

1 Timothy 3

Verse by Verse

Church Leadership

Introduction

Overseers
3:1-7

Deacons
3:8-13

Pauls Purpose
in Writing
3:14-16

Conclusions



(St. Paul imprisoned, ends the letter to the Ephesians, and hands it over to Tychicus. Wood engraving, 1886, Gustave Dore (Wikimedia Commons))

Introduction

Previously in 1 Timothy

- **1 Timothy 2** began with encouragement to pray, especially "for kings and those in high positions."
- Paul tied this to God's desire for "all people to be saved."
- He then moved on to some specific instructions for men and women.
- For men, the need is to pray "without anger or quarreling."
- Evidently, he saw this as a particular weak point for men.
- For women the goal is to cultivate a modest and quiet demeanor.
- Perhaps this is an area where women might need special encouragement.

Opening
Thoughts

What's in
1 Timothy 3

Key Verse

Opening Thoughts

- What are some of the qualifications you've needed in order to apply for a job?
- Experience?
- Education?
- Personal References?
- Good Interviewing Skills?
- Connections?

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What's in
1 Timothy 3

Key Verse

What's in 1 Timothy 3?

- Paul here prepares Timothy for an important task that he had before him.
- This was to assess potential candidates for ministry.
- Therefore, Paul outlined some qualifications for those who desired to lead.
- These “credentials,” along with those given to Titus, comprise the biblical standard for designated leaders within the body of Christ.
- Paul ends the chapter with a reminder of why he is writing to Timothy in the first place.

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1 Timothy 3:1

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

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 - Refer to Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Peter 5:1-4.
- **a noble task** Or, "a good work."
- It is the work that is good, not necessarily the position (NLT).

On Church
Government

Qualifications
Part 1

Qualifications
Part 2

On Church Government

- Again, the words **pastor, overseer and elder** are used more or less interchangeably by Paul.
- Despite the clear fact that the church needed leaders, it's not very certain how those leaders functioned within their respective church environments.
- No well-defined model for church government becomes obvious from Scripture alone.

Pastor,
Overseer,
and Elder

Forms of
Church
Government

A Lesson on
Leadership

Pastor, Overseer and Elder

- These three passages provide us with examples in which terms connected with pastor (or shepherd), overseer and elder are used interchangeably.

Acts 20:17, 28 Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the **elders** of the church to come to him ... Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**, to **care for** [literally, "shepherd"] the church of God,[a] which he obtained with his own blood.

Titus 1:5, 7 This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint **elders** in every town as I directed you— ... 7 For an **overseer**, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain,

1 Peter 5:1-4 So I exhort the **elders** among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 **shepherd** the flock of God that is among you, exercising **oversight**, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

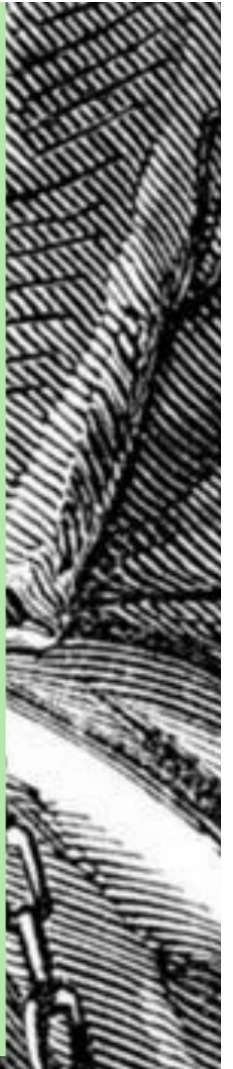


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Forms of Church Government

- Church history has given rise to multiple forms of structure within the church, each having strengths and weaknesses:
- **Hierarchical or Episcopal** was the earliest.
- **Presbyterian or Representative** came next.
- **Congregational** followed that.
- Almost all churches today either fall into one of these categories or exist as a blend of these basic forms.

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A Lesson on Leadership

- All of the main forms of church government have been extremely successful in one situation or another.
- All of them have also failed tragically at times.
- It seems that no form of church government can be better than the people who fill the positions or make up the church.
- Therefore, the Bible is right when it highlights the personal character of leaders more than the structure within which they work.

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Overseers 3:1-7

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 - Refer to Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Peter 5:1-4.
- **a noble task** Or, "a good work."
- It is the work that is good, not necessarily the position (NLT).

