews, since no one wants a "skeleton in the closet" to emerge as a surprise that discredits the person. Vetting is a time-consuming and detailed process, but it is considered an essential prerequisite to political leadership.

The passages we've been studying these past few days give biblical guidelines for "vetting" church leaders. In particular, the description of potential deacons being "tested" to make sure "there is nothing against them" sounds much like the political vetting process. Today's reading lists the general qualifications for deacons, a word meaning simply "one who serves." The standards are similar to those described earlier for overseers. Deacons too must be righteous persons with a solid grasp of sound doctrine and whose families are ably led. The phrase translated "their wives" (v. 11) might also be translated "deaconesses" or even indicate that deacons and their wives served together in leadership. Some churches today treat female deacons as a separate leadership office, some open the office to both men and women, and others commission husbands and wives to serve together.

Church leadership theories abound, but we must be careful not to see the church as a merely human organization (vv. 14-15). It is "God's household ... the pillar and foundation of the truth." It is a living organism, charged with living out the mystery of redemption. It is the body of Christ and He is the Head. No wonder our conduct within such a "household" is so important, and no wonder our leaders must meet such high standards of spiritual accountability.

APPLY THE WORD Our culture promotes notions of leadership that include striving for the top, taking advantage of opportunities (and others), and being in charge to get your own way. These do not match the qualities of biblical leadership found in Scripture. Today, pray for leaders in the church, that their ministry will be characterized by godliness, not worldly ideas about power.

1 Timothy 3:9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

BGT 1 Timothy 3:9 χοντας τ μυστηριον τς πιστεως ν καθαρ συνειδσει.

KJV 1 Timothy 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

NET 1 Timothy 3:9 holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

CSB 1 Timothy 3:9 holding the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

ESV 1 Timothy 3:9 They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

NIV 1 Timothy 3:9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.

NLT 1 Timothy 3:9 They must be committed to the mystery of the faith now revealed and must live with a clear conscience.

NRS 1 Timothy 3:9 they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

RSV 1 Timothy 3:9 they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

YLT 1 Timothy 3:9 having the secret of the faith in a pure conscience,

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:9 holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.

NJB 1 Timothy 3:9 They must hold to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

NAB 1 Timothy 3:9 holding fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

ASV 1 Timothy 3:9 holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

MIT 1 Timothy 3:9 retaining the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

DBY 1 Timothy 3:9 holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.

GWN 1 Timothy 3:9 They must have clear consciences about possessing the mystery of the Christian faith.

BBE 1 Timothy 3:9 Keeping the secret of the faith in a heart free from sin.

- Holding: 1Ti 1:5,19
- the mystery: 1Ti 3:16 2Jn 1:9,10
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

1 Timothy 1:18-19 This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, 19 keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

Colossians 1:26-27 that is, the **mystery** which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, 27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Romans 9:1 (CONSCIENCE AS A GUIDE) I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit,

GUARDING THE MYSTERY OF THE FAITH

While 1Ti 3:8 focuses on external behavior (dignity, self-control, honesty), verse 9 now focuses on the internal spiritual life — what deacons believe and how they hold that belief. Paul emphasizes that deacons are not merely practical helpers; they are spiritually grounded servants entrusted with the deep truths of the Christian faith.

but (added by translators but not in Greek text) **holding to** (present tense - continually possessing) **the mystery** ([musterion](#)) **of the** (definite article) **faith** ([pistis](#)) - **Mystery** in modern usage is similar to this ancient use for it usually means a secret for which no answer can be found (cf "mystery novel"). In contrast to this contemporary use of "mystery", Scripture uses **musterion** to indicate truth which was previously unknown but which now has been made known through revelation mediated by God.

What is the **mystery** that has been revealed? **MacArthur** sums it up as "the word "mystery" describes truth previously hidden, but now revealed, including Christ's incarnation (v. 16), Christ's indwelling of believers (Col 1:26, 27), the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the church (Eph 3:4-6), the gospel (Col 4:3), lawlessness (2Th 2:7), and the rapture of the church (1Co 15:51, 52). (Borrow [MacArthur Study Bible](#) or [here - p5314](#))

With a clear ([katharos](#)) **conscience** ([suneidesis](#)) - These men possess a pure inner moral awareness. A clear conscience means living consistently with what one professes. (THOUGHT - HOW IS YOUR WALK? DOES IT MATCH YOUR TALK?) The conduct matches their confession. In other words it is not enough for deacons just to believe the truth, but they must also live it out. Or stated another way, we might say their doctrinal integrity (holding the mystery of the faith) matches their moral integrity (with a clear conscience). The point is that these men are stewards of God's revealed truth, and not merely helpers. By way of application, it is important for deacons (and all believers for that matter) to regularly examine their beliefs and conscience asking if they are walking faithfully in what they claim to believe?

Paul is not calling for something he himself does not practice, writing in 2Ti 1:3+ "I thank God, Whom I **serve with a clear conscience** the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day."

John MacArthur has an excellent description of the conscience and its function in our spiritual lives - The conscience is a human faculty given by God to every person, which is designed to warn each person when they have violated moral law (cf. Ro 2:14-15). It either accuses or excuses. It either produces guilt, shame, fear, remorse, and despair over sin, or assurance, peace, and joy due to righteousness. (See [1 Timothy Commentary](#))

William MacDonald - Deacons must hold **the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience** ([suneidesis](#)). This means that they must be sound in doctrine and in life. They must not only know the truth; they must live it. **The mystery of the faith** is a description of the Christian **faith**. Many of the doctrines of Christianity were kept secret throughout the OT period but were then revealed by the apostles and prophets of the NT. That is why the word **mystery** is used here. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Mystery ([3466](#)) [musterion](#) from **mustes** = one initiated [as into the Greco-Roman "mystery" religions] from **mueo** = to close or shut) in the NT is a truth never previously known, and a truth which human intellect could never discover, but one which has now been made known by divine revelation. In Paul's day **musterion** was a technical term utilized by the "mystery religions" which referred to a secrets concealed by strange customs and ceremonies and confided only to those initiated into the "mystery cult". **Musterion** embraced ideas such as "a secret rite," "secret teaching," and "a divine mystery which is beyond human comprehension." The "mystery-religions" (See **Barclay's lengthy comment below** on Jesus' use of **musterion** in Mt 13:11) had their secrets and signs just as seen in modern secret societies. Those initiated into these pagan cults, knew these secret signs. In summary, a **mystery** in the context of the Greek Mystery Religions was a secret rite which was administered to the person being initiated.

Musterion - 28x in 28v - Matt 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10; Ro 11:25; 16:25; 1Cor 2:1, 7; 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; 15:51; Eph 1:9; 3:3f, 9; 5:32; 6:19; Col 1:26, 27; 2:2; 4:3; 2Th 2:7; 1Ti 3:9, 16; Rev 1:20; 10:7; 17:5, 7

Related Resources:

- [What is the mystery of God referred to in the Bible?](#)
- [What is the mystery of Christ in Colossians 4:3?](#)

Faith (4102) **pistis** is synonymous with trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything, but in Scripture usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it. Note that this discussion of **pistis** is only an overview and not a detailed treatise of this vitally important subject. Those interested are directed to respected, conservative books on systematic theology for more in depth discussion (eg, Dr Wayne Grudem's book [Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine](#) (also online or see PDF) is an excellent, uncompromising, imminently readable resource for the lay person. See especially Chapter 35 which addresses the question "What is saving faith?" in an easy to understand manner.) Much of this "definition" deals with the general word group for faith (**pistis** = noun, **pistos** = adjective, **pisteuo** = verb)

As **pistis** relates to God, it is the conviction that God exists and is the Creator and Ruler of all things well as the Provider and Bestower of eternal salvation through Christ. As faith relates to Christ it represents a strong and welcome conviction or belief that Jesus is the Messiah, through Whom we obtain eternal salvation and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

The faith is a specific phrase (definite article **"the"** plus **"faith"**) found some 38x in the NASB, some instances referring to saving faith in Christ exercised by an individual and necessary for salvation.

The faith -Acts 3:16; 6:7; 13:8; 14:22; 16:5; Ro 4:11f, 16; 14:22; 1Co 16:13; 2Co 13:5; Gal 1:23; 3:23; 6:10; Eph 1:15; 4:13; Phil 1:25, 27; Col 1:23; 1Ti 1:2, 14; 3:9, 13; 4:1, 6; 5:8; 6:10, 21; 2Ti 1:13; 2:18; 3:8; 4:7; Titus 1:1, 13; 3:15; Philemon 1:5; Jude 1:3; Rev 13:10

Approximately **one-half** of the 38 occurrences of the specific phrase **the faith** refer not to the **ACT** of believing but rather to **WHAT** is believed, the latter being the usage that the present context would seem to favor (cp retain the standard of sound words, 2Ti 1:13, guard...the treasure 2Ti 1:14, handling accurately the Word of truth 2Ti 2:15). It follows that the specific meaning of this phrase is dependent on the **context** (the text that goes with the text in question).

The first use of "the faith" referring to the body of truth believed is recorded by Luke who writes that

the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to **the faith**." (Acts 6:7)

Robertson remarks that here **"the faith"** means

the gospel, the faith system as in Gal 1:23; Jude 1:3, etc. Here the (phrase "the faith") means more than individual trust in Christ." (Word Pictures in the New Testament)

In a similar use we read of

Elymas the magician (for thus his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from **the faith**. (Acts 13:8+)

Clear (innocent, pure) (2513) **katharos** literally describes that which is free of dirt and thus **clean**. It describes that which is free from admixture or adulteration and thus is **pure**. From a biblical standpoint the concept of cleansing is deeply rooted in both the Old and the New Testaments. **Katharos** is blameless, innocent, unstained with the guilt and is used to describe that which is ceremonially or ritually pure or clean (in a "Levitical sense"). Heavy emphasis was placed on ceremonial cleansing and thus contact with any unclean animal, substance, person, or place was strictly forbidden. By the time Christ came this preoccupation with ceremonial cleanness had unfortunately displaced true worship with many of the Jews, most notably the Pharisees. It is not surprising then that the New Testament focuses mainly on an inward cleanness (heart, conscience), rather than on an external or ceremonial cleanness. English word derived from **katharos** = **catharsis** = purifying, cleansing, a term used in psychology and counseling for a cleansing of the mind or emotions - a "soul cleansing" if you will. It is also worth noting that **katharos** is related to the Latin **castus**, from which we get chaste. The related word **chasten** refers to discipline given in order to cleanse from wrong behavior. **Katharos** was a word used of soiled clothing which had been washed clean, grain from which all chaff had been removed, metal

without any trace of alloy, or a man with all his bills and taxes paid."

Katharos is an adjective that figuratively is used in both the OT and the NT to describe the state of one's **heart**. When a person is **pure** in heart and mind, his or her perspective on all things is pure, and that inner purity produces outer purity.

KATHAROS - 22V - clean(12), clear(3), innocent(1), pure(10). Matt. 5:8; Matt. 23:26; Matt. 27:59; Lk. 11:41; Jn. 13:10; Jn. 13:11; Jn. 15:3; Acts 18:6; Acts 20:26; Rom. 14:20; 1 Tim. 1:5; 1 Tim. 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:22; Tit. 1:15; Heb. 10:22; Jas. 1:27; Rev. 15:6; Rev. 19:8; Rev. 19:14; Rev. 21:18; Rev. 21:21

Conscience (4893) [suneidesis](#) is derived from [sun/syn](#) = with + [eido](#) = know) literally means a "knowing with", a co-knowledge with oneself or a being of one's own witness in the sense that one's own conscience "takes the stand" as the chief witness, testifying either to one's innocence or guilt. It describes the witness borne to one's conduct by that faculty by which we apprehend the will of God. In Classic Greek [suneidesis](#) occurs in legal contexts of witnesses who share testimony. In a reflexive sense [suneidēsis](#) signifies "consciousness" (in a neutral sense) and from that it means "inner consciousness" or conscience. **Conscience** carries moral implications as it serves a monitor of the "knowledge" of right from wrong. [Suneidesis](#) is especially a Pauline word (20/30 uses). Many texts reading [suneidesis](#) occur in a forensic (legal) context (e.g., Ro 2:15; Ro 9:1). Often the **conscience** becomes the "court of appeal" where the believer makes moral decisions. The believer's conscience controlled by the Spirit (Ro 9:1; cf. 2 Co 1:12) is important in helping the Christian make right decisions. Since the **conscience** is a legitimate point of the appeal of the gospel (2 Co 4:2; cf. 2Cor 5:11), it is only natural to expect that the believer's life is to be marked with a conscience that has been "cleared" by the transforming power of the Gospel. A clear conscience signals faithfulness, especially among those in leadership (cf. 1 Ti 1:5, 19; 3:9; cf. 1 Pe 3:16). One trademark of the opponents of the faith is a "seared conscience" (1 Ti 4:2; Titus 1:15). They resist sound teaching and their behavior reflects their stubbornness (cf. Titus 1:16).

Colin G. Kruse - The **conscience** is not to be equated with the voice of God or even the moral law, rather it is a human faculty which adjudicates upon human action by the light of the highest standard a person perceives. Seeing that all of human nature has been affected by sin, both a person's perception of the standard of action required and the function of the conscience itself (as a constituent part of human nature) are also affected by sin. For this reason conscience can never be accorded the position of ultimate judge of one's behavior. It is possible that the conscience may excuse one for that which God will not excuse, and conversely it is equally possible that conscience may condemn a person for that which God allows. The final judgment therefore belongs only to God (cf. 1 Cor. 4:2–5). Nevertheless, to reject the voice of conscience is to court spiritual disaster (cf. 1 Ti 1:19). We cannot reject the voice of conscience with impunity, but we can modify the highest standard to which it relates by gaining for ourselves a greater understanding of the truth. ([The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians - TNTC](#))

SUNEIDESIS - 30X/29V - conscience(24), conscience'(4), consciences(1), consciousness(1). Acts 23:1; Acts 24:16; Rom. 2:15; Rom. 9:1; Rom. 13:5; 1 Co. 8:7; 1 Co. 8:10; 1 Co. 8:12; 1 Co. 10:25; 1 Co. 10:27; 1 Co. 10:28; 1 Co. 10:29; 2 Co. 1:12; 2 Co. 4:2; 2 Co. 5:11; 1 Tim. 1:5; 1 Tim. 1:19; 1 Tim. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:2; 2 Tim. 1:3; Tit. 1:15; Heb. 9:9; Heb. 9:14; Heb. 10:2; Heb. 10:22; Heb. 13:18; 1 Pet. 2:19; 1 Pet. 3:16; 1 Pet. 3:21

Warren Wiersbe compares a good conscience, or a clean conscience, "to a window that lets in the light of God's truth" ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#)). The more we study God's Word, the more light we let in and the more sensitive we become to right and wrong. Paul informs Timothy that the [false teachers](#), those who "abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons," have persisted in their sin and rebellion against God to the point of having their consciences "[seared](#) as with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:1–2). The light of God's truth is shut out from such hearts. ([Gotquestions.org](#))

Related Resource:

- [What does it mean to have a good conscience \(1 Timothy 1:5\)?](#)Gotquestions.org

QUESTION - [What is the mystery of faith? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

ANSWER - *The mystery of faith* is a term that occurs in 1 Timothy 3:9. Depending on the English translation, the Greek phrase *μυστήριον τῆς πίστεως* is translated "the mystery of faith," "the mystery of the faith," or "the deep truths of the faith."

The verse in which the phrase appears is about [deacons](#). Paul is advising Timothy about what sort of man should be trusted with the office of deacon in order to serve the local church body. Paul says a deacon should be dignified, truthful, and one who "holds to the mystery of faith with a clear conscience" (1 Timothy 3:9). In this context, Paul is simply saying that the man who serves the church

should be a believer who is mature, who has a firm grasp on the basic elements of the gospel, and whose life matches his profession of faith.

