

# **Fighting the Good Fight**

## *A Study in First Timothy*

### **LESSON THREE**

Prayerfully read through 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy, chapter three.

In chapter three Paul goes on to give Timothy further instructions in the organization of the church. In chapter two, Paul focused his attention on prayer within the church service and the role of male leadership, with women respectfully subjecting to that Biblical order of authority. Here in chapter three he lays out the qualifications of that male leadership, making it clear that being a “male” isn’t the only requirement.

- 1) **Verse 1** gives us another of the “faithful sayings” Paul states. What does he say this “faithful saying” is?
  
- 2) The Greek word used for “bishop” literally means to “watch over” or to “oversee.” It’s one who is given the “oversight” of the church. This word can be used for both elders and pastors. We note in verse 1 that Paul states that this position is a **good work**. Look up and record the following Scriptures concerning “overseers.”

**Acts 20:28 -**

**1 Peter 5:2-4 –**

- 3) Paul makes it clear in **1 Timothy 3:2-7** that “desire” is not enough to qualify you for this “**good work**.” Looking at **verse 2**, name the qualifications Paul begins with.

- 4) Let's look at each one of these qualifications individually. The first one listed is **Blameless**. This does not mean "perfect." Commentator **Albert Barnes** states, "...he should be a man against whom no charge of immorality, or of holding false doctrine, is alleged. Undoubtedly it means that if "any" charge could be brought against him implying moral obliquity, he is not fit for the office. He should be a man of irreproachable character for truth, honesty, chastity, and general uprightness." Look up **Philippians 2:15** and record it below.
- 5) The second qualification Paul lists is **the husband of one wife**. This has often been misinterpreted as being a man who has only been married one time, which would exclude a man who was widowed and remarried or one who remarried after a Biblical divorce. Most scholars agree this is not the proper interpretation, but that the pastor or elder be a "**one-woman**" man. Polygamy was something very common in this time, and definitely not part of God's design for marriage. In **David Guzik's** words, "**The idea is that his love and affection and heart is given to one woman, and that being his lawful and wedded wife. 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.**" Look up and record **Hebrews 13:4**.
- 6) Next, Paul lists **temperate**. Look up the word **temperate** in a dictionary and record your findings.
- 7) **Sober-minded** is the next item on Paul's list. A good description is found again in **David Guzik's** commentary: "**This describes the person who is able to think clearly and with clarity. They are not constantly joking but know how to deal with serious subjects in a serious way.**" Commentator **Warren Wiersbe** adds: "**This does not mean he has no sense of humor, or that he is always solemn and somber. Rather it suggests that he knows the value of things and does not cheapen the ministry or the Gospel message by foolish behavior.**"

This word is sometimes translated as “**self-controlled**” or “**vigilant.**” Look up and record **1 Peter 4:7 & 5:8** below.

**1 Peter 4:7 -**

**1 Peter 5:8 –**

8) Next on the list is **of good behavior**. The word used is “kosmios” and is translated as “modest” in **2 Timothy 2:9**. Its definition is “orderly, moderately, decent, or dignified.” This word deals with how we conduct ourselves. Look up and record the following verses below.

**Ephesians 4:1 -**

**Titus 2:10 -**

**1 Peter 3:16 -**

9) The next qualification Paul names is **hospitable**. Hospitality was a much needed quality, especially at the time Paul was addressing this letter. To welcome guests into your home for the night, for a meal, or for the comfort of fellowship and refreshment, was vital. Many of the churches were held in homes, and many disciples, like Paul and his companions, moved from place to place preaching the Gospel. Hospitality is also vital today, perhaps in a different way. To receive others and make them feel welcome is an important ministry of the church. Record these verses on hospitality below.

**Matthew 25:35 & 36 -**

**Romans 12:10 & 13 -**

**Hebrews 13:2 -**

10) **Able to teach** is the next qualification Paul states. This goes without saying for one who is a senior pastor over the church, and every pastor or elder needs to be able to accurately handle the Word of God.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary states, “The phrase **able to teach** speaks of a leader’s ability to handle the Scriptures. He must be able both to understand and to communicate the truth to others, as well as to refute those who mishandle it (cf. **Tit 1:9**). Not all must necessarily do this publicly, of course; some may conduct this aspect of their ministries more informally in private settings. Yet all leaders must possess an aptitude for handling the Word with skill.” Look up and record **Titus 1:9**.

