

THE ELDERSHIP
(Qualifications Given to Timothy)
Lesson 14

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. The Qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 Can Be Grouped Together: 1) by Positives (must be) and Negatives (must not be); and 2) by Areas of Life (character, reputation, habits, domestic relations, experience, and intellect).
- B. Three "Preliminary" Qualifications:
1. A man (1 Tim. 3:1) — despite the practice of many religions today, a woman may not serve as an elder.
 2. Seek and desire (1 Tim. 3:1) — a man who does not first seek and desire this work will not do a good job at it. "Seek" comes from the Greek *orego*, "to reach after or stretch out after", and "desire" comes from the Greek *epithumeo*, "to set one's heart upon", "to desire earnestly".
 3. First be proved (1 Tim. 3:10) — a man must first be proved. "Proved" comes from the Greek *dokimazo*, "to be tried or tested; to be approved after testing". A man must first be tried and tested to be an elder. He must be seen living the qualifications of an elder and doing the work that elders would be doing. He must be "proved" to see if he is fitting to be an elder.

II. QUALIFICATIONS GIVEN TO TIMOTHY.

- A. Blameless.
1. Gr. *anepileptos*, "not to be taken hold of"; hence, "not open to censure", "without or above reproach", "irreproachable", "unimpeachable", see 1 Tim. 3:2; 5:7; 6:14.
 2. An elder, though not sinless, must live above reproach. He must live so that no charge of guilt can be proved against him.
- B. The Husband of One Wife.
1. Gr. *mias gunaikos andra*, "one-woman man," "one wife's husband"; hence, "the husband of one wife", see 1 Tim. 3:12; 5:9 [inverted]; Tit.1:6. "Married only once", found in the NRSV, is an interpretation, not a translation.
 2. An elder must be a faithful husband and married to one woman.
- C. Vigilant.
1. Gr. *neephalios*, "free from the influence of intoxicants", "sober", "temperate", "watchful", "circumspect", see 1 Tim. 3:2,11; Tit. 2:2.
 2. An elder must be clearheaded, attentive, and spiritually alert to himself and others.

D. Sober.

1. Gr. *sophron*, "of sound mind"; hence, "self-controlled", "sober-minded", "prudent", "sensible", "thoughtful", see 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8; Tit. 2:2, 5.
2. An elder must act with a sound-mind and with self-control, never from uncontrolled or unstable emotions.

E. Of Good Behavior.

1. Gr. *kosmios*, "orderly", "well-arranged", "modest", "decorum", "dignified", "decent", "respectable", "honorable", see 1 Tim. 2:9; 3:2.
2. An elder must live a well-behaved and well-ordered life, well-arranged by God's word.

F. Given to Hospitality.

1. Gr. *philoxenos*, "love of, or friend of strangers", "generous to guests", "hospitable", see 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:9.
2. An elder must love to be hospitable to all people in a generous way.

G. Apt to Teach.

1. Gr. *didaktikos*, "skilled or skillful in teaching" "able to teach", see 1 Tim.3:2; 2 Tim.2:24.
2. An elder must be an able, capable, and qualified teacher.

H. Not Given to Wine.

1. Gr. *paroinos*, "by or beside wine", "not tarrying at wine", "not sitting long at wine," "addicted to wine", "drunken", see 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7.
2. An elder must not spend time near or beside wine.

I. No Striker.

1. Gr. *pleektees*, "striker", "ready with blows", "pugnacious", "violent", see 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit.1:7.
2. An elder must not be a violent person who is always ready to start a fight.

J. Not Greedy of Filthy Lucre.

1. Gr. *aischrokerdees*, "greedy of base (shameful) gain", "fond of dishonest gain", "eager for base gain", see 1 Tim. 3:3 [not in some manuscripts], 8; Tit.1:7.
2. An elder must not make or keep his personal wealth by dishonest means.

K. Patient.

1. Gr. *epieikees*, "seemly", "fitting"; hence, "equitable", "fair", "moderate", "forbearing", "mild", "yielding", "gentle", "kind", see Phil. 4:5; 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 3:2; Jas. 3:17; 1 Pet. 2:18.

2. An elder must always be gentle, not harsh or unpleasant. An elder must be firm in his stand for the truth, but his delivery of the truth must always be with gentleness and kindness.

L. Not a Brawler.

1. Gr. *amachos*, "not fighting", "not combating", "not quarrelling", "not contentious", see 1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 3:2.
2. An elder must be peaceable, never fighting physically or verbally.

M. Not Covetous.

1. Gr. *philarguros*, "no lover of money", "not greedy", "not avaricious", see 1 Tim. 3:3; Heb. 13:5.
2. An elder must be generous, never coveting money in a stingy or miserly way.

N. One That Ruleth Well His Own House, Having His Children in Subjection with All Gravity.

1. Gr. *proistemi*, "be at the head (of)", "to stand before", "to be over"; hence, "to lead", see Rom. 12:8; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12; 5:17; Tit. 3:8, 14. Gr. *hupotasso*, "to arrange under", "subject", "subordinate"; see a Bible concordance for its many passages. Gr. *semnotees*, "reverence", "dignity", "seriousness", "respectfulness", see 1 Tim. 2:2; 3:4; Tit.2:7.
2. An elder must lead his own children in the right way and his children must be under his control and be respectful to him. Take note of why an elder must rule well his children. Caring for a "family" of God's people (local church) is like caring for your own family.

O. Not a Novice.

1. Gr. *neophutos*, "newly-planted"; hence, "a new or recent convert", see 1 Tim. 3:6.
2. An elder must be a well experienced Christian, not a new convert. Take note of why an elder must not be a new convert. Inexperience can lead to pride and then to sin.

P. A Good Report of Them Which Are Without.

1. Gr. *marturia*, "testimony", "testifying", "witness(ing)", "record"; hence, "report", see a Bible concordance for its many passages. Gr. *exothern*, "those outside"; hence, "unbelievers".
2. An elder must be able to have good things said about him from non-Christians ("them which are without", 1 Cor. 5:12-13; Col. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:12; etc.). Take note of why an elder must have a good report from non-Christians. A bad reputation can lead to more sin.

III. CONCLUSION. God Has Set the Standard. The Individual Man Must Fit the Qualifications, Not the Other Way Around. Men Should Begin Now to Qualify Themselves to Serve as Elders in the Lord's Church.

Lesson Fourteen Discussion

1. Why is a woman not allowed to be an elder?
2. What attitude and action must a man have while he is studying the "qualifications" of an elder?
3. Does "blameless" mean sinless?
4. Do the words "husband of one wife" exclude any men from the eldership?
5. What is the difference in meaning between "vigilance" and "sober"?
6. What does Paul say about an elder's behavior and his hospitality?
7. What basic requirements are necessary for a man to be "apt to teach"?
8. What does "not given to wine" mean?
9. What is the difference in meaning between "no striker" and "no brawler"?
10. What must accompany an elder's firm stand for the truth?

11. What is the difference in meaning between "not greedy of filthy lucre" and "not covetous"?

12. What qualification is given regarding an elder's children and why?

13. What qualification is given regarding an elder's experience (conversion) and why?

14. What qualification is given regarding an elder's reputation from non-Christians and why?