A “[mystery](#)” in the New Testament is something that had at one time been hidden but is now revealed to God’s people. Jesus told His disciples, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted” (Matthew 13:11, NASB). The apostle Paul often spoke of such “mysteries”: Jesus’ incarnation (1 Timothy 3:16), the indwelling of the Spirit (Colossians 1:26–27), the unity of the church (Ephesians 3:4–6), the rapture (1 Corinthians 15:51–52), and the gospel itself (Colossians 4:3). All these truths were “hidden” from the prophets of old but have been revealed plainly to us today. They are “mysteries” that are no longer mysterious to the child of God. “The mystery of faith” is the divinely revealed truth about grace, redemption, and forgiveness in Christ.

The message of Christ’s sacrifice for sin and His resurrection (the message that Paul refers to as “the faith”) is easy to understand. The basic gospel message is simple enough for even the youngest believer, but it is also a humbling mystery that was only hinted at throughout the time of the Old Covenant. Now God’s plan of salvation has been revealed in His Son, Jesus Christ, and we are held responsible to “hold” that message firmly.

When Paul advises Timothy to appoint deacons who “hold to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience,” he is telling Timothy to find mature believers—men who understand the message of the gospel and are living it out. “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” (Romans 11:33). Oh, the condescension of Christ who has made manifest the mysteries of heaven to us!

1 Timothy 3:10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.

BGT 1 Timothy 3:10 καὶ οἱ τοὶ ὁδοκιμαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸν ἐκκλησιαστικὸν ὄφειλμα ἵνα ᾖ ἀνεπίβλητοι.

KJV 1 Timothy 3:10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

NET 1 Timothy 3:10 And these also must be tested first and then let them serve as deacons if they are found blameless.

CSB 1 Timothy 3:10 And they must also be tested first; if they prove blameless, then they can serve as deacons.

ESV 1 Timothy 3:10 And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.

NIV 1 Timothy 3:10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

NLT 1 Timothy 3:10 Before they are appointed as deacons, let them be closely examined. If they pass the test, then let them serve as deacons.

NRS 1 Timothy 3:10 And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons.

RSV 1 Timothy 3:10 And let them also be tested first; then if they prove themselves blameless let them serve as deacons.

YLT 1 Timothy 3:10 and let these also first be proved, then let them minister, being unblameable.

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:10 But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless.

NJB 1 Timothy 3:10 They are first to be examined, and admitted to serve as deacons only if there is nothing against them.

NAB 1 Timothy 3:10 Moreover, they should be tested first; then, if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

ASV 1 Timothy 3:10 And let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless.

MIT 1 Timothy 3:10 Let deacon candidates be tested by examination first, and then let those who are irreproachable serve.

DBY 1 Timothy 3:10 And let these be first proved, then let them minister, being without charge against them.

GWN 1 Timothy 3:10 First, a person must be evaluated. Then, if he has a good reputation, he may become a deacon.

BBE 1 Timothy 3:10 And let these first be put to the test; then let them become Deacons if there is nothing against them.

- **these:** 1Ti 3:6 5:22 1Jn 4:1
- **let them serve:** 1Ti 3:13 Ac 6:1,2
- **if they are beyond:** 1Ti 3:2 1Co 1:8 Col 1:22 Titus 1:6,7
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Acts 6:1-6+ (DISCUSSION OF FIRST DEACONS) Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily **serving** ([diakonia](#)) of food. 2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to **serve** ([diakoneo](#)) tables. 3 "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. 4 "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." 5 The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. 6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them.

1 Timothy 5:22+ Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.

TESTING BEFORE TRUSTING

These men (not it Greek text) **must also first** ([protos](#)) **be tested** ([dokimazo](#)) - Literally "let these also first be prove." The idea is that these men must first be critically examined to determine when they pass the test. This doesn't necessarily mean a formal exam, but it means observing their conduct and consistency over time. **Be tested** ([dokimazo](#) used for testing metals or materials to reveal quality) is in the present tense indicating this is to be ongoing assessment, not just one and done. Note the adverb **also** which links this "test" of deacons with elders (1Ti 3:1-7), who must also be continually evaluated by the church. Prospective deacons must show proven character before public service. This safeguards the church and maintains the credibility of the office of deacons.

THOUGHT - TAKEAWAY - Do not rush anyone into leadership without watching their walk, even more than their talk. Churches must assess character, not just charisma or business success. I have seen successful businessmen moved into positions of church leadership and they were abysmal! God calls His servants not just to work hard, but to live well. Titles mean little without proven character, and faithful service in unseen places is often the best preparation for visible roles.

Note that one of the first criteria of the first church for deacons was Spirit filled men, Luke writing "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of **good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom**, whom we may put in charge of this task." (Acts 6:3+, cf Acts 6:5+)

Then **let them serve** ([diakoneo](#)) **as deacons** ([diakonos](#)) **if they are beyond reproach** ([anegkletos](#)) - **Let them serve** is a [present imperative](#) a command to **let them serve** after they pass the character test. **IF** is a first class conditional, **beyond reproach** (cf "good reputation" Acts 6:3+) assumed to be true.

MacArthur adds "They differ in function from elders in that elders are the primary teachers of the church, while deacons help in applying their teaching. Nevertheless, the spiritual requirements for both are the same. Deacons must not have any blot on their lives, nothing for which they could be accused, arraigned, and disqualified." (See [1 Timothy Commentary - Page 129](#))

William MacDonald - Deacons should **first be tested**, as in the case of elders. This means that they should be observed for some time and perhaps even given some minor responsibilities in the local church. As they prove themselves to be trustworthy and faithful, then they can be advanced to greater responsibilities. **Then let them serve as deacons**, or simply, "let them minister." As with bishops, the emphasis is not so much on an ecclesiastical office as it is on service for the Lord and His people. Whenever a man has been **found blameless** in his personal life and in his public life, he may be allowed to serve as a deacon. **Blameless** here

refers particularly to the qualifications that have just been mentioned. At this point it may be well to mention a few of the men who might be considered as deacons in a local church. The treasurer certainly would be one, and also the correspondent or secretary, the Sunday School superintendent, and the ushers. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Tested (1381) **dokimazo** from **dokimos** = tested, proved or approved, tried as metals by fire and thus purified from **dechomai** = to accept, receive) means to assay, to test, to prove, to put to the test, to make a trial of, to verify, to discern to approve. **Dokimazo** involves not only testing but determining the genuineness or value of an event or object. That which has been tested is demonstrated to be genuine and trustworthy.

Dokimazo was used in classic Greek to describe the assaying of precious metals (especially gold or silver coins), usually by fire, to prove the whether they were authentic and whether they measured up to the stated worth. That which endures the test was called **dokimos** and that which fails is called **adokimos**.

Dokimazo was used in a manuscript of 140AD which contains a plea for the exemption of physicians, and especially of those who have **passed the examination** (**dokimazo**). **Dokimazo** was thus used as a technical expression referring to the action of an examining board putting its approval upon those who had successfully passed the examinations for the degree of Doctor of Medicine. **Dokimazo** was also used to describe the passing of a candidate as fit for election to public office.

Dokimazo means to put to the test for the purpose of approving, and finding that the person tested meets the specifications prescribed, to put one's approval upon him. For example Paul writes that unregenerate mankind "did not **approve** (**dokimazo**) of having God in knowledge, God gave them up to a disapproved mind, to do the things not seemly." (Young's literal translation see **note Romans 1:28**) In this incredible verse in Romans 1, fallen men presumptuously put God to the test for the purpose of approving Him to see He if He would meet the specifications which they laid down for a God Who would be to their liking! But sinful man did not stop there, for finding that He did not meet their specifications, they refused to **approve** (**dokimazo**) Him as the God to be worshipped or to be kept in its knowledge! They tested the infinitely precious God as they would a mere coin, and chose to turn aside from Him!

DOKIMAZO - 22X/20V - **analyze(2), approve(3), approved(1), approves(1), examine(4), examines(1), prove(1), proving(1), see fit(1), test(2), tested(3), try(1), trying to learn(1)**. Lk. 12:56; Lk. 14:19; Rom. 1:28; Rom. 2:18; Rom. 12:2; Rom. 14:22; 1 Co. 3:13; 1 Co. 11:28; 1 Co. 16:3; 2 Co. 8:8; 2 Co. 8:22; 2 Co. 13:5; Gal. 6:4; Eph. 5:10; Phil. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:4; 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 Tim. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:7; 1 Jn. 4:1

Beyond reproach (410) **anegkletos** from a = without, negative particle + **egkaleo/enkaleo** {en = in + kaleo = call} = to call in {as a debt or demand}, to bring to account, to accuse in court, call into account, bring a charge against - in Ro 8:33+ "who will bring a charge [egkaleo] against God's elect?" The answer "no one" means not arraigned (as in a court), that which cannot be called to account, unblamable, blameless, irreproachable, free from accusation or reproach, not accused of having done anything wrong. **Anegkletos** ("not convicted, not found guilty") refers to character (behavior) that *stands up* when *correctly* tried, not convictable when evaluated by *sound rules of evidence*. **Anegkletos** signifies that which cannot be called to account. It means having no blot on one's life for which one could be accused, arraigned, and disqualified. It means there is nothing laid to one's charge (as the result of public investigation). It is not simply an acquittal but the absence of even a valid accusation.

ANEGKLETOS - 5V - **above reproach(2), beyond reproach(2), blameless(1)**. 1 Co. 1:8; Col. 1:22; 1 Tim. 3:10; Tit. 1:6; Tit. 1:7

1 Timothy 3:11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

BGT 1 Timothy 3:11 Γυναικες σατως σεμνεις, μη διαβλους, νηφαλους, πιστες εν παντι.

KJV 1 Timothy 3:11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

NET 1 Timothy 3:11 Likewise also their wives must be dignified, not slanderous, temperate, faithful in every respect.

CSB 1 Timothy 3:11 Wives, too, must be worthy of respect, not slanderers, self-controlled, faithful in everything.

ESV 1 Timothy 3:11 Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.

NIV 1 Timothy 3:11 In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

NLT 1 Timothy 3:11 In the same way, their wives must be respected and must not slander others. They must exercise self-control and be faithful in everything they do.

NRS 1 Timothy 3:11 Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things.

RSV 1 Timothy 3:11 The women likewise must be serious, no slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things.

YLT 1 Timothy 3:11 Women -- in like manner grave, not false accusers, vigilant, faithful in all things.

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:11 Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.

NJB 1 Timothy 3:11 Similarly, women must be respectable, not gossips, but sober and wholly reliable.

NAB 1 Timothy 3:11 Women, similarly, should be dignified, not slanderers, but temperate and faithful in everything.

ASV 1 Timothy 3:11 Women in like manner must be grave, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.

MIT 1 Timothy 3:11 By the same standard, their wives must be of good character, not accusers, free from addictions so as to think clearly, being faithful in everything.

DBY 1 Timothy 3:11 The women in like manner grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.

GWN 1 Timothy 3:11 Their wives must also be of good character. They must not be gossips, but they must control their tempers and be trustworthy in every way.

BBE 1 Timothy 3:11 Women are to be serious in behaviour, saying no evil of others, controlling themselves, true in all things.

- **Women:** Lev 21:7,13-15 Eze 44:22 Lu 1:5-6 Titus 2:3
- **dignified:** 1Ti 3:4
- **Not malicious gossips:** Ps 15:3 50:20 101:5 Pr 10:18 25:13 Jer 9:4 Mt 4:1 Joh 6:70 2Ti 3:3 Titus 2:3 Rev 12:9,10
- **temperate:** 1Ti 3:2 1Th 5:6-8 2Ti 4:5 Titus 3:2 1Pe 5:8
- **faithful:** 1Ti 1:12 6:2
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Romans 16:1+ I commend to you our sister Phoebe ([note](#)), who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea;

James 3:5-6+ So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! 6 And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.

Luke 16:10+ (FAITHFULNESS OF WOMEN) "He (OR SHE) who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.

FAITHFUL WOMEN SERVING THE CHURCH

From my title you can see I favor the women as referring to deaconesses (see below).

Women *must* (added by translators) **likewise** - Most versions translate it as "*Their wives*" (ESV, NET, NIV, NLT). **Likewise** means "in like manner" the deacons and elders described above. Some interpret women as referring to those women who serve as deacons and others as wives of deacons.

John MacArthur's reasons for interpreting the **women** as referring to deaconesses - The following points show that women in general, not necessarily deacons' wives are in view here. First, the use of likewise (cf. 1 Tim. 2:9; 3:8; Titus 2:3, 6) argues strongly for seeing a third and distinct group here in addition to elders and deacons. Second, there is no possessive pronoun or definite article connecting these women with deacons. Third, Paul gave no qualifications for elders' wives. Why would he do so for deacons' wives? Fourth, Paul did not use the word "deaconesses" because there was no such word in the Greek language; the masculine

form of diakonos was used of both men and women (cf. Rom. 16:1). A different term, diakonissa, was used for “deaconess” in post-biblical Greek (Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946], 3:176). Using the term women was the only way Paul could distinguish them from the male deacons. Finally, their qualifications parallel those of the male deacons. (See [1 Timothy Commentary - Page 130](#))

NET NOTE on **women** (**NET** = “their wives”) - Or “also deaconesses.” The Greek word here is γυναῖκας (gunaikas) which literally means “women” or “wives.” It is possible that this refers to women who serve as deacons, “deaconesses.” The evidence is as follows: (1) The immediate context refers to deacons; (2) the author mentions nothing about wives in his section on elder qualifications (1 Tim 3:1–7); (3) it would seem strange to have requirements placed on deacons’ wives without corresponding requirements placed on elders’ wives; and (4) elsewhere in the NT, there seems to be room for seeing women in this role (cf. Rom 16:1 and the comments there). The translation “wives”—referring to the wives of the deacons—is probably to be preferred, though, for the following reasons: (1) It would be strange for the author to discuss women deacons right in the middle of the qualifications for male deacons; more naturally they would be addressed by themselves. (2) The author seems to indicate clearly in the next verse that women are not deacons: “Deacons must be husbands of one wife.” (3) Most of the qualifications given for deacons elsewhere do not appear here. Either the author has truncated the requirements for women deacons, or he is not actually referring to women deacons; the latter seems to be the more natural understanding. (4) The principle given in 1 Tim 2:12 appears to be an overarching principle for church life which seems implicitly to limit the role of deacon to men. **Nevertheless, a decision in this matter is difficult, and our conclusions must be regarded as tentative**

THOUGHT - Whether as deaconesses or as deacons’ wives, women are vital to the life and ministry of the church. Their character is just as important as that of male leaders. Churches should recognize and honor the vital leadership role of faithful women.

Related Resource:

- [Can women serve as deacons in the church? | GotQuestions.org](#)

Be (added by translators) **dignified** ([sempnos](#)) - **CSB, NIV** = “Worthy of respect” **NLT** “must be respected” **NRS** = “be serious” *Sempnos* is that trait which in a human being calls forth veneration and respect from others. They should be serious in character, not silly, frivolous, or attention-seeking. This mirrors the same dignity required of male leaders (1Ti 3:8).

Not malicious gossips ([diabolos](#)) - Tongue control is paramount! **NIV** = “Not malicious talkers” Not slanderous, maliciously gossiping or accusing falsely. The Greek word ([diabolos](#)) is rendered **devil** (the ultimate slanderer) in 1Ti 3:6-7 because one of the devil’s main actions is to make false accusations (cf Rev 12:10+ = “accuses them before our God day and night.”). Obviously if these women slander, they are acting like the devil. The implication is that some may indeed be children of the devil. Paul warns specifically against gossip and slander because women in leadership or ministry are often entrusted with sensitive matters.

A T Robertson - Original meaning of *diabolos* (from *diaballō*, Luke 16:1), the devil being the chief slanderer (Ephes. 6:11). “She-devils” in reality (Titus 2:3). “While men are more prone to be dilogous, double-tongued, women are more prone than men to be slanderers” (White).

But temperate ([nephaios](#)) - The idea is self-controlled, sober-minded, those who exercise self-control. They should demonstrate emotional steadiness and restraint, not ruled by moods or impulses. They are to be the antithesis of “weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2 Ti 3:6-7+)

Faithful ([pistos](#)) **in all things** - **NIV** = “trustworthy in everything” These women are to be trustworthy in everything they do. They are reliable in every aspect of life.