On Church
Government

Qualifications
Part 1

Qualifications
Part 2

Qualifications Part 1

- **3:2 above reproach** Accusations regarding major character flaws do not stick.
- **husband of one wife** - or "**a man of one woman.**"
- **sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable** These all point to a man with a high degree of self-mastery - not an undisciplined person.
- **hospitable [philóxenos]** loving strangers, generous to guests.
 - Side note: An elder can never be very effective in hospitality unless his "one wife" shares a vision for hospitality along with him.
- **able to teach** This is not required for deacons later on.

Husband of
One Wife

Able to
Teach

Husband of One Wife

- This is a much-debated expression.
- It seems tidiest if we view it as a character trait like the other items in the list.
- This works better than a box to check regarding marital status.

Polygamy?

A
Character
Trait

From
Robert
Yarbrough

Polygamy?

- Polygamy was not common in the Greco-Roman world, so it is doubtful that Paul was speaking directly about this here.
- Still, this "man-of-one-woman requirement, by any definition, rules out the polygamist from holding a position of leadership.
- Polygamy was practiced among certain Jews in Europe into the Middle Ages and beyond.
- It is practiced in the Middle East right through the present day.
- Under biblical standards, the LDS Church (Mormons) under Joseph Smith and Brigham Young would never have gotten off the ground.

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A Character Trait

- This understanding rules out the typical Greco-Roman male who doesn't prize marital fidelity very highly.
- The "character-trait view" allows us to freely consider:
 - A single man like Paul or Timothy, who seems obviously qualified for ministry.
 - A remarried widower.
 - A man divorced and remarried far enough in the past to exhibit the *one-woman man* character trait

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Robert Yarbrough,
Covenant Seminary

Paul wants Timothy to affirm the overseer whose relationship with God is such that his commitment to his wife reflects the love and fidelity that the law requires and that grace enables.

in, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*

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- This is the primary thing that differentiates the overseers from the deacons (servants) who come next.
- Both need to have godly character.
- The overseers have the added responsibility of equipping others by means of their teaching to do the work of the ministry.

Ephesians
4:11-12

From
Warren
Wiersbe



Ephesians 4:11-12

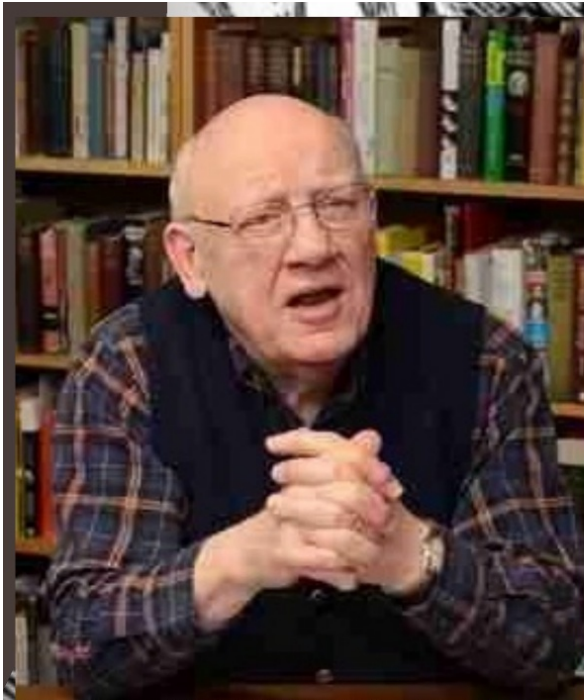
11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets,
the evangelists, the **shepherds and teachers**,
12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry,
for building up the body of Christ,

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From
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Warren Wiersbe
(1929 - 2019), pastor
and Bible teacher.

Quoting Phillips Brooks (1835 - 1893)

'Apt to teach – it is not something to which one comes by accident or by any sudden burst of fiery zeal.'

A pastor must be a careful student of the Word of God, and of all that assists him in knowing and teaching the Word. The pastor who is lazy in his study is a disgrace in the pulpit.

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Government

Qualifications
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Qualifications Part 2

The Enemy's Attacks

- **Not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome** Again these traits point to a self-disciplined person.
- **Not a lover of money** Odd that some pastors have developed a reputation for this very trait.
- **Must manage his own household well** - including his children
 - It helps here if the pastor/elder's home is open to others - as in, he is *hospitable*.
 - Whether he likes it or not, his life is on display and others will see it.

The Enemy's Attacks

Paul mention's two items to look for in a potential pastor/elder which point to areas the enemy will easily use against him and/or the church.

- **Not a recent convert** - not a *neophyte* (one who is newly planted).
 - Maturity allows one to weather the storms that will most certainly come in ministry.
- **Well thought of by outsiders** - Being a pastor is something of a public position. He will have to maintain public relationships.

