

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO TIMOTHY

I TIMOTHY 3:1-16

WEEK OF MARCH 23–28

ELDERS AND DEACONS – LEADERS AND SERVANTS OF THE CHURCH

Paul continues in his letter to Timothy, the young pastor in Ephesus, to instruct him to put things in order in the church. The theme of this first letter to Timothy is part of our study this week. In 1 Timothy 3:15 Paul instructed Timothy, “I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct themselves in the household of God.” Having already addressed several issues needing attention in the church at Ephesus, Paul next moves to the leadership structure of the church. In this passage, Paul primarily addresses the character qualities of both overseers and deacons. He concludes this section with the charge to focus on the Mission and the Message of Christ’s church.

Read I Timothy 3:1-7 The Elders

1. In **verse 1**, Paul refers to an “overseer” (NASB), what other names are used for that same leadership position in **Acts 20:17,28; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-2**?
2. What two conditions or prerequisites does Paul give in **verse 1**, for an overseer?

The overseer, from verse 2, must be “above reproach” which means that there is nothing for which he could be accused. “Obviously, it does not mean he has not committed sins in his life. What it does mean is that his life has not been marred by some obvious sinful defect in character which would preclude him from setting the highest standard for godly conduct.” [MacArthur Commentary First Timothy](#), p.103.

Paul continues in **verses 2-7** to specifically list the character qualities of a man above reproach.

3. List the qualities from **verses 2 and 3** and explain what each means.
4. Why do you think Paul first addresses “the husband of one wife” in **verse 4**?
5. What are the additional moral character qualities and requirements for the overseer in **verses 4-7**? Briefly explain each of these.
6. From **verse 5**, why is the management of the home an important matter in evaluating the qualification of an overseer?
7. What does **Titus 1:6** add to the requirement of a well-managed home?

Read 2 Timothy 3:8-13 The Deacons

In verses 1-7, Paul discusses the spiritual qualifications for Elders. In verses 8-13, he discusses the spiritual qualities of the Deacons. There is no difference in the qualifications of the character of Elders and Deacons, except that the Elder “is able to teach”. The deacons are those who are especially gifted for service and work closely alongside the Elders in the practical life of the Church.

8. Explain the qualifications of the Deacons in **verses 8-10 and 12**.

9. In **verse 11**, Paul changes focus from men in **vs 10** to women in **verse 11**. What is the implication of Paul’s use of “likewise” in reference to women?

10. What are the spiritual and moral qualifications Paul applies to women serving in the church? Explain these.

11. “High Standing” in **vs 13** means to be well regarded by others (See also **1Thess. 5:12-13**). “Great confidence in the faith” is used of boldness of speech. “Those who serve God well and see his power and grace operative in their lives will be emboldened for even greater service.” 1 Timothy, p. 131.
How would these promised rewards be an encouragement to faithful deacons?

Read 1 Timothy 3:14-16 The Reminder to All in The Church to Focus on the Mission and Message of the Church.

Paul concludes this section with the importance of the testimony of the church (v.15) and the focus on the mission and the message of the Church.

12. From **verse 15(b)** the mission of the church is to be the pillar and support of the Truth, displaying, defending and protecting the Word of God. How does the church leadership and congregation fulfill that mission? What specific action do you need to take to “uphold that truth”?

“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. It is to support and safeguard it. It is the sacred, saving treasure given to sinners for their forgiveness, and to believers for their sanctification and edification, that they might live for the glory of God. The church has the stewardship of Scripture, the duty to guard it as the most precious possession on earth. Churches that tamper with misrepresent, depreciate, relegate to second place or abandon biblical truth destroy their only reason for existing and experience impotence and judgment. 1 Timothy, p.136-137

In **vs 16**, “common confession” is a truth upon which everyone agrees; it is the unanimous conviction of all believers that “great is the mystery of godliness”. Godliness, then, first refers to the incarnation and secondly to those who are saved and become the godly in Christ. 1 Timothy, p. 139

13. What truths in **vs.16** most impact your heart and soul, resulting in greater worship of Christ?

14. As you consider and meditate upon **chapter 3**, what character qualities would you identify and ask God to grow in you in this upcoming year? What specific steps are you taking to grow in those areas of life?