William MacDonald - This verse apparently refers to the **wives** of deacons, or to the wives of bishops and deacons. The **wives** of those who are given responsibilities in the church should certainly be women of Christian testimony and integrity, such as will help their husbands in their important work. However, the same word used for “**wives**” may also be translated “**women**.” This translation would permit the additional interpretation of **women deacons**. There were such women in the early church, e.g. Ro 16:1, where Phoebe is spoken of as a servant (same word as “*deacon*”) of the church at Cenchrea. A clue as to the type of service which these women performed in the church is given in Romans 16:2, where Paul says of Phoebe that “she has been a helper of many and of myself also.” Whichever interpretation one accepts, these women **must be reverent**, dignified, and sober. They must **not** be **slanderers**, spending their time gossiping about others, passing on false and malicious reports designed to injure the reputation of others. They must be **temperate**, exhibiting self-control and restraint. Finally, they must be **faithful in all things**. This might not only mean true to the Christian faith, but also dependable, loyal, and worthy of confidence. They should be able to keep personal

1 Timothy 3:12 Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.

BGT 1 Timothy 3:12 δι' κωνοι στῶσαν μι ς γυναικ ς νῶρες, τ κνων καλ ς προϊστ μενοι κα τ ν ὀων ο κων.

KJV 1 Timothy 3:12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

NET 1 Timothy 3:12 Deacons must be husbands of one wife and good managers of their children and their own households.

CSB 1 Timothy 3:12 Deacons must be husbands of one wife, managing their children and their own households competently.

ESV 1 Timothy 3:12 Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.

NIV 1 Timothy 3:12 A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.

NLT 1 Timothy 3:12 A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his children and household well.

NRS 1 Timothy 3:12 Let deacons be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well;

RSV 1 Timothy 3:12 Let deacons be the husband of one wife, and let them manage their children and their households well;

YLT 1 Timothy 3:12 Ministrants -- let them be of one wife husbands; the children leading well, and their own houses,

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:12 Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

NJB 1 Timothy 3:12 Deacons must be husbands of one wife and must be people who manage their children and households well.

NAB 1 Timothy 3:12 Deacons may be married only once and must manage their children and their households well.

ASV 1 Timothy 3:12 Let deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

MIT 1 Timothy 3:12 Deacons must be one-woman men, able to manage children excellently as well as their own households.

DBY 1 Timothy 3:12 Let the ministers be husbands of one wife, conducting their children and their own houses well:

GWN 1 Timothy 3:12 A deacon must have only one wife. Deacons must manage their children and their families well.

BBE 1 Timothy 3:12 Let Deacons be husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their houses well.

- 1Ti 3:2,4,5
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

1 Timothy 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach

Hebrews 13:4 Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

Ephesians 5:25; 6:4 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, (6:4) Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

FAITHFUL IN FAMILY, FAITHFUL IN MINISTRY

In 1Ti 3:12, Paul zeroes in on family life just as he did for elders in 1Ti 3:4–5, because how a man leads at home reflects his fitness to lead in the church.

Deacons (*diakonos*) **must be** (*present imperative*) **husbands of only one wife** - Literally = "one wife husbands" (or "one-woman men"-cf 1T 3:2) Note that Paul does not mean they must be married.

NET NOTE - Or "men married only once," "devoted solely to their wives" (see the note on "wife" in 1 Tim 3:2; also 1 Tim 5:9; Titus 1:6).

MacArthur - They must not be unfaithful to their wives either in their actual conduct with other women, **or in their minds**. As with elders, the issue is moral character, not marital status. They are models of sexual purity. (Bolding added) (See [1 Timothy Commentary - Page 130](#))

And good (*kalos* - excellent, commendable) **managers** (*proistemi* - stand before, lead) **of their children** (*teknon*) **and their own** (*idios*) **households** (*oikos*) - Godly leadership begins at home! Or stated another way, household leadership is great training for the ministry, because how a man leads at home reflects his fitness to lead in the church.

They must lead their family life well, disciplining and guiding their children, managing finances, and maintaining a godly, ordered home. The upshot is that poor family leadership raises concerns about a man's readiness for spiritual leadership. The home is where a man's real leadership and character show up. Faithfulness in small, personal settings (the home) proves readiness for larger, public service (the church).

William MacDonald - The apostle now reverts to the subject of **deacons**. He first specifies that they must be **husbands of one wife**. The various interpretations of this expression have been given in connection with verse 2 of this chapter. It is sufficient here to say that, like the bishops, the deacons must be above reproach in their married life. They, too, must rule **their children and their own houses well**. The NT looks on failure to do this as a defect of Christian character. This does not mean that men must be autocratic and imperious, but it does mean that **their children** should be obedient and a testimony to the truth. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

1 Timothy 3:13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

BGT 1 Timothy 3:13 ο γ ρ καλ ς διακον σαντες βαθμ ν αυτο ς καλ ν περιποι ο νται κα πολλ ν παρρησ αν ν π στει τ ν Χριστ ησο .

KJV 1 Timothy 3:13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

NET 1 Timothy 3:13 For those who have served well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

CSB 1 Timothy 3:13 For those who have served well as deacons acquire a good standing for themselves, and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

ESV 1 Timothy 3:13 For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

NIV 1 Timothy 3:13 Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

NLT 1 Timothy 3:13 Those who do well as deacons will be rewarded with respect from others and will have increased confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus.

NRS 1 Timothy 3:13 for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great

boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

RSV 1 Timothy 3:13 for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

YLT 1 Timothy 3:13 for those who did minister well a good step to themselves do acquire, and much boldness in faith that is in Christ Jesus.

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

NJB 1 Timothy 3:13 Those of them who carry out their duties well as deacons will earn a high standing for themselves and an authoritative voice in matters concerning faith in Christ Jesus.

NAB 1 Timothy 3:13 Thus those who serve well as deacons gain good standing and much confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus.

ASV 1 Timothy 3:13 For they that have served well as deacons gain to themselves a good standing, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

MIT 1 Timothy 3:13 For deacons who serve meritoriously achieve good recognition for themselves and much boldness in representing faith in Christ Jesus.

DBY 1 Timothy 3:13 for those who shall have ministered well obtain for themselves a good degree, and much boldness in faith which is in Christ Jesus.

GWN 1 Timothy 3:13 Those deacons who serve well gain an excellent reputation and will have confidence as a result of their faith in Christ Jesus.

BBE 1 Timothy 3:13 For those who have done good work as Deacons get for themselves a good position and become free from fear in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

- **those:** Mt 25:21 Lu 16:10-12 19:17
- **have served,** Mt 20:28 Ro 12:7,8 1Co 16:15 Heb 6:10 1Pe 4:10,11
- **standing:** Ac 21:35 *Gr:
- **great confidence:** Ac 6:5,8,15 7:1-53 Php 1:14 1Th 2:2 2Ti 2:1
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Acts 4:13+ Now as they observed the **confidence** ([parrhesia](#) - boldness - cf Acts 4:31+) of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

DEACONS HIGH HONOR THRU HUMBLE MINISTRY

For ([gar](#)) - Term of explanation.

Those who have served ([diakoneo](#)) well as deacons ([diakonos](#)) obtain ([peripoieomai](#) - achieve, gain) for themselves a high ([kalos](#) - excellent, commendable) standing ([bathmos](#)) - **High standing** does not necessarily mean a higher position of church leadership but speaks to the high respect this person has from others. This verse would serve to motivate service of deacons, emphasizing that they do not serve in vain but will be rewarded. This **high standing** is not about pride or promotion, but about God-honored recognition. Faithful servants may not always be seen by the world, but they are seen by Christ and He honors them.

Hiebert: "The word '**standing**' means 'a step' and so denotes an advanced position. Paul is not speaking of the ecclesiastical advancement of the deacon to the overseership, nor is he speaking of the future reward in glory. The reference is to the excellent community standing and recognition which they require through their having rendered good service."

John MacArthur on a **high standing** - Bathmos (standing) literally refers to an elevated stand. Here it is used metaphorically to speak of those who are a step above everyone else. In our vernacular, we might say they are put on a pedestal. That is not sinful pride, because deacons do not seek it, yet are worthy of it. Those who serve in humility will be exalted by God (James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6), and by the church (1 Thess. 5:12-13). Faithful deacons will be respected and honored by those they serve. It is only by commanding such respect that deacons can be examples, since respected people are the ones emulated. (See [1 Timothy](#)

NET NOTE - The statement **those who have served well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves** is reminiscent of Jesus' teaching (Mt 20:26–28+; Mk 10:43–45+) that the one who wishes to be great must be a servant (διάκονος [diakonos], used here of deacons) of all, just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve (διακονέω [diakoneō], as in 1 Ti 3:10, 13).

And great (pollus - much) **confidence** ([parrhesia](#) - boldness) **in the faith** ([pistis](#)) **that is in Christ Jesus** - NJB = "an authoritative voice in matters concerning faith in Christ Jesus." **Confidence** ([parrhesia](#)) is confidence that speaks up (so to speak) and thus is outspoken confidence. It is a deep confidence that shows itself in bold, candid speech, by one being "ready and willing" to make their convictions known in public without fear of repercussions (cp Acts 4:13, 29, 31, 9:31, 28:31). A faithful deacon's service deepens their trust in God, clarity of conviction, and courage to speak or lead. Ultimately this quality of **confidence** is that which is energized by the indwelling Spirit, emboldening (Spirit filled) believers to openly declare (with great conviction) all that He births within (cp Acts 4:31+).

NET NOTE - In the phrase the faith that is in Christ Jesus, the term **faith** seems to mean "what Christians believe, Christian truth," rather than personal trust in Christ (See "[the faith - pistis](#)"). So the whole phrase could mean that others will come to place greater confidence in them regarding Christian truth; but the word "confidence" is much more likely to refer to their own boldness to act on the truth of their convictions. (**MacArthur** agrees with the NET Note - **The faith** that is in Christ Jesus refers to the sphere of Christian truth).

William MacDonald - The clause **those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing** is well illustrated in the cases of Philip and Stephen. In Acts 6:5, these two men are named among the seven deacons who were appointed. The work to which they were appointed was to handle the distribution of money to the widows in the church. As they were faithful in these duties, it seems that the Spirit of God advanced them to greater spheres of service; for, as the book of Acts continues, we find Philip serving as an evangelist and Stephen as a teacher. Having **served well as deacons**, they were promoted and given **a good standing** in the eyes of the local church. A person who faithfully discharges an assignment, even if it is a small matter, will soon come to be respected and esteemed for reliability and devotion. In addition, Philip and Stephen were granted **great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus**. This doubtless means that they were given great liberty in witnessing for Christ, in teaching, and in prayer. This was certainly true of Stephen in his remarkable address before he was martyred. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Served (ministered, waited on) ([1247](#)) [diakoneo](#) derivation uncertain - cp **diakonis** = in the dust laboring or running through the dust or possibly **diako** = to run on errands; see also study of related noun - [diakonia](#)) means to minister by way of rendering service in any form or to take care of by rendering humble service. The root word diakonos refers to one who serves as a waiter upon tables performing menial duties (see below Matt 8:15; 20:28; 27:55; Mark 1:31; 10:45; 15:41; Luke 4:39; 10:40; 12:37; 17:8; 22:26, 27; John 12:2). Diakoneo conveys the basic idea of personal service, and depending on the context can mean specifically to serve, to wait on, to see after or to care for someone's needs by performing a service (conveying the sense that help is provided to the one being served - see Mt 4:11, 25:44, Mark 1:13).

DIAKONEO - 33V - Neh. 7:41; Matt. 4:11; Matt. 8:15; Matt. 20:28; Matt. 25:44; Matt. 27:55; Mk. 1:13; Mk. 1:31; Mk. 10:45; Mk. 15:41; Lk. 4:39; Lk. 8:3; Lk. 10:40; Lk. 12:37; Lk. 17:8; Lk. 22:26; Lk. 22:27; Jn. 12:2; Jn. 12:26; Acts 6:2; Acts 19:22; Rom. 15:25; 2 Co. 3:3; 2 Co. 8:19; 2 Co. 8:20; 1 Tim. 3:10; 1 Tim. 3:13; 2 Tim. 1:18; Phlm. 1:13; Heb. 6:10; 1 Pet. 1:12; 1 Pet. 4:10; 1 Pet. 4:11

Standing ([898](#)) **bathmos** means a step, threshold. It can depict the rank or standing of someone. The word is used here in a figurative sense and may refer to standing in the sight of God; or it may refer to the reputation and influence of the deacons in the congregation. **Vine** says bathmos "denotes "a step," primarily of a threshold or stair, and is akin to bainō, "to go;" figuratively, "a standing, a stage in a career, position, degree," 1 Tim. 3:13, of faithful deacons." Some scholars have cited its usage in 1 Timothy 3:13 as evidence that a form of hierarchy was present in the primitive church. Only use is 1Ti 3:13 - another [hapax legomenon](#) in 1Ti 3.

Confidence ([3954](#)) ([parrhesia](#)/[parresia](#) from pás = all + rhesis = speech, act of speaking) is literally all speech or speaking all things and thereby conveys the idea of freedom to say all. The basic idea in the word is freedom of speech, when the word flowed freely. It is that attitude of openness that stems from freedom and lack of fear ("shaking" fear - godly, reverential fear is always appropriate) means in essence the freedom to say all. Greeks used **parrhesia** of those with the right to speak openly in the assembly. Speaking with plainness, openness and confidence (Acts 2:29). Speaking publicly or in the open (Jn 7:13, 11:54, 18:20) and then something done in public (Jn 7:26, Col 2:15+)

During President Bill Clinton's impeachment hearings, some people questioned the fairness of judging public officials for their "weekend" behavior. Could they not fulfill the duties of their public office despite their private moral failures?

As Christians we know that the conduct and character—whether public or private—cannot be separated. God sees and knows all, and He's as concerned with our attitudes as He is with our actions. The list of qualifications for overseers and deacons reveals this. It includes both the public and private dimensions of life. That's why the standard for a leader's conduct is set high. It must be evident that Jesus Christ has taken hold of his life from the inside out if he is to be selected for this ministry.

Tomorrow we'll look more in depth at the actual specifications for overseers and deacons, most of which are the same, a few of which are different. Today, however, we'll consider some of the implications for leadership that we see in this passage: examination, responsibility, accountability, and reward.

The first three elements should sober anyone who would aspire to this noble task. The first, examination, means that his life and family should be scrutinized (1Timothy 3:10). The reason for this is not for the purpose of fault-finding but for the purpose of understanding whether someone fulfills the requirements of the position. Secondly, leadership in the church is an enormous responsibility. Leading a family is challenging; leading a church requires that much more wisdom and grace from God (1Timothy 3:5).

Third, leaders are accountable to a scriptural standard of behavior. Not only must they meet these requirements to become a leader, they must also continue to live uprightly. The good news is that the task is well worth it. The fourth point reminds us that the reward will be great for those who lead well in the church (1Timothy 3:13).

If you are a leader in the church, reflect on this passage in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to examine your life and ministry. If you are not in a position of church leadership, spend time praying for your pastor and others who lead your church. Pray especially for their families, as they are included here as a vital part of God's blessing and responsibility for a pastor. Pray, too, that those serving faithfully will experience God's rich rewards.

1 Timothy 3:14 I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long;

BGT 1 Timothy 3:14 Τα τ σοι γρ φω λπ ζων λθε ν πρ σ σ ν τ χει·

KJV 1 Timothy 3:14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly:

NET 1 Timothy 3:14 I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you

CSB 1 Timothy 3:14 I write these things to you, hoping to come to you soon.

ESV 1 Timothy 3:14 I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that,

NIV 1 Timothy 3:14 Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that,

NLT 1 Timothy 3:14 I am writing these things to you now, even though I hope to be with you soon,

NRS 1 Timothy 3:14 I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that,

RSV 1 Timothy 3:14 I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that,

YLT 1 Timothy 3:14 These things I write to thee, hoping to come unto thee soon,

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:14 These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly;

NJB 1 Timothy 3:14 I write this to you in the hope that I may be able to come to you soon;

NAB 1 Timothy 3:14 I am writing you about these matters, although I hope to visit you soon.

ASV 1 Timothy 3:14 These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly;

MIT 1 Timothy 3:14 I am writing these things to you in hopes of coming to you soon.