From
Warren
Wiersbe

From Tony
Evans



Age is no guarantee of maturity, but it is good for a man to give himself time for study and growth before he accepts a church. Some men mature faster than others, of course. Satan enjoys seeing a youthful pastor succeed and get proud; then Satan can tear down all that has been built up.

Warren Wiersbe
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From
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From Tony
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Though outsiders may not believe what the church teaches, they should be able to respect the overseer for his character and integrity.



Tony Evans, Bible Teacher
and Commentator

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Deacons 3:8-13

Wives or
Women in
3:11?

- **3:8 Deacon** [*diakonos*] This means "a servant, one who executes the commands of another."
- It is specifically used of one who waits tables, serving food and drink to others.
- Though the passage does not use the word, the **Seven** selected to serve alongside the **Twelve** in **Acts 6** seem like the prototype of this position.
- **Qualifications:** Men who are honest, don't abuse alcohol (or perhaps other drugs in our day), and not greedy.
- They need to be firm believers whose faith has stood the test of time and various trials.
- Like the elders, their homelife needs to be orderly.

Wives or Women in 3:11?

Romans
16:1-2

- The Greek word can refer to the wives of deacons or to "women" who hold a position of ministry similar to that of the deacons described here.
- Historically, most translations have opted for "wives." The word "Their," while present in the ESV is not there in the original Greek.
- Either way, Paul often greets women who serves together with him in various churches.
- And historically, there have always been women who serve.



Romans 16:1-2

I commend to you **our sister Phoebe, a servant [diakonos] of the church at Cenchreae**, 2 that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well.

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Paul's Purpose in Writing 3:14-16

Mystery of
Godliness

- **3:14-15** Paul may or may not be able to join Timothy in Ephesus soon.
- Nonetheless, Timothy needs to set the church there up for success.
- The church, Paul reminds us, is the **pillar and buttress of the truth**.
- The church is built on the confession of Jesus as Christ.
- The church also holds up the truth for the world to see.
- Paul ends with a confession a statement of truth, which he calls "**the mystery of godliness**."

Mystery of Godliness

- A *mystery* is a truth that was once concealed but has now been revealed. We know the truth expressed here.

He [that is, *Jesus*] was manifested in the flesh,

- He was always God, but came as a real man.

vindicated by the Spirit,

- The Spirit testified to his deity and perfect humanity.

seen by angels [*messengers*]

proclaimed among the nations,

believed on in the world,

taken up in glory.



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Conclusions

- Paul is preparing Timothy to prepare this church for the future. This is really the main goal of the Pastoral Epistles.
- One of Timothy's tasks was to assess potential candidates for ministry.
- Therefore, Paul outlined some qualifications for those who desired to lead.
- These "credentials," along with those given to Titus, comprise the biblical standard for designated leaders within the body of Christ.
- But before we close in prayer, we will read this chapter in the *New Living Translation* to get an even clearer sense of what we just studied.

From Chuck
Smith

Key Verse

From John
Stott

A Final
Prayer



Chuck Smith (1927-2013),
founding pastor of the
Calvary Chapel Movement

It is sad when people are elevated in ministry ... too rapidly. They may be clever business people, or prominent citizens in the community, or perhaps talented entertainers or athletes; and when they come to the Lord, we see how gifted they are and immediately we put them into a visible and public position.

They are not given time to develop, and quite often the result is that they are lifted up in pride. We need to give people a chance to be grounded in the faith before they are put into positions of leadership.

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John Stott (1921 - 2011)

In conclusion, Paul's perspective in this chapter is to view the presbyters and the deacons in the light of the church they are called to serve, and to view the church in the light of the truth it is called to confess. One of the surest roads to the reform and renewal of the church is to recover a grasp of its essential identity as *God's household, the church of the living God, and the pillar and foundation of the truth.*

- John Stott , in *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus: The Life of the Local Church*

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A Final Prayer

Let's conclude with prayer for our our own church leadership and for other churches that we know or are connected with in some way or another. For example,

- Other Calvary Chapel churches, especially here in Indiana and the Midwest.
- Churches we support in overseas mission settings.
- Other churches that meet in YMCAs around central Indiana.
- Other churches near downtown Indianapolis like Fountain Square Presbyterian.
- Any other church you want to pray for.

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Pauls Purpose
in Writing
3:14-16

Conclusions



(St. Paul imprisoned, ends the letter to the Ephesians, and hands it over to Tychicus. Wood engraving, 1886, Gustave Dore (Wikimedia Commons))