DBY 1 Timothy 3:14 These things I write to thee, hoping to come to thee more quickly;

GWN 1 Timothy 3:14 I hope to visit you soon. However, I'm writing this to you

BBE 1 Timothy 3:14 I am writing these things to you, though I am hoping to come to you before long;

- **hoping:** 1Ti 4:13 1Co 11:34 16:5-7 2Co 1:15-17 1Th 2:18 Phm 1:22 Heb 13:23 2Jn 1:12 3Jn 1:14
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Romans 1:11+ For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established;

1 Timothy 4:13+ Until I come, **give attention** to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.

1 Corinthians 4:14+ I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children.

James 4:13-15+ (GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN TIMING) Come now, you who say, **"Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city**, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. 15 Instead, you ought to say, **"If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that"**

PAUL'S DESIRE TO BE PRESENT BUT WRITING WHILE WAITING

I am writing ([grapho](#)) - I like the **NIV** rendering (ESV & NRSV renderings also helpful) for it picks up the sense of Paul's purpose for writing which is elaborated on in the next verse. **NIV** has "I am writing you these instructions so that (15) if I am delayed you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household."

THOUGHT - Don't underestimate the power of written encouragement, even when you can't be physically present. Have you recently written any brother or sister (including your missionaries) an encouraging word in the form of an email or text? If the Spirit nudges you, follow through! Even when we cannot always be physically present, we can still strengthen our brethren with words of encouragement.

These things to you (singular = Timothy) - Ask what are **these things**? In context all the prior positive instructions (but this could be an allusion to the entire epistle). Paul is writing this letter to Timothy (**you** is singular in 1Ti 3:14), his trusted disciple, who is pastoring the church in Ephesus (1Ti 1:3+). So far, in chapters 1–3, the **things** Paul has covered include correct doctrine (ch. 1), instructions for worship and public roles (ch. 2) and qualifications for elders and deacons (ch. 3). In 1Ti 3:14–15, Paul explains why he's writing, stating that even though he hopes to visit soon, he is giving written instructions in case his arrival is delayed. This verse marks a transition point from the generally positive specific leadership instructions to the generally negative warnings in the last three chapters.

Hoping ([elpizo](#) - expectantly) **to come** ([erchomai](#)) **to you** (singular - Timothy) **before long** (tachion = "more quickly," or "sooner" - idea might be "sooner than I at one time thought") - While Paul clearly hoped to come to Ephesus, he was a man who relied on the Lord's timing (see [James above](#)). Paul's pastoral heart longs to be present with Timothy, which reminds of us the words in his final letter "longing to see you (TIMOTHY), even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy." (2Ti 1:4+) Paul knows that while written words are powerful, they are not a substitute for his personal presence. We can also sense a note of urgency in his words which reflects the importance of the issues Timothy is dealing with in Ephesus. Paul's words and desire reflect the heart of a true shepherd, one who is not just giving orders but who seeks to walk alongside the sheep.

[A T Robertson](#) - Paul's hopes were not to be realized, but he did not know that.

Hoping (1679) [elpizo](#) ([elpis](#) = hope, absolute assurance of future good) means to look forward with confidence to that which is good and beneficial. To express desire for some good with the expectation of obtaining it. [Elpizo](#) means a firm conviction based on the Jesus' resurrection, that we too can have confidence as we face the future (Ro 8:24, 25, 1Co 15:18). We can have confident expectation (He 11:1).

ILLUSTRATION - Vince Lombardi, the Hall of Fame coach of the Green Bay Packers football team, was notorious for his emphasis on fundamentals. His teams won championships because they could block, tackle, and execute better than anyone else. It is said that once, frustrated by his team's poor performance, he held up a football and said, "Gentlemen, this is a football!" Like Coach Lombardi, the apostle Paul knew well the importance of going back to the fundamentals. He penned this letter to Timothy because the church at Ephesus was starting to drift away from the basic truths of the Christian faith. Like the Ephesians, we need regularly to be reminded of the foundational truths of our faith. The church today sponsors a bewildering variety of highly specialized ministries,

everything from race track evangelism to bowling leagues for blind bowlers. People can get lost in the superficial. Further, the Bible contains such an inexhaustible treasure of knowledge that some seem to become lost in its depths. It is all too easy for churches and believers to get so involved with peripheral matters or theological minutiae that they lose sight of the primary matters. Paul writes this passage as a reminder that the church must give its attention to the essential truths. ([John MacArthur](#))

1 Timothy 3:14-15 I am writing you these instructions so that... you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household. - Chuck Swindoll once described a neighborhood kids' club that had a humorous, but wise, list of rules for its members. The rules were beautiful in their simplicity: ""Nobody act big. Nobody act small. Everybody act medium."" That's a list of rules anyone can keep! (Today in the Word)

1 Timothy 3:14-16 Character Ethic

God has chosen to make known ... the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
- Colossians 1:27

Steven Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, researched over 200 years of "success" literature to find common principles for personal success and fulfillment. What he immediately noticed was the "character ethic," the principle that he says emphasizes who we are matters most in what we do.

Personal change does not happen solely as the result of the integration of good habits into one's life. While important, habits cannot make us into the person we want to be. Today's passage gives us the real "secret" for godliness.

Godly conduct is rooted completely in our identity in Christ. This passage reveals the primary purpose for Paul's letter to Timothy, that "you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household" (1Ti 3:15). There is an imperative for personal holiness in the church.

We are called to godliness because we belong to the family, or household, of God. We are the church of the living God, which emphasizes the personal and active presence of God in our lives. We don't serve mute idols. We don't serve an impersonal force. We serve a God who speaks to us and who listens to us. And we are a people who represent the truth. We represent steadfast, eternal realities that do not shift with cultural tides. Our calling is to represent the God we serve to a world that prefers not to acknowledge Him.

We are pressured on every side to forsake this high calling, and we will fail in it if we do not understand "the mystery of godliness." We cannot depend upon ourselves, our habits, our energies, and our abilities to get the job done. The secret of the Christian life is about our union with Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit within us. The mystery entails what Christ has done and who He is (v. 16). And that also is what matters most. By allowing Him to live His life through us, we have our ultimate "hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

If we want to be completely united with Christ, we need to confess and repent from deliberate sin. When we persist in deliberate sin, the Bible says that we "grieve the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. 4:30). Thankfully, our confession and repentance will be met with forgiveness (1 John 1:9). As the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, He also guides us to the truth of forgiveness through the work of Jesus. As He works in our lives, we can expect nothing less than change as dramatic as resurrection (cf. Rom. 8:11).

1 Timothy 3:14-16

You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. - Matthew 16:16

TODAY IN THE WORD For hundreds of years, various denominations have used manuals of Christian instruction known as catechisms to instruct believers in the basic truths of the faith, usually in preparation for baptism. The term 'catechism' is taken from a Greek word that means 'to teach' or 'to instruct,' and many of the catechisms achieved that goal in admirable ways.

The method often included a question-and-answer format that required the student to answer the instructor's question concerning a particular spiritual truth or article of Christian faith. The catechetical method also involved much memory work, especially before the invention of printing when written texts were scarce. The genius of the church's great catechisms, such as the Westminster Larger Catechism of 1647, was the way in which they captured the Bible's teaching in a concise and memorable way.

The writers of the catechisms had a good model for this method. Today's reading shows that the early church also used concise summaries of truth to train and instruct believers. Some believe this confession Paul recorded was part of an early hymn, composed to capsule the basics of Christ's life and ministry: His incarnation, resurrection (His vindication 'by the Spirit'), and ascension.

Summaries like this are another proof of how much theology mattered to Paul and the first-century saints to whom he ministered. Years earlier, he had warned the elders from Ephesus that after his departure, the church would be attacked by 'savage wolves' who

would tear at the body of Christ (Acts 20:29).

Sadder still, 'Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth' (v. 30). Paul lived to see it happen in the churches he founded (see yesterday's study), and it's still happening today.

The good news is that knowing the truth is still the best defense against heresy. The not-so-good news is that as a whole, modern-day Christians aren't big on the idea of the systematic learning of truth. We need to take a cue from our ancestors. When even the shepherd boys were armed with theological truth through catechism, the wolves had a harder time getting to the flock.

1 Timothy 3:14-4:10 A Good Church

By Herbert Vander Lugt

A television documentary showed several types of worship services in American churches. I liked some of what I saw but was troubled by an emphasis on being entertained instead of being led in worship. The focus of many services was on having fun rather than on worshipping the Lord.

This is more than a matter of differing styles. I've been enriched in highly liturgical as well as in less formal services. I have also been edified in gatherings marked by spontaneity and freedom. But in all of these there was a genuine sense of worship.

The one indispensable element of a good church service is the celebration of God's great redeeming acts in the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. These saving events were the theme of an early church hymn quoted in 1 Timothy 3:16, and they were to be central in the message Paul urged Timothy to proclaim (4:6-10).

We ought to praise God joyfully for all of His blessings, both spiritual and temporal. But we must also be good listeners to the instruction and challenges of God's Word. This combination of the inflow of God's Word and the outflow of worship is what makes for a good church service. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

The quiet hush of reverent hearts
Prepares us for God's Word,
And brings a stillness to our lives
That lets His voice be heard.
—DJD

In some churches there is more commotion and emotion than devotion.

1 Timothy 3:15 but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.

BGT 1 Timothy 3:15 ὁ βραδύων, να εἰς πς δε νοκ θεο ναστρ φεσθαι, τις στυ κκλησ α θεο ζντος, στος κα δραωματς ληθεας.

KJV 1 Timothy 3:15 But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

NET 1 Timothy 3:15 in case I am delayed, to let you know how people ought to conduct themselves in the household of God, because it is the church of the living God, the support and bulwark of the truth.

CSB 1 Timothy 3:15 But if I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to act in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

ESV 1 Timothy 3:15 if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

NIV 1 Timothy 3:15 if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

NLT 1 Timothy 3:15 so that if I am delayed, you will know how people must conduct themselves in the household of God. This is the church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of the truth.

NRS 1 Timothy 3:15 if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which

is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.

RSV 1 Timothy 3:15 if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.

YLT 1 Timothy 3:15 and if I delay, that thou mayest know how it behoveth thee to conduct thyself in the house of God, which is an assembly of the living God -- a pillar and foundation of the truth,

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

NJB 1 Timothy 3:15 but in case I should be delayed, I want you to know how people ought to behave in God's household -- that is, in the Church of the living God, pillar and support of the truth.

NAB 1 Timothy 3:15 But if I should be delayed, you should know how to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth.

ASV 1 Timothy 3:15 but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

MIT 1 Timothy 3:15 If there is a delay, you will know how one must function in God's house, the church of the living God, the pillar and mainstay of truth.

DBY 1 Timothy 3:15 but if I delay, in order that thou mayest know how one ought to conduct oneself in God's house, which is the assembly of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

GWN 1 Timothy 3:15 in case I'm delayed. I want you to know how people who are members of God's family must live. God's family is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

BBE 1 Timothy 3:15 But if I am long in coming, this will make clear to you what behaviour is right for men in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of what is true.

- **know:** 1Ti 3:2 De 31:23 1Ki 2:2,4 1Ch 22:13 28:9-21 Ac 1:2
- **the house:** Eph 2:21,22 2Ti 2:20 Heb 3:2-6 1Pe 2:5
- **the church:** 1Ti 3:5
- **the living:** 1Ti 4:10 6:16 De 5:26 Jos 3:10 1Sa 17:26,36 2Ki 19:4 Ps 42:2 84:2 Jer 10:10 23:36 Da 6:26 Ho 1:10 Mt 16:16 Joh 6:69 Ac 14:15 Ro 9:26 2Co 3:3 6:16 1Th 1:9 Heb 3:12 9:14 12:22 Rev 7:2
- **the pillar:** Jer 1:18 Mt 16:18,19 18:18 Ro 3:2 Ga 2:9
- **the truth:** 1Ti 3:16 Joh 1:17 14:6 18:37 2Co 6:7 Ga 3:1 Eph 4:21 Col 1:5
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Ephesians 2:19-22+ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and **are of God's household**, 20 having **been built on the foundation** of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

Galatians 6:10+ So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of **the household of the faith**.

Hebrews 3:6+ but **Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are** if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

1 Peter 4:17+ For it is time for judgment to begin with the **household of God**; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

2 Corinthians 6:16-18+ (THE LIVING GOD AMONG HIS CHILDREN) Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 17 "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. 18 "And **I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,**" Says the Lord Almighty.

1 Timothy 6:20+ O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly and empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called "knowledge"—

2 Timothy 1:13-14+ **Retain** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 14 **Guard**, ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.

HOW TO BEHAVE IN GOD'S HOUSEHOLD

But in case I am delayed - As explained in the comments above, Paul was very sensitive to the Lord's timing of events in his life and knew that delay in visiting Timothy in Ephesus was a possibility. So in case he is delayed visiting, Timothy needs to know how to guide the church in its conduct.

Bob Utley points out that "**in case I am delayed**" "is a THIRD CLASS CONDITIONAL SENTENCE, which means potential action." In other words, he might be delayed. Timothy needs to be "psychologically" prepared for such an eventuality.

I write ([grapho](#)) so that ([hina](#) = term of purpose/result) **you will know** ([eido](#) - beyond a shadow of a doubt = describes know-how, the possession of knowledge or skill necessary to accomplish a desired goal) **how one ought** ([dei](#) - not a suggestion but an obligation in present tense - continually) **to conduct** ([anastrepho](#) - behave) **himself** - Paul is concerned about practical conduct — how believers live together as God's people in God's household.

In the household ([oikos](#)) **of God** ([theos](#)) - **Of God** emphasizes that the church belongs to God (He purchased it with His blood - Acts 20:28+) and thus is a divine, not human institution! This is the family of God. Clearly this is the **church** as he explains in the next clause. But it is also a beautiful metaphor of the body ([another beautiful metaphor](#)) of Christ, as it pictures God as Father, Jesus as Son, believers as children and brethren (Mt 12:50+, Ro 8:29+, Heb 2:11+) of Jesus (see [Family of God](#)) and live under the watchcare of our Heavenly Father.

Which is the church ([ekklesia/ecclesia](#) - assembly) **of the living** ([zao](#) - present tense) **God** ([theos](#) - [note](#)), **the pillar** ([stulos](#)) **and support of the truth** ([aletheia](#)) - So not only is the Church God's family, Paul says it also the guardian of the truth! **The Church of the living God** is called the **pillar** and ground of the truth. The Church is viewed as the house of God, which God has constructed to support and to conserve this truth. The architectural metaphor is pronounced, although here *stulos* refers more to the support and foundation provided by the columns than the columns per se. **Support** is **hedraïoma** (from [hedraios](#) = steadfast) only used here ([hapax legomenon](#) - no uses in Lxx) and describes a foundation, mainstay, that which provides a firm base, in this case for **the truth** ([aletheia](#)) about the Christian faith. This foundational **truth** ([aletheia](#)) is given in 1Ti 3:16 and the church is the visible upholder of God's revealed truth in midst of a crooked and perverse generation (Php 2:15+) This statement by Paul conveys not just the identity of the church but it's responsibility to hold it fast and lift high the foundational truth (1Ti 3:16) to a world filled with sin, error and lies.

It is notable that Ephesus was a city filled with idols (dead gods, no gods) so the reminder that the church was not a dead institution but an assembly of souls guided by the living God presented a powerful contrast (and reminder to the saints in Ephesus that they were on the "winning team.")

Ray Stedman - The Apostle Paul uses two descriptive phrases here to tell us what that was. He calls the church, 'the house of God,' which suggests intimacy and warmth, a family gathered; and then he calls it, 'the church of the living God,' which suggests excitement and power. That was what the church was, and is; that is the nature of the church.

Bob Utley on *aletheia* - The term truth (*alētheia*) is very common in Paul's writings (and John's). It usually refers to gospel content (cf. Rom. 1:18,25; 2:2,8; 3:7; 15:8; 1 Cor. 13:6; 2 Cor. 4:2; 6:7; 7:14; 13:8; Gal. 2:5,14; 5:7; Eph. 1:13; 4:21; 5:9; Phil. 1:18; Col. 1:5,6; 2 Thess. 2:10,12,13; 1 Tim. 3:15; 4:3; 6:5; 2 Tim. 2:15,18,25; 3:7,8; 4:4; Titus 1:1,14). See ["TRUTH" IN PAUL'S WRITINGS](#)

*The church has the stewardship of Scripture,
the duty to guard it as the most precious possession on earth*

John MacArthur on the pillar and support of the truth - The imagery of these terms for the church would not have been lost on the Ephesians. The impressive temple of [the goddess Diana \(Artemis\)](#), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was located in the city. **William Barclay** gives the following description of it: "*One of its features was its pillars. It contained one hundred and twenty-seven pillars, every one of them the gift of a king. All were made of marble, and some were studded with jewels and overlaid with gold*" (See [1 Timothy 3 Commentary](#)). Each **pillar** acted as a tribute to the king who donated it. The honorary significance of the **pillars**, however, was secondary to their function of holding up the immense structure of the roof. [Hedraïōma](#) (support) appears only here in the New Testament and refers to the foundation on which a structure rests. Thus in Paul's metaphor the church is the **foundation and pillar** that holds up the **truth**. As the foundation and pillars of the Temple of Diana were a testimony to the error of

pagan false religion, so the church is to be a testimony to God's truth. That is its mission in the world—its reason for existing here. For failing to do that, Israel has been temporarily set aside. **The truth** is the divine revelation, including the truth of the gospel, the content of the Christian faith. It is the solemn responsibility of every church to solidly, immovably, unshakably uphold the truth of God's Word. The church does not invent the truth, and alters it only at the cost of judgment (See [1 Timothy Commentary](#))

See **John MacArthur's** sermon [The Heart of the Church's Mission](#) for eight practical things individual members of the church can do individually to assure that we fulfill our role as **the pillar and support of the truth**. (Summary of these 8 things: hear it, memorize it, meditate on it, study it, obey it, defend it, live it, proclaim it).

William MacDonald - Paul recognized the possibility of being **delayed**, or even of his not getting to Ephesus at all. Actually, we do not know whether he ever was able to rejoin Timothy in Ephesus. And so if he tarried long, he wanted Timothy **to know how** believers **ought to conduct** themselves **in the house of God**. In the preceding verses, Paul has been describing how bishops, deacons, and their wives ought to behave. Now he explains how Christians in general should behave in **the house of God**. **The house of God** is here defined as **the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth**. In the OT, God dwelt in the tabernacle and temple, but in the NT, He dwells in **the church**. It is spoken of as **the church of the living God**, and this contrasts it to a temple in which there are lifeless idols. **The church** is spoken of as **the pillar and ground of the truth**. A pillar was not only used to support a structure, but oftentimes a pillar was set up in a public marketplace and notices were posted on it. It was thus a proclaimer. The church is the unit on earth which God has chosen to proclaim and display His **truth**. It is also the **ground of the truth**. Here **ground** carries the thought of foundation or supporting structure. This pictures the church as that which is entrusted with the defense and support of the truth of God. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

LIVING GOD - 28X/28V - Deut. 5:26; Jos. 3:10 (By this you shall know that **the living God** is among you, and that He will assuredly dispossess from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Jebusite"); 1 Sam. 17:26 (David was incensed that Goliath should "taunt the armies of **the living God**"); 1 Sam. 17:36; 2 Ki. 19:4; 2 Ki. 19:16; Ps. 42:2 ("My soul thirsts for God, for **the living God**; when shall I come and appear before God?"); Ps. 84:2 (My soul longed and even yearned for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh sing for joy to **the living God**"); Isa. 37:4; Isa. 37:17; Jer. 10:10 ("The Lord is the true God; He is **the living God** and the everlasting King"); Jer. 23:36; Dan. 6:20; Dan. 6:26; Hos. 1:10; Mt. 16:16; Mt. 26:63; Acts 14:15; Ro 9:26; 2 Co. 3:3; 2 Co. 6:16; 1Ti 3:15; 1Ti 4:10; Heb. 3:12; Heb. 9:14; Heb. 10:31; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 7:2

Conduct (390) [anastrepho](#) from **aná** = again, back + **strepho** = turn) literally means to turn down or back, to wheel about and hence, to move about in a place or to sojourn. Another meaning of **anastrepho** is to turn back or to return to a place (Acts 5:22, 15:16-return here alludes to Second Coming). **Anastrepho** conveys the idea of "turning" back and forth in a place and so to spend time there (Mt 17:22). In secular Greek anastrophe meant turning back and forth in a place or dawdling around and lingering. Finally, the figurative meaning of **anastrepho** describes one's **whole** manner of life, behavior, conduct or deportment, the general ordering of one's conduct in relation to others.

Wuest writes that the **verb** ANASTREPHO "In classical Greek, the verb meant among other things "to turn one's self about, to turn back, round, or about, to dwell in a place," the noun, "a turning back or about, occupation in a thing, a mode of life, behaviour." One can see that the ideas of "a mode of life" and "one's behaviour" are derived from the fact of one's activity. (Anastrepho means) to conduct or behave one's self, to walk," the latter meaning not referring here to the physical act of walking but to the act of determining our course of conduct and the carrying out of that determined course of action. The noun (anastrophe) means "one's walk, manner of life, conduct." In the biblical use of the word, the moral and spiritual aspect of one's manner of life is in view. ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmann Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

ANASTREPHO - 6X - **conduct(3), conducted(1), live(1), lived(1), return(1), returned(1), treated(1)**. Acts 5:22; Acts 15:16; 2 Co. 1:12; Eph. 2:3; 1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 10:33; Heb. 13:18; 1 Pet. 1:17; 2 Pet. 2:18

Church (1577) [ekklesia/ecclesia](#) from **ek** = out + **klesis** = a calling, verb = **kaleo** = to call) literally means called out (but see note by Louw-Nida below) and as commonly used in the Greco-Roman vernacular referred to citizens who were *called out* from their homes to be publicly assembled or gathered to discuss or carry out affairs of state. **Wuest** writes that "The word **assembly** is a good one-word translation of **ekklesia**."

John Walvoord has a helpful summary of **ekklesia/ecclesia** - This word translated church or assembly is found in at least four important meanings in the New Testament. It is used **(1)** to mean an assembly of people. In this sense it has no special theological meaning. It can refer to Israel as a gathered people in the wilderness (Acts 7:38) or a regular assembly of citizens (Acts 19:39) or a group of people gathered for religious worship (Heb. 2:12). **(2)** The same word is used for an assembly of Christians in a local church (Acts

8:1, 8:3; 11:22, 26) and in the plural for a group of such churches (1Cor. 16:19; Gal. 1:2). Each assembly or church has a local gathering composed of professed Christians. That all in the assembly are not necessarily true believers is clear from the messages to the seven churches of Asia (Rev 2:1-29; Rev 3:1-22). (3) **Ecclesia** is also used of the total of professing Christians without reference to locality and is practically parallel in this sense to Christendom (Acts 12:1; Ro 16:16; 1Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Rev. 2:1-29, Rev 3:1-22; etc.). The same word is used (4) of the body of Christ, composed of those baptized by the Holy Spirit into the church (1Cor. 12:13). **Ecclesia** used in this connection becomes a technical word referring to the saints of this age. (Borrow [The Millennial Kingdom](#) on page 224)

Pillar (4769) [stulos](#) describes a literal column which serves as a support of a structure. Stulos is a common term in classical Greek for many kinds of pillars, columns, and other architectural supports. As a figure of speech it describes any firm support or persons of authority and influence in the church, those who bear responsibility (the elders in Jerusalem). **Robertson** on Rev 3:12 = "Metaphorical and personal use with a double significance of being firmly fixed and giving stability to the building." 1Ti 3:15 uses stulos describes "the church of the living God, the **pillar** and support of the truth." **Vine** says in 1Ti 3:15 it is used "in a collective capacity, to maintain the doctrines of the faith by teaching and practice." All 4 NT uses are metaphorical. It can describe something in shape which resembles a pillar (like a column of fire (Ex 13:21, 14:24, Rev 10:1) **Vine** adds "in Rev. 10:1, seen as flames rising like columns of fire indicative of holiness and consuming power, and thus reflecting the glory of Christ as depicted in Rev. 1:15; cp. Ezek. 1:7.) In Gal 3:2 stulos describes one recognized for spiritual leadership.

STULOS - 4V - Gal. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:15; Rev. 3:12; Rev. 10:1

QUESTION - [What does it mean to be a part of the family of God? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

ANSWER - The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ and the Father are One (John 1:1-4), and that He is also the only begotten Son of God (Hebrews 1:1-4). This familial term indicates God regards Jesus as a family member. Born-again believers are told that we, too, are members of this family (Romans 9:8; 1 John 3:1-2). How do we become a part of this family of God? When we hear the gospel, confess our sins, and place our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, we are at that moment born into God's kingdom as His children and become heirs with Him for eternity (Romans 8:14-17).

While Jesus Christ is referred to as the only begotten Son of God, believers are referred to as children born into God's family who need to grow and mature in our faith (Ephesians 4:11-16), and as sons and heirs adopted into His family (Galatians 4:4-7). God's infinite grace and mercy are revealed in Ephesians 1:5-6, which says He redeems sinners, whom He has "adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves."

*As children of God,
what do we inherit?*

As children of God, what do we inherit? Nothing less than the kingdom of God (Matthew 25:34; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; Hebrews 12:28)! Ephesians 1:3 tells us that believers are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. These spiritual blessings are infinite, eternal, and reside in Christ, and by God's grace we are given these blessings as His children. As earthly children we eventually inherit what our parents leave behind for us after their death. But in God's case believers are already reaping the rewards of our inheritance by having peace with Him through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross. Other rewards of our inheritance include the gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at the moment we believe in Christ (Ephesians 1:13-14), which empowers us to live for Him in the present, and the knowledge that our salvation is secure for eternity (Hebrews 7:24-25).

Being a part of the family of God is the greatest blessing bestowed upon believers and one that should drive us to our knees in humble adoration. We can never do anything to deserve it for it is His gift of love, mercy, and grace to us, yet, we are called to become sons and daughters of the Living God (Romans 9:25-26). May we all respond in faith to His invitation!

Related Resources:

- [Are we all God's children, or only Christians? GOTQUESTIONS](#)
- [Who are the people of God? GOTQUESTIONS](#)

Spurgeon - [The church—conservative and aggressive](#) 1 Timothy 3:15

I remember a somewhat ludicrous incident which occurred to a church in which there were great quarrellings and bickerings. The minister and the deacons, and the people, were all at arm's length, and daggers drawn. It was determined at last that the matter should come to a settlement, and it was by mutual consent given up to the judgment of a good Christian farmer, who lived in the

neighbourhood. He was to hear the case, and write an answer to be read at the next church meeting. Our friend, the farmer, sat down to write his letter; at the same time he had a letter from a steward or tenant asking advice about his farm, and by a mistake, or rather by a blessed providence as God would have it, he put the wrong letters into the envelopes, so that the letter which was intended for the church went to the steward, and that which was intended for the steward went to the church. At the church meeting, when they were all assembled, this letter was read to the church; it ran thus: 'Dear friend, mind you see to the hedges well. Keep them up as best you can, and take special care of the old black bull.' Now that was a most extraordinary letter to write to a church. It had been sent by mistake, but the minister, thinking it was a bona fide piece of advice, said he could not comprehend it. Some brother got up and said it was plain enough; it was meant that they must be very watchful as to whom they should receive into the church. They must keep their hedges up and see there were no gaps. 'And,' said he, 'by 'the old black bull' I have no doubt he means that spirit of Satan that would get in and trouble and divide us.' So understanding it in that sense they made up their difference, repaired their hedges, and were careful of 'the old black bull.' Every church must do the same.

1 Timothy 3:15 That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God. - - J R Miller

It is important that those who occupy official positions in the Church shall be worthy, and that they fittingly "behave themselves in the house of God." The minister should be without reproach. His name should be like ointment poured forth. He should be "temperate," using the word in its broader sense; he should have his temper, his speech, his feelings, his appetites, under complete mastery. He should be soberminded - not long-faced, but serious, reverent. He should be apt to teach; gentle, not contentious. He should be well spoken of among those who are outside.

Other church officers are under scarcely less holy sanctions. Deacons must be grave, not double-tongued, not greedy for money, holding faith in a pure conscience, and living a blameless life. Holiness becometh God's house, and all who are active in its affairs should be reverent, sincere, and worthy examples to all who look to them as their leaders. Unfit behavior in official church members hurts Christ's cause.

A Home For God

God was manifested in the flesh. — 1 Timothy 3:16

Today's Scripture : John 1:1-14

When King Solomon wanted to construct a temple for the Lord, he was overwhelmed by the knowledge that he could never make one that would be fully adequate. In awe he exclaimed, "Who is able to build Him a temple, since heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him?" (2 Chr. 2:6).

The answer to the king's question is found in God Himself. Centuries after Solomon built a temple for the Lord, God prepared an earthly home for Himself through the miracle of Jesus' birth (Heb. 10:5).

I thought of this miracle when my family and I visited a museum. On display was an unforgettable exhibit tracing the development of a human being through its various stages. The final part of the display, showing several full-term babies, captured the interest of most of the spectators.

It was the earliest stage, however, that left the most profound impression on me. I marveled that the God of heaven would condescend to dwell among us and begin His earthly existence as a tiny cell in the womb of a virgin. My heart overflowed with praise as I realized how much He loves us, and how He humbled Himself to save us.

Praise God that He came to us in Jesus, His Son! By: Henry G. Bosch (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Heaven's arches rang when the angels sang,
Proclaiming Thy royal degree;
But of lowly birth didst Thou come to earth
And in greatest humility.
—Elliott

God made His home with us that we might make our home with God.

A Good Church

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad. — Psalm 126:3

Today's Scripture : 1 Timothy 3:14-4:10

A television documentary showed several types of worship services in American churches. I liked some of what I saw but was troubled by an emphasis on being entertained instead of being led in worship. The focus of many services was on having fun rather than on worshipping the Lord.

This is more than a matter of differing styles. I've been enriched in highly liturgical as well as in less formal services. I have also been edified in gatherings marked by spontaneity and freedom. But in all of these there was a genuine sense of worship.

The one indispensable element of a good church service is the celebration of God's great redeeming acts in the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. These saving events were the theme of an early church hymn quoted in 1 Timothy 3:16, and they were to be central in the message Paul urged Timothy to proclaim (4:6-10).

We ought to praise God joyfully for all of His blessings, both spiritual and temporal. But we must also be good listeners to the instruction and challenges of God's Word. This combination of the inflow of God's Word and the outflow of worship is what makes for a good church service. By: Herbert Vander Lugt (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

The quiet hush of reverent hearts
Prepares us for God's Word,
And brings a stillness to our lives
That lets His voice be heard.
—DJD

In some churches there is more commotion and emotion than devotion.

Church By Pastor J. David Hoke

SCRIPTURE: 1 Timothy 3:15

INTRODUCTION: Has anyone asked you, "What's church really all about anyway?" Paul gives two wonderful descriptions that capture the meaning and purpose of the Church.

1 Household of God. One of the most powerful images is that of the church as a family; this idea focuses on the essential ingredient of relationships. In families we are related to one another by blood. Do you see yourself as related to these people sitting all around you? Do you treat them as such?

2 Pillar of Truth. The church is a place where truth can be discovered and known. The church provides us with an environment where we can be challenged to live our lives on the basis of the truth we have come to know.

CONCLUSION: The church is composed of people redeemed by the Son of God, brought together by the will of God to live together as the family of God, in order to do the work of God in the power of the Spirit of God, all for the glory of God.

A W Tozer - MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH 1 Timothy 3:15 [Mornings with Tozer: Daily Devotional Readings - Page 28](#)

Not all of the pooled efforts of any church can make a Christian out of a lost man!

The Christian life begins with the individual; a soul has a saving encounter with God, and the new life is born.

All else being equal, every individual Christian will find in the communion of a local church the most perfect atmosphere for the fullest development of his spiritual life. There he will also find the best arena for the largest exercise of those gifts and powers with which God may have endowed him.

Unfortunately, the word "church" has taken on meanings which it did not originally have. The meaning of the word for the true Christian was fixed by our Lord and His apostles, and no man and no angel has authority to change it!

The universal Church is the Body of Christ, the Bride of the Lamb, the habitation of God through the Spirit, the pillar and the ground of the Truth.

Without doubt the most important body on earth is the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood!

[Spurgeon - What the church should be](#) 1 Timothy 3:15

How holy should all members of Christian churches be! 'Holiness becometh thine house.' An unholy member of a church! What shall I say? Let that black stone be wet with tears of penitence this day, and then may it be washed in the blood of Jesus. O member of the church, is your conduct inconsistent with your profession? Judge yourself, be zealous and repent. All of us may well humble ourselves in the sight of God and ask him to cleanse us that we may be fit for him to dwell in. How obedient also should we be, for if we are a part of the house of God, let it be our joy to submit ourselves to the Master. When we were children in the home of a loving father, his rule was not irksome to us, and with such a Father as our God we own that 'his commandments are not grievous'. Let us obey carefully and joyfully, each one of us. How struck with awe ought every church-member to be to think that he is built into God's house. Truly, as I enter among the people of God, I feel bound to cry with Jacob, 'How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God.' Take not lightly upon yourselves a profession of Christianity, and when you have been baptized into the name of Christ and are united with his church, 'see then that ye walk circumspectly' and 'adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things'. At the same time, how full of love ought we to be, for 'God is love'. A house is no home if love is absent, and a church is unchurchly if there is division among the brethren. Is it not written, 'the Father himself loveth you'; 'love one another'; 'God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him'?

1 Timothy 3:15 - Octavius Winslow

God has been graciously pleased to appoint His church the great conservator of His truth, and His truth the especial medium of sanctification to His church; there is a close and beautiful relation between the two. The church may be compared to the golden lamp which contains the sacred oil, which, in its turn, feeds the flame of its light and holiness. The church is to guard with a jealous and vigilant eye the purity of the truth, while the truth is to beautify and sanctify the ark which preserves it. Thus there is a close relation, and a reciprocal influence, between the church of Christ and the truth of God.

Every individual believer in Jesus is himself a subject, and therefore a witness, of the truth; he has been quickened, called, renewed, and partially sanctified through the instrumentality of God's revealed truth: "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." "For the truth's sake which dwells in us." "You are my witnesses, says the Lord." Here is unfolded one of the most solemn and affecting truths touching the character and individual responsibility of a child of God. He is a subject of truth, he is a repository of the truth, and he is a witness for the truth; yes, he is the only living witness to the truth which God has on earth. The world he lives in is a dark, polluted, God-blaspheming, Christ-denying, truth-despising world. The saints, who have been called out of it according to His eternal purpose and love, and by His sovereign, distinguishing, and free grace, are the only lights and the only salt in the midst of this moral darkness and corruption. Here and there a light glimmers, irradiating the gloomy sphere in which it moves; here and there a spot of verdure appears, relieving the arid and barren desolation by which it is surrounded. These are the saints of the Most High, the witnesses of the Divine character, the omnipotent power, and the holy tendency, of God's blessed truth. Let the saints of God, then, solemnly weigh this affecting fact, that though the written word and the accompanying Spirit are God's witnesses in the world, yet they are the only living exemplification of the power of the truth, and, as such, are earnestly exhorted to be "blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." Let them be careful to maintain good works, and so walk in all the holiness of the truth they profess; let them see that by no carelessness of deportment, by no want of integrity, by no worldly conformity, yes, by no inconsistency whatever, they bring a slur upon the holy doctrines they avowedly maintain and love; but let them show that, with the truth in their judgments, they possess grace in the heart, and unspotted holiness in the life.

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QUESTION - [What does it mean that the church is the pillar and foundation of the truth?](#) GOTQUESTIONS.ORG

ANSWER - Catholic apologists are fond of citing 1 Timothy 3:15 as evidence that "the church"—specifically, the Catholic Church—is the true, infallible earthly source of spiritual knowledge. In particular, they claim this verse not only supports the inerrancy of Catholic teachings but that it also contradicts the doctrine of [sola scriptura](#). Read completely out of context, the verse could be taken that way:

"If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15).

But, as with any Bible text, what something means out of context is irrelevant. Looking at the verse in light of its scriptural setting not only defeats this particular claim, it strongly contradicts [other aspects of Catholicism](#).

First of all, it would be one thing to use 1 Timothy 3:15 to generically claim "the church" as a source of authority or truth on earth. Catholic apologists, however, frequently point to this passage and extract concepts such as an inerrant magisterium, an infallible Pope, and so forth. The scope of the verse in no way supports that kind of overreach. This is particularly true in light of what Paul and the rest of the New Testament says about the church and truth.

1 Timothy 3:15 is the end of Paul's description of proper conduct for church members, including leaders. He nowhere mentions a unique power of these leaders to make doctrinal or interpretive decisions. Nor does he declare members of the body incapable of making those interpretations themselves. In fact, in verse 14 Paul specifically says that his *written words* are what define proper conduct. This actually suggests the concept of *sola scriptura*; Paul is assigning authority to the written Word. He does not say, "The church will tell you what this letter means."

At the start of the epistle, Paul explicitly tells Timothy to oppose those who teach unsound doctrine (1 Timothy 1:3–7, 18–19). He does not tell Timothy to oppose those who disagree with "the church" or with church leaders. This echoes other statements of Paul that indicate that the content of a belief is what matters, not the person who proclaims it (2 Corinthians 11:14; Galatians 1:6–8). Paul refers to those proclaiming the gospel as stewards of the truth, not the source of it (1 Corinthians 4:1; 9:17). Elsewhere, Paul explicitly says there is only one "true" foundation for our faith, which is Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11), so what he says in 1 Timothy 3:15 must be taken in that context.

It's also short-sighted to use 1 Timothy 3:15 to support Catholicism, given the words that come directly before and after it. In 1 Timothy 3:1–13, Paul says that church leaders ought to be "the husband of one wife" and to have demonstrated control over their household and children. Yet Catholicism demands that priests be unmarried and celibate, a prohibition that Paul condemns a few verses later (1 Timothy 4:1–3). That's hardly a ringing endorsement of Catholic doctrine.

How, then, should 1 Timothy 3:15 be interpreted? Judging by the context of 1 Timothy, as well as the rest of Scripture, certainly not that "the church" has an infallible grasp of truth. In this case, Paul seems to be saying that the *ekklesia*—the body of believers, "the church"—is the structure that holds up and holds forth the gospel to the world. For that reason, the conduct of the body and its selection of leaders are critically important.

This interpretation is strongly supported by Paul's use of two Greek words, *stulos* and *hedraioma*, translated as "pillar" and "foundation." *Stulos* means "pillar, column, prop, or support" and is found in the New Testament only here, in Revelation 3:12, and in Revelation 10:1. *Hedraioma* means "prop or support" and is found only in this verse. Both words come from Greek root words that imply something that stiffens, stabilizes, steadies, or holds. These are completely different words than what are used for other occurrences of "foundation" in English Bibles. For instance, Paul's reference to Christ as our "foundation" in 1 Corinthians 3:11 uses the word *themelios*, which means "foundation of a building" or "initial and founding principles of an idea."

So, in 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul is not referring to "the church" as the source of truth or the creator of truth. He's saying "the church" is what holds up and holds firm the truth in the world. Again, this interpretation fits with Paul's warnings not to be swayed by carnal philosophies (Colossians 2:8), false teachers (2 Timothy 4:3), or any person who changes the gospel (Galatians 1:8). Rather than

fall prey to false doctrine, we're to compare teachers to the Word of God (Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 Timothy 3:16; Romans 15:4).

"The church," that is, the entire population of Christian believers, bears the earthly responsibility of holding up the truth of the gospel. The ultimate basis of that truth is Christ, not the proclamations or infallibility of members of that body. Paul is calling on believers to care for the structure that "supports" or "props up" our message to the world. 1 Timothy 3:15 cannot be taken to mean that the church *itself* is the source or standard for truth.

1 Timothy 3:16 By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

BGT 1 Timothy 3:16 κα μολογουμ νως μ γα στ ν τ τ ε σεβε ας μυστ ριον· ς φανερ θη ν σαρκ , δικαι θη ν πνε ματι, φθη γγ λους, κηρ χθη ν θνεσιν, πιστε θη ν κ σμ , νελ μφθη ν δ ξ .

KJV 1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

NET 1 Timothy 3:16 And we all agree, our religion contains amazing revelation: He was revealed in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

CSB 1 Timothy 3:16 And most certainly, the mystery of godliness is great: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

ESV 1 Timothy 3:16 Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

NIV 1 Timothy 3:16 Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.

NLT 1 Timothy 3:16 Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith: Christ was revealed in a human body and vindicated by the Spirit. He was seen by angels and announced to the nations. He was believed in throughout the world and taken to heaven in glory.

NRS 1 Timothy 3:16 Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great: He was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory.

RSV 1 Timothy 3:16 Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

YLT 1 Timothy 3:16 and, confessedly, great is the secret of piety -- God was manifested in flesh, declared righteous in spirit, seen by messengers, preached among nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory!

NKJ 1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

NJB 1 Timothy 3:16 Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is very deep indeed: He was made visible in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed to the gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory.

NAB 1 Timothy 3:16 Undeniably great is the mystery of devotion, Who was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed to the Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory.

ASV 1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; He who was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the spirit, Seen of angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

MIT 1 Timothy 3:16 Undeniably, the mystery intrinsic to the holy life is tremendous: He was manifested in flesh. He was authenticated in spirit. He was watched over by angels. He was proclaimed among the nations. He was trusted in the world. He was accepted above in glory.

DBY 1 Timothy 3:16 And confessedly the mystery of piety is great. God has been manifested in flesh, has been justified in the Spirit, has appeared to angels, has been preached among the nations, has been believed on in the world, has been received up in glory.

GWN 1 Timothy 3:16 The mystery that gives us our reverence for God is acknowledged to be great: He appeared in his human nature, was approved by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was announced throughout the nations, was believed in the world, and was taken to heaven in glory.

BBE 1 Timothy 3:16 And without argument, great is the secret of religion: He who was seen in the flesh, who was given God's approval in the spirit, was seen by the angels, of whom the good news was given among the nations, in whom the world had faith, who was taken up in glory.

Written out in poetic form as might have been seen in a Christian hymn...

And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness:

He who was revealed in the flesh,

Was vindicated in the Spirit,

Beheld by angels,

Proclaimed among the nations,

Believed on in the world,

Taken up in glory

- **By common confession:** Heb 7:7
- **the mystery:** 1Ti 3:9 Mt 13:11 Ro 16:25 1Co 2:7 Eph 1:9 3:3-9 6:19 Col 2:2 2Th 2:7 Rev 17:5,7
- **God:** Isa 7:14 9:6 Jer 23:5,6 Mic 5:2 Mt 1:23 Joh 1:1,2,14 Ac 20:28 Ro 8:3 9:5 1Co 15:47 Ga 4:4 Php 2:6-8 Col 1:16-18 Heb 1:3 Heb 2:9-13 1Jn 1:2 Rev 1:17,18
- **He who was revealed** 1Jn 3:5
- **Was vindicated in the Spirit:** Isa 50:5-7 Mt 3:16 Joh 1:32,33 15:26 16:8,9 Ac 2:32-36 Ro 1:3-4 1Pe 3:18 1Jn 5:6-8
- **Seen by angels,:** Ps 68:17,18 Mt 4:11 28:2 Mk 1:13 16:5 Lu 2:10-14 22:43 24:4 Joh 20:12 Ac 1:10,11 Eph 3:10 1Pe 1:12
- **Proclaimed among the nations:** Lu 2:32 Ac 10:34 13:46-48 Ro 10:12,18 Ga 2:8 Eph 3:5-8 Col 1:27
- **Believed on in the world:** Ac 14:27 Col 1:6,23 Rev 7:9
- **Taken up in glory:** Mk 16:19 Lu 24:51 Joh 6:62 13:3 16:28 17:5 Ac 1:1-9,19 Eph 4:8-10 Heb 1:3 8:1 12:2 1Pe 3:22
- 1 Timothy 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

2 Timothy 1:9-10+ who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, 10 but now **has been revealed** ([phaneroo](#)) by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

Acts 13:48+ When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Luke 24:46-47+ and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, 47and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

THE MYSTERY AND MAJESTY OF CHRIST

Paul has just explained (1Ti 3:15) the importance of conduct in God's household, the church, which is **the pillar and support of the truth**. Now, in this verse Paul focuses on the great truth the church upholds which could be summed up as the mystery of godliness, centered in Jesus Christ.

By common confession - **NET** = "And we all agree" is one word **homologoumenos** an adverb that is only used here ([hapax legomenon](#) - not in Lxx) and means with common consent, in the judgment of all, undoubtedly or without controversy. It pertains to

being a matter on which there is general agreement, and thus is uncontestable, undeniably true, and most certainly beyond question. Many take the following 6 descriptions of Christ to be an early Christian hymn. Paul felt that the following truths were vital for the young church to maintain and propagate.

*This great confession shapes
both belief and behavior.*

Great is the mystery ([musterion](#)) **of godliness** ([eusebeia](#)) - NET = "our religion contains amazing revelation" **Mystery** is truth which was previously hidden but has now been divinely revealed (cf Ro 16:25; 1Co 2:7; 4:1; Ep 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 6:19; Col 1:26–27; 4:3). In this context the "**mystery**" is Christ Himself (cf Col 1:27+) as summarized by the 6 part "Christian hymn."

Godliness, then, first refers to the incarnation and secondly to those who are saved and become the godly in Christ

John MacArthur says that **mystery** ([musterion](#)) **of godliness** ([eusebeia](#)) "refers to the great truth of salvation and righteousness through Christ, which produces **godliness** ([eusebeia](#)) in those who believe. It is also possible to understand the mystery of godliness as a reference to Jesus, who was the very revelation of true and perfect "godlikeness," since He was God. Godliness, then, first refers to the incarnation and secondly to those who are saved and become the godly in Christ" (See [1 Timothy Commentary - Page 139](#))

*The following creedal statements are illustrations of the great truths
that the church is charged with protecting*

NET NOTE on **godliness** (translated "religion" by NET) - "Religion" ([eusebeia](#)) is a word used frequently in the pastorals with a range of meanings: (1) a certain attitude toward God - "devotion, reverence"; (2) the conduct that befits that attitude - "godliness, piety"; and (3) the whole system of belief and approach to God that forms the basis for such attitude and conduct - "religion, creed." See BORROW [BDAG page 325](#) s.v.; 2Ti 3:5; 4 Macc 9:6–7, 29–30; 15:1–3; 17:7. So the following creedal statements are illustrations of the great truths that the church is charged with protecting (v. 15).

He who was revealed ([phaneroo](#) - made visible [not created or bring into existence]) **in the flesh** ([sarx](#) = physical flesh, not sinful flesh) (Heb 2:14+, Heb 4:15+) - This describes Jesus' preexistence (Jn 8:58+, Jn 17:5+) and incarnation. John 1:14+ says "the Word (Jn 1:1+ = preexistence) became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (cf Php 2:6-7+) See [NET Note](#) (Note #24) for a Technical Discussion regarding the first word **He**," which some manuscripts have as **God**." (Or see Bruce Metzger's discussion - BORROW [A textual commentary on the Greek New Testament, page 641](#)) This truth is a rebuttal of the [false teaching of Docetism](#).

Bob Utley - This speaks of the Incarnation (birth) of Jesus Christ at Bethlehem: His life, teachings, death, and resurrection fully reveal the Father (cf. John 1:14-18). There is also the strong inference of His pre-existence (cf. John 1:1-5; 8:57-58; 16:28; 17:5; 2 Cor. 8:4; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3; 10:5-8). This is the central truth of the Gospels about Jesus Christ, that He was truly God and truly human (cf. John 1:14; Phil. 2:6-8; Col. 1:14-16; 1 John 4:1-3).

Was vindicated ([dikaioo](#)) **in the Spirit** ([pneuma](#)) - Most translations capitalize **Spirit** thus identifying [pneuma](#) as the Holy Spirit. Obviously Jesus did not need to be justified as sinners do which is the usual meaning for sinners who are justified (Ro 3:24+), so what does this mean? At His baptism, the Spirit descended on Jesus (Mt 3:16+), which identified Him as the One Who baptizes in the Spirit (Jn 1:33+). In that sense Jesus was "declared righteous" and the Father also testified to His divinity and thus His perfect righteousness (Mt 3:17+).

I suggest Paul may have another sense similar to [dikaioo](#) as used in Ro 3:4+ where Paul speaking of God says "that You (God) **may be justified** ([dikaioo](#)) in Your words." The sense is that God is **shown to be righteous** by His words." In the same sense, Jesus was "**vindicated**" or **shown to be righteous** by His resurrection by the agency of the Holy Spirit (Ro 1:4+). In addition, a fact that is often overlooked is that when Jesus emptied Himself of His divine prerogatives, He became the perfect model for believers today. What to I mean by that? Just this -- after the Holy Spirit came upon Him at His baptism we see that in his subsequent wilderness temptation, Jesus was filled with (controlled by) and led by the Spirit! (Lk 4:1, 14, 18+), the very thing believers are to imitate in order to experience a Christlike supernatural life! In short, Jesus conducted His ongoing ministry for 3 years, empowered by the Spirit, and in that sense **was vindicated** (shown to be righteous) **in the Spirit**! See Peter's summary of Jesus' ministry in Acts 10:37-38+. (See more discussion of this vitally important principle which can change your spiritual life! [Walk Like Jesus Walked!](#))

Duane Litfin seems to agree with one aspect of Jesus' vindication writing **Was vindicated by the Spirit** refers to God's demonstration through the Resurrection (cf. Acts 2:24-36+), by the Holy Spirit (cf. Ro 8:11+),

that the crucified Jesus is Lord and Messiah." (See [The Bible Knowledge Commentary - Page 167](#))

John MacArthur takes a different approach - Though the translators decided to capitalize Spirit, making it refer to the third member of the Trinity, it could also refer to Jesus. That would mean that Jesus Christ was **vindicated**—declared to be righteous—with respect to His spiritual nature. This reality is why the Father said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased" (Mt 3:17). (See [1 Timothy Commentary - Page 140](#))

Seen by angels ([aggelos/angelos](#)) - At Jesus' birth He was seen by angels (Lu 2:9-14+), when the angels saw Christ as a Baby, fully Man. Jesus was also **seen by angels** after His temptation (Mt 4:11+), later in His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (Lk 22:43+), at His resurrection (Mt 28:2-7+) and at His ascension (Acts 1:10-11+). In short, the heavenly realm watched in awe as God's redemption plan unfolded.

Proclaimed ([kerusso](#)) **among the nations** ([ethnos](#)) - After Christ's resurrection, the gospel went global. The Gospel began to be boldly proclaimed on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:13-41+). Initially the message was preached to the Jews but it soon spread to the **nations** ([ethnos](#)) or Gentiles (See Acts 10:37-43+) Jesus' last command was to fulfil the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20+; Acts 1:8+).

Believed ([pisteuo](#)) **on in the world** ([kosmos](#)) - Of course not all the **world** ([kosmos](#)) **believed on** Him (cf Mt 7:13, 14+), but those who have believed in Christ will not perish because they have received eternal life (Jn 3:36, cf Jn 4:42, Jn 12:46). In Revelation 7 we see the global fruit of the gospel, John writing "After these things I looked, and behold, **a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." (Revelation 7:9-10+)

Taken up ([analambo](#)) **in glory** ([doxa](#)) - A clear description of Jesus ascension and being seated **at the right hand of the Majesty on High** (Heb 1:3+).

John MacArthur - In six short stanzas, this hymn summarizes the gospel. God became man, died for our sins, triumphed over death, was honored by angels and feared by demons, and ascended into heaven. This message was preached all over the world and many believed and were saved. That is the heart of the message it is our mission to proclaim to the world. (**ILLUSTRATION**) There once was an old church in England. A sign on the front of the building read "We preach Christ crucified." After a time, ivy grew up and obscured the last word. The motto now read, "We preach Christ." The ivy grew some more, and the motto read, "We preach." Finally, ivy covered the entire sign, and the church died. Such is the fate of any church that fails to carry out its mission in the world. (See [1 Timothy Commentary - Page 142](#))

William MacDonald - When Paul says that **the mystery of godliness is great**, he does not mean that it is very mysterious but that the previously unknown truth concerning the Person and work of the Lord Jesus is very marvelous and wonderful. **God was manifested in the flesh** refers to the Lord Jesus, and particularly to His Incarnation. True **godliness** was manifest in the flesh for the first time when the Savior was born as a Babe in Bethlehem's manger. Does **justified in the Spirit** mean "justified in His own human spirit"? Or does it mean "justified by the Holy Spirit"? We understand it to mean the latter. He was vindicated by the Holy **Spirit** of God at His baptism (Matt. 3:15-17), transfiguration (Matt. 17:5), resurrection (Rom. 1:3, 4), and ascension (John 16:10). The Lord Jesus was **seen by angels** at His birth, temptation, His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, resurrection, and ascension. From the day of Pentecost onward, He has been **preached among the Gentiles**. The proclamation has reached not only the Jewish people but the farthest corners of the earth. **Believed on in the world** describes the fact that some from almost every tribe and nation have trusted the Lord Jesus. It does not say "believed on **by** the world." Although the proclamation has been worldwide, yet its reception has been only partial. **Received up in glory** is generally agreed to refer to His Ascension to heaven after the work of redemption had been completed, and to His present position there....Some believe we have in this verse a fragment of an early Christian hymn. If so, it is rather similar to our gospel song "One Day" (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#)):

Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me;
Buried, He carried my sins far away;
Rising, He justified freely forever:
One day He's coming—oh, glorious day!
—Charles H. Marsh

Godliness (2150) [eusebeia](#) from **eu** = well + **sebomai** = reverence. Sebomai is in turn derived from "seb" which refers to sacred awe or reverence exhibited especially in actions) most literally means "well worship". It describes reverence or awe that is well directed. **Eusebeia** is true religion that displays itself in reverence before what is majestic and divine in worship and in a life of active obedience which befits that reverence. **Eusebeia** is a term used, not of God, but of men. [Click](#) for more discussion on godliness.

William Barclay - **godliness, eusebeia** is one of the great and almost untranslatable Greek words. It describes reverence both towards God and man. It describes that attitude of mind which respects man and honors God. Eusebius defined it as "reverence towards the one and only God, and the kind of life that he would wish us to lead." To the Greek, the great example of eusebeia was Socrates whom Xenophon describes in the following terms: "So pious and devoutly religious that he would take no step apart from the will of heaven; so just and upright that he never did even a trifling injury to any living soul; so self-controlled, so temperate, that he never at any time chose the sweeter in place of the bitter; so sensible and wise and prudent that in distinguishing the better from the worse he never erred" (Xenophon: Memorabilia, 4, 8, 11). Eusebeia comes very near to that great Latin word *pietas*, which Warde Fowler describes thus: "The quality known to the Romans as *pietas* rises, in spite of trial and danger, superior to the enticements of individual passion and selfish ease. Aeneas' *pietas* became a sense of duty to the will of the gods, as well as to his father, his son and his people; and this duty never leaves him." Clearly eusebeia is a tremendous thing. It never forgets the reverence due to God; it never forgets the rights due to men; it never forgets the respect due to self. It describes the character of the man who never fails God, man or himself. Godliness, eusebeia is the reverence of the man who never ceases to be aware that all life is lived in the presence of God. ([1 Timothy 2 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

EUSEBEIA - 15V - godliness(14), piety(1). Acts 3:12; 1 Tim. 2:2; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Tim. 4:7; 1 Tim. 4:8; 1 Tim. 6:3; 1 Tim. 6:5; 1 Tim. 6:6; 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:5; Tit. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Pet. 1:6; 2 Pet. 1:7; 2 Pet. 3:11

Revealed (made manifest, disclosed, appeared) ([5319](#)) [phaneroo](#) from **phanerós** = manifest, visible, conspicuous in turn from **phaino** = give light; become visible in turn from **phos** = light) is literally "to bring to light" and primarily means "to make visible" or to cause to become visible. The basic meaning of **phaneroo** is to make known, to clearly reveal, to manifest (see Vine's below), to cause to be seen or to make something clear. [BDAG \(borrow\)](#) summarized - 1, to cause to become visible, reveal, expose publicly (w. relatively more focus on the sensory aspect than on the cognitive 2. to cause to become known, disclose, show, make known [Liddell-Scott](#) - to make manifest, N.T. II. to make known or famous:-Pass. to become so, Hdt.

Friberg - reveal, make known, show (1) of a thing; (a) active, as a causative make known, cause to be seen, show, often as synonymous with [apokalupto](#) to indicate God's revelation of something (Ro 1.19; 2Co 2.14); (b) passive become visible, be revealed, become known (Mk 4.22; Jn 3.21); (2) of a person; (a) active make oneself known, show or reveal oneself (Jn 7.4); (b) passive become known, be shown, be in true character (2Co 5.11); appear, become visible, be revealed (Jn 21.14; 1Ti 3.16) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

Wuest - It was the invisible God Who in the Person of His Son was made visible to human eyesight by assuming a human body and human limitations. ([Eerdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

PHANEROO - 43V - appear(1), appeared(6), appears(3), become visible(1), becomes visible(1), disclose(1), disclosed(1), displayed(1), made...evident(2), made known(1), made manifest(2), make...clear(1), manifested(18), manifests(1), revealed(7), show(1), shown(1). Mk. 4:22; Mk. 16:12; Mk. 16:14; Jn. 1:31; Jn. 2:11; Jn. 3:21; Jn. 7:4; Jn. 9:3; Jn. 17:6; Jn. 21:1; Jn. 21:14; Rom. 1:19; Rom. 3:21; Rom. 16:26; 1 Co. 4:5; 2 Co. 2:14; 2 Co. 3:3; 2 Co. 4:10; 2 Co. 4:11; 2 Co. 5:10; 2 Co. 5:11; 2 Co. 7:12; 2 Co. 11:6; Eph. 5:13; Col. 1:26; Col. 3:4; Col. 4:4; 1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:10; Tit. 1:3; Heb. 9:8; Heb. 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:20; 1 Pet. 5:4; 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Jn. 2:19; 1 Jn. 2:28; 1 Jn. 3:2; 1 Jn. 3:5; 1 Jn. 3:8; 1 Jn. 4:9; Rev. 3:18; Rev. 15:4

Proclaimed (preached) ([2784](#)) [kerusso](#) from [kerux/keryx](#) = a herald - one who acts as the medium of the authority of one who proclamation he makes; [kerugma](#) = the thing preached or the message) means to proclaim (publicly) or to herald or act as a public crier - the town official who would make a proclamation in a public gathering. **Kerusso** was used of the official whose duty it was to proclaim loudly and extensively the coming of an earthly king, even as **our gospel** is to clearly announce the coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16+)! The Imperial Herald would enter a town in behalf of the Emperor, and make a public proclamation of the message which his Sovereign ordered him to give, doing so with such formality, gravity, and authority as to emphasize that the message must be heeded! (Think about this in regard to the Gospel of God instead of the decree of a man! cf 1Th 2:13+). He gave the people exactly what the Emperor bade him give, nothing more, nothing less. He did not dare add to the message or take away from it. Should this not be the example and pattern every preacher and teacher of the holy gospel of God seeks and strives to emulate, yea, even doing so with fear and trembling! ("not as pleasing men but God, who examines our hearts" see 1Th 2:4+)

Vindicated ([1344](#)) [dikaioo](#) from **dike** = right, expected behavior or conformity, not according to one's own standard, but according to an imposed standard with prescribed punishment for nonconformity) primarily means to deem to be right. **Dikaioo** describes the act

by which a man is brought into a right state of relationship to God. **Dikaioo** is a legal term having to do with the law and the the courtroom, where it represented the legally binding verdict of the judge. This is the sense in which Paul uses **dikaioo** in this section in Romans ([Ro 3:21-5:11](#)) in which he unfolds the doctrine of justification.

The meaning of dikaioo depends on the context and depending on which lexicon you consult you will come up with a variety of definitions so the following is an attempt as classifying most of the NT uses, but please be a Berean and do you own study of this word.

(1) To cause someone to be in a proper or right relation with someone else This use corresponds to the vitally important truth imputed righteousness and thus means to justify or to declare righteous, which is only accomplished by faith and not by works as explained in definition #2.

(2) To show to be right or righteous. James uses **dikaioo** in this sense - to show to be righteous. And so we see that Abraham's works show that he was righteous. He had been declared righteous by faith in Genesis 15:6, but was shown to be righteous in Genesis 22, which is the point that James is making in the following passages. James 2:21+ James 2:24+ James 2:25+ In some cases **dikaioo** refers to Jesus or God Who are demonstrated to be morally right (Divine vindication)...Romans 3:4+ 1 Timothy 3:16+

(3) To make free, liberate, set free or release from the control of . This meaning is similar to another Greek verb eleutheroo. BDAG explains that the idea is "to cause someone to be released from personal or institutional claims that are no longer to be considered pertinent or valid" Romans 6:7+ Acts 13:39+

4) Acknowledging that someone is just or right. Luke 7:29+

(5) Man declaring that he is just or right. This is something man does and based on his standard of righteousness (self righteousness) not God's standard. Luke 10:29+

To understand **dikaioo**, one needs to understand the root work **dike** which originally meant manner, tendency and with time came to refer to the designation for the right of established custom or usage. Stated another way, the basic meaning of **dike** involves the assertion by human society of a certain standard expected by its people which, if not kept, can bring forth ensuing judgment. Thus it can be said that **dike** is expected behavior or conformity, not according to one's own standard, but according to an imposed standard (here in Romans it is God's standard of righteousness) with prescribed punishment for nonconformity.

Spurgeon - The hexapla of mystery [or, the six fold mystery] 1 Timothy 3:16

'God was manifest in the flesh'. I believe that our version is the correct one, but the fiercest battles have been held over this sentence. It is asserted that the Greek word theos is a corruption for os, so that, instead of reading 'God was manifest in the flesh,' we should read, 'who was manifest in the flesh'. There is very little occasion for fighting about this matter, for if the text does not say 'God was manifest in the flesh', who does it say was manifest in the flesh, a man, an angel or a devil? Does it tell us that a man was manifest in the flesh? Assuredly that cannot be its teaching, for every man is manifest in the flesh, and there is no sense whatever in making such a statement concerning any mere man and then calling it a mystery. Was it an angel then? But what angel was ever manifest in the flesh? And if he were, would it be at all a mystery that he should be 'seen of angels'? Is it a wonder for an angel to see an angel? Can it be that the devil was manifest in the flesh? If so, he has been 'received up into glory', which, let us hope, is not the case. Well, if it was neither a man, nor an angel, nor a devil who was manifest in the flesh, surely he must have been God; and so, if the word be not there, the sense must be there, or else nonsense. We believe that, if criticism should grind the text in a mill, it would get out of it no more and no less than the sense expressed by our grand old version. God himself was manifest in the flesh. What a mystery is this, a mystery of mysteries! God the invisible was manifest; God the spiritual dwelt in flesh; the infinite, uncontained, boundless 'God was manifest in the flesh'

James Smith - THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS 1 Timothy 3:16

This mystery was seen in the burning bush, in the Holy of Holies, in the Person of Christ. Notice here the relationship of God the Son—

- | | | |
|----|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | To the Flesh, | "Manifested." |
| 2. | To the Spirit, | "Justified." |
| 3. | To the Angels, | "Seen by them." |
| 4. | To the Gentiles, | "Preached." |
| 5. | To the World, | "Believed in." |
| 6. | To the Glory, | "Received up." |

Spurgeon - Morning and Evening —1 Timothy 3:16

We have seen our well-beloved Lord in the days of his flesh, humiliated and sore vexed; for he was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He whose brightness is as the morning, wore the sackcloth of sorrow as his daily dress: shame was his mantle, and reproach was his vesture. Yet now, inasmuch as he has triumphed over all the powers of darkness upon the bloody tree, our faith beholds our King returning with dyed garments from Edom, robed in the splendour of victory. How glorious must he have been in the eyes of seraphs, when a cloud received him out of mortal sight, and he ascended up to heaven! Now he wears the glory which he had with God or ever the earth was, and yet another glory above all—that which he has well earned in the fight against sin, death, and hell. As victor he wears the illustrious crown. Hark how the song swells high! It is a new and sweeter song: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for he hath redeemed us unto God by his blood!" He wears the glory of an Intercessor who can never fail, of a Prince who can never be defeated, of a Conqueror who has vanquished every foe, of a Lord who has the heart's allegiance of every subject. Jesus wears all the glory which the pomp of heaven can bestow upon him, which ten thousand times ten thousand angels can minister to him. You cannot with your utmost stretch of imagination conceive his exceeding greatness; yet there will be a further revelation of it when he shall descend from heaven in great power, with all the holy angels—"Then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." Oh, the splendour of that glory! It will ravish his people's hearts. Nor is this the close, for eternity shall sound his praise, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever!" Reader, if you would joy in Christ's glory hereafter, he must be glorious in your sight now. Is he so?

J C Philpot - A mystery indeed it is, a great, a deep, an unfathomable mystery; for who can rightly understand how the divine Word, the eternal Son of God, was made flesh, and dwelt among us? "Who shall declare his generation?" (Isa. 53:8) either that eternal generation whereby He is the only-begotten Son of God, or the generation of His sacred humanity in the womb of the Virgin, when the Holy Ghost came upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her? These are things "which the angels desired to look into;" which they cannot understand, but reverently adore. And well may we imitate their adoring admiration, not attempting to understand, but believe, love, and revere; for well has it been said,

"Where reason fails, with all her powers,
There faith believes, and love adores."

Nor, if rightly taught and spiritually led, shall we find this a barren, dry, or unprofitable subject. It is "the great mystery of godliness;" therefore all godliness is contained in it, and flows out of it. The whole of God's grace, mercy, and truth is laid up in, is revealed through, is manifested by, the Son of His love; for "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;" and this as Immanuel, God with us. Thus His sacred humanity, in union with His divine Person, is the channel of communication through which all the love and mercy of God flow down to poor guilty, miserable sinners, who believe in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. If blessed, then, with faith in living exercise, we may draw near and behold the great mystery of godliness. To tread by faith upon this holy ground is to come "unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:22); for every blessing of the new covenant, if we are but favoured with a living faith in an incarnate God, is then experimentally as well as eternally ours.

F B Meyer - 1 Timothy 3:16

It is more than likely that this is a fragment of one of the earliest hymns of the Church. In her hymns, and maintenance of the ordinances, she thus becomes the pillar and ground of the truth. The words "mystery of godliness" are probably a general heading which is further unfolded and expanded in the six following sentences, which may have been sung antiphonally:—

"God was manifest in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit.
Seen of angels,
Preached unto the Gentiles.
Believed on in the world,
Received up into glory."

The Extremes of Manifestation. — The Eternal Word was manifested in the flesh. But it was not simply a physical manifestation; we cannot forget the descent of the Holy Spirit at his baptism, or the authentication of his words which the Spirit gave in signs and

wonders, and convinced hearts, and converted lives.

The Extremes of Created Intelligence. — Angels worship Him; and Gentiles, sunk in heathen darkness, hear the story of his wondrous love. Jesus is the centre of all worlds: from heaven's bright spaces they come to Him on the one hand; from earth's dark sins they come on the other. In Him meet angels and men.

The Extremes of Space. — Glory is above: "He was received up into glory." The world is but a speck, a mote in the beam of eternity. How great the space between the two! But the feet of our Emmanuel have trodden its low pavement, and He has now taken to Himself his former glory. Like Jacob's ladder, He links earth with the throne of God.

QUESTION - [What is the mystery of godliness? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](http://GOTQUESTIONS.ORG)

ANSWER - The phrase *the mystery of godliness*, found in 1 Timothy 3:16, is part of an introduction to an ancient hymn. In the English Standard Version, the verse reads this way:

"Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory."

Other translations speak of "the mystery from which true godliness springs" (NIV) and "the great mystery of our faith" (NLT). The words that follow in 1 Timothy 3:16 explain the mystery of godliness: God became flesh and lived among us (cf. John 1:1, 14).

The Greek word [musterion](#) ("mystery"), when used in the New Testament, refers to the things of God that were once hidden but were later revealed through Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). A mystery is that which can only be known through the revelation of God (Romans 16:25–26; Colossians 1:26–27). It is something that in times past had been hidden but is now revealed to God's people. Jesus spoke of "the mystery of the kingdom of God" (Mark 4:11, NAS) that He was at that time revealing to His disciples. The apostle Paul used the word *mystery* 21 times in his epistles: the mystery of God (Colossians 2:2), the mystery of faith (1 Timothy 3:9), the [mystery of iniquity](#) (2 Thessalonians 2:7), etc. In each case, the "mystery" involved a declaration of spiritual truth, revealed by God through divine inspiration. The New English Translation of 1 Timothy 3:16 speaks of the mystery of godliness as an "amazing revelation" concerning our faith.

The Greek word translated "godliness" in most English translations means "a proper response to the things of God, which produces obedience and righteous living." As He walked this earth, Jesus was the embodiment of pure godliness, which led Him to lay down His life for unworthy sinners (John 10:18). His life was dedicated to the glory of the Father, and He always did what pleased Him (John 8:29). Christians pursue godliness when we follow the example of Jesus in dedicating every decision to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). Godliness is not a suggestion; it is a command (1 Peter 1:15–16; Hebrews 12:14).

*The mystery of godliness is
the heart of the Christian faith.*

The mystery of godliness is the heart of the Christian faith. The hymn that Paul records in 1 Timothy 3:16 contains a summation of Jesus' ministry. The godliness of God's Son is now to be reflected in us. Christianity is not a system of rules and actions that must be performed to appease a deity. At the heart of Christianity is the mystery of godliness—the fact that God took on human flesh to live among the people He created (Philippians 2:5–11). As a Son, Jesus remained completely obedient to His Father in heaven and then offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice in our place (John 10:18; Hebrews 4:15; 2 Corinthians 5:21). God then raised Him from the dead, thereby conquering death for all who trust in Him (Matthew 28:6; 1 Corinthians 15:3–7, 13–14, 55). Because Jesus took our place, sinful humans may be declared righteous before God and be "born again" (John 3:3). The new birth is spiritual and results in a change of heart that produces true godliness (2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 3:8–10). How a life is transformed is the mystery of godliness and is comprehended only through the revelation of God in Christ.

"Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great" (1 Timothy 3:16).

Robert Hawker - Poor Man's Evening Portion - —1 Timothy 3:16.

My soul! sit down this memorable evening, and in commemorating the great event of Christ's nativity, listen to what the Holy Ghost here speaks, by his servant the apostle, concerning the mystery of godliness! Here are so many wonders branched out into so many chapters; they hang like a rich and full cluster upon the vine. Gather them one by one, mark their beauties, and taste their sweetness. The first is, "God manifest in the flesh:" here is a meditation for thee to live upon, and to feast upon for ever. Thy God, thy Jesus, thy Holy One, the Son of God, was made flesh! Go on to the second: he was "justified in the Spirit:" a matter that would never have taken place, had he not fully, by his righteousness and death, satisfied his Father's law, and brought in an everlasting righteousness for his people. Take down the third blessed character: He was "seen of angels." Yes! they worshipped him also: for angels, principalities, and powers, were made subject unto him. Look, my soul, at thy Lord, under the fourth description which the

Holy Ghost hath here given of him: He was "preached unto the Gentiles:" and this was as great a mystery to the Jewish Church as any: that God should "grant to the Gentiles also, through Christ, repentance unto life." And how dear this part of Jesus's character should be to thee, my soul, who wast by nature a poor Gentile, an alien to the commonwealth of Israel, having no hope, and without God in the world, thou needest not to be told. Mark another, and the fifth, particularity of thy Jesus; he is said to be "believed on in the world;" and how should this have been done, even in a single instance, but for the sovereignty of God's grace? Surely this is no less a mystery also. Remark, my soul, how great, how very great in thy case. Lastly, the account closeth: "Jesus was received up into glory;" and there, my soul, do thou follow him, by faith, until the Lord come to take thee home with him in absolute enjoyment, that "where he is, there thou mayest be also." Amen.

1 Timothy 3:16a And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: - - Octavius Winslow

The doctrine of the Incarnation presents a gospel mystery, if possible, more astonishing than that of the Trinity. We can more easily understand that there should be three people in a unity of subsistence, than that God should be manifested in the flesh. The analogy of the one meets us everywhere; turn we the eye within ourselves, or turn we it without upon the broad expanse of God's creation-from every point of observation, a trinity of existence bursts upon our view. But, of the other, in vain we search for anything approaching to resemblance. It was a thing so unheard of and so strange, so marvelous and so unique-that there was nothing in the sublime or the rude, in the bold or the tender, of nature's varied works, to prepare the mind for, or awaken the expectation of, a phenomenon so strange, so stupendous, and so mysterious. Not that the possibility of such an event astonishes us. With Jehovah all things are possible. "Is anything too hard for me?" is a question that would seem to rebuke the first rising of such an emotion - A God allowed, all other wonders cease.

But we marvel at the fact itself. Its stupendousness amazes us-its condescension humbles us-its glory dazzles us-its tenderness subdues us-its love overpowers us. That the uncreated Son of God should become the created Son of man-that the Eternal Word should be made flesh and dwell with men-that He should assume a new title, entwining in the awful letters that compose His divine name, others denoting His inferior nature as man, so revealing Himself as Jehovah-Jesus! Oh wonder, surpassing thought! Before this, how are all others infinitely outshone; their luster fading away and disappearing, as stars before the advancing light?

The mystical union of Christ and His church is also declared to be one of the mysteries of the gospel. "This is a great mystery;" says the apostle, "but I speak concerning Christ and His church." That Christ and His people should be one-one as the head and the body-the vine and the branch-the foundation and the house-is indeed a wondrous truth. We cannot understand how it is; and yet so many, palpable, and gracious are the blessings flowing from it, we dare not reject it. All that a believer is, as a living soul, he is from a vital union with Christ. As the body without the soul is dead, so is a sinner morally dead without union to Jesus. Not only His life, but his fruitfulness is derived from this source. All the "beauties of holiness" that adorn his character, spring from the vital principle which his engrafting into Christ produces. He is skillful to fight, strong to overcome, patient to endure, meek to suffer, and wise to walk, as he lives on Christ for the grace of sanctification. "Without me you can do nothing." Is it not indeed a mystery that I should so be one with Christ, that all that He is becomes mine, and all that I am becomes His. His glory mine, my humiliation His; His righteousness mine, my guilt His; His joy mine, my sorrow His. Mine His riches, His my poverty; mine His life, His my death; mine His heaven, His my hell? The daily walk of faith is a continuous development of the wonders of this wondrous truth. That in traveling to Him empty, I should return from Him full. That in going to him weak, I should come away from Him strong. That in bending my steps to Him, in all darkness, perplexity, and grief, I should retrace them all light, and joy, and gladness. Why marvel at this mystery of the life of faith? My oneness with Jesus explains it.

1 Timothy 3:16 ...God was manifest in the flesh - Octavius Winslow

Viewed as a medium of the most costly blessings to the church of God, how precious a mystery does the incarnation of our Lord appear! The union of the Divine and the human in Immanuel, is the reunion of God through the second Adam with fallen man. The first Adam severed us from the Divine nature-the second Adam reunites us. The incarnation is the grand link between these two extremes of being. It forms the verdant spot, the oasis, in the desert of a ruined universe, on which God and the sinner can meet together. Here are blended in marvelous union the gloomy clouds of human woe, and the bright beams of Divine glory-God and man united! And will you, O theist, rob me of this truth, because of its mystery? Will you yourself reject it, because reason cannot grasp it? Then might I rob you of your God (whom you ignorantly worship), because of His incomprehensibleness, not one attribute of whom can you understand or explain. No! It is a truth too precious to part with so easily. God in my nature-my God-my Brother-my Friend-my Counselor-my Guide-my Redeemer-my Pattern-my all! God in my nature, my wisdom, my righteousness, my sanctification, my redemption!

But for this heaven-descending communication, of which the patriarch's ladder was the symbol and the type, how could a holy God advance towards me, or I draw near to Him? But He takes my nature that He may descend to me, and He gives me His nature that I may ascend to Him. He stoops, because I could not rise! Oh mystery of grace, wisdom, and love! Shall I doubt it? I go to the manger

of Bethlehem, and gaze upon the infant Savior. My faith is staggered, and I exclaim, "Is this the Son of God?" Retiring, I track that infant's steps along its future path. I mark the wisdom that He displayed, and I behold the wonders that He wrought. I mark the revelations that He disclosed, the doctrines that He propounded, the precepts that He taught, the magnanimity that He displayed. I follow Him to Gethsemane, to the judgment-hall, and then to Calvary, and I witness the closing scene of wonder. I return to Bethlehem, and with the evidences which my hesitating faith has thus collected, I exclaim, with the awe-struck and believing centurion, "Truly this is the Son of God!" All the mystery of His lowly incarnation vanishes, and my adoring soul embraces the incarnate God within its arms. We marvel not that, hovering over the spot where this great mystery of godliness transpired, the celestial choir, in the stillness of the night, awoke such strains of music along the plains of Bethlehem as were never heard before. They left the realms of glory to escort the Lord of glory in His advent to our earth. How gladly they trooped around Him, thronging His wondrous way, their benevolent bosoms dilating in sympathy with the grand object of His mission. And this was the angel's message to the astonished shepherds: "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, good will toward men." Shall angels rejoice in the incarnation of the Son of God, and our hearts be cold and unmoved? Forbid it love, forbid it gratitude, forbid it, O my soul!

1 Timothy 3:16 The Man On The Cross

By Dave Branon

In today's anything-goes world, it should be no surprise that there's a group called Atheists for Jesus. They claim to believe in Jesus' moral teachings but not what He said about God.

They are not alone. Others who may not consider themselves atheists fail to see that it's impossible to accept Jesus' words without also accepting His divinity.

Stand at the foot of the cross, and your only possible conclusion is that Jesus is divine. Listen to Him forgive those who sought to destroy Him, and you realize that only God can forgive with such grace. Overhear Him speak hope to the dying criminal at His side, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Lk. 23:43). Catch His words above the wails of the mourners as He does what no human can—He commits His spirit to God the Father, in effect releasing Himself to death (Lk. 23:46; Jn. 10:17-18).

This was no mortal hanging below a sign with the mocking words that underestimated His identity (Lk. 23:38). This was God Incarnate, doing the work He alone could do—by becoming Immanuel, God with us (Mt. 1:23).

Jesus was not just a man who was blessed with wisdom. Never think of Him as anyone less than God the Son. His words and work on the cross prove His divinity. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Eternal with the Father, One,
Is Jesus Christ, His own dear Son;
In Him God's fullness we can see,
For Jesus Christ is deity.
—DJD

Jesus is God spelled out in language we can understand.

[Spurgeon - The great mystery of godliness](#) 1 Timothy 3:16

Did you ever hear of angels hovering around the assemblies of philosophical societies? Very interesting papers are sometimes produced speculating upon geological facts; startling discoveries are every now and then made as to astronomy and the laws of motion; we are frequently surprised at the results of chemical analyses; yet I do not remember ever reading even in poetry that angelic beings have shown any excitement at the news. The fact is that the story of the world's history and all the facts about this world are as well known to angels as the letters of the alphabet are to us; all our profound sciences and recondite theories must seem utterly contemptible to them. Those august minds which have been long ago created by God, and preserved from defilement by his decrees, are better able to judge of the importance of things than we are; and when we find them deeply interested in a matter, it cannot be of small account. Concerning an incarnate God it is said, 'which things the angels desire to look into.' Their views of God's manifesting himself in the flesh are such that over the mercy seat they stand with outspread wings gazing in reverent admiration, and before the throne they sing, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain'. The doctrine of incarnate Deity may be folly to the Greeks, and the boastful wiseacres of this world may call it commonplace, but to angels it is an ever flowing fount of adoring admiration. They turn from every other sight to view the incarnate Redeemer, regarding his condescending deed of grace as a

bottomless ocean of mystery, a topless steep of wonder. Jesus was 'seen of angels,' and they still delight to gaze upon him.