- 11) Paul continues his list in **1 Timothy 3:3**. He has listed all the things a qualified pastor or elder must be, now he lists what they **must not be**. Record the “**nots**” listed in this verse.
  
- 12) Not surprisingly, this list in 1 Timothy 3 is the same as the list Paul gives to Titus in **Titus 1:6-8**. Record the qualifications from that verse below.
  
- 13) The statement “**not given to wine**” is not a prohibition of drinking an alcoholic beverage altogether, but they are not to be “**given over**” to alcohol and its use is to be moderate, and in other Scriptures discouraged. **Proverbs 31:4** states that it is not for “kings” (much like “overseers”) to drink wine and “intoxicating drinks.” **Proverbs 31:5** gives the reason. Record that reason below.
  
- 14) Although **1 Timothy 3:3** isn’t prohibiting this, record the good advice Paul give in **Ephesians 5:18** below.

- 15) Among all the other negatives in **verse 3** of our chapter (not violent, not greedy, not quarrelsome, not covetous) we see one **positive**. What is it?
- 16) The Greek word translated “gentle” is “epieikes.” It means patient, forbearing, reasonable. The same word is used in the following verses. Record them below to get a clearer understanding of the word and its use.

**Philippians 4:5 -**

**Titus 3:2 -**

**James 3:17 -**

- 17) Looking at **1 Timothy 3:4 & 5**, what does Paul state next on his list. **Summarize** these verses in your own words.

For those who have suffered the heartbreak of prodigal children, these verses can be a rather hard pill to swallow. Does this mean that those with prodigal children are disqualified? If that were the case, that list would include Adam, Isaac, Jacob, Eli, Samuel, and King David, just to name a few. The emphasis here is not on the conduct of the children, but on the conduct of the man in the home, as the head and leader of the family. **David Guzik** says in his commentary: **“The godly leader demonstrates his leadership ability first in his own home; Paul recognized that it is in the home where our Christianity is first demonstrated. It is true that a child may rebel from even a good home; but is the rebellion *because* of the parents or *in spite* of their job as parents? This is the question that must be asked.”**

- 18) Look up the following verses on fatherhood and **select the one that speaks most to your heart** and explain why.  
**Deuteronomy 6:5-7; Proverbs 3:11 & 12; Proverbs 4:1 & 2; Proverbs 14:26; Colossians 3:21; and 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12.**

- 19) In **1 Timothy 3:6** Paul warns that a leadership role is not be given to a **novice**. Record his reason for this.

I like what **David Guzik** says about this verse: “**Novice is literally ‘newly planted.’ When someone first comes to Jesus, it isn’t good to put them into a place of leadership until they have been allowed to grow long enough to put down some deep roots.**”

- 20) Paul concludes his qualifications for Overseers in **verse 7**. Record the verse below.

Paul states that an overseer must have a **good testimony** (or reputation) not only **within** the church but **outside** of it. What do these other Scriptures say concerning this?

**Romans 12:17 -**

**2 Corinthians 6:3 -**

**2 Corinthians 8:21 –**

- 21) Moving on to the qualifications for **deacons**, read **1 Timothy 3:8-13**. Deacons are what we might call the “practical servants or ministers” of the church. This practical ministry was first born in Acts, chapter 6. Look up **Acts 6:1-4** and record in your own words the reason this became a necessary ministry.
- 22) Most of the qualifications in **1 Timothy 3:8-13** are the same as for overseers, but there are a couple of exceptions. One is that we do not find **able to teach** in the list. However, what does **verse 9** state as a must to be qualified?

The **Bible Knowledge Commentary** states, “**Most important of all, deacons must be men of spiritual depth. Specifically, they should be men who understand and hold fast the deep truths of the faith.**”

Commentator **Albert Barnes** adds, **“Though not a preacher, yet his influence and example would be great, and a man who held material error ought not to be in office.”**

- 23) In **verse 10** Paul says that a deacon must first be **tested**. The Greek word used is “dokimazo.” It is the same as is used for **testing metals**. A similar word, “dokimion, is used in **1 Peter 1:7**. Record that verse below.
- 24) Look again at **Acts 6:1-4**. Record **Acts 6:3** below that describes the qualities the Apostles were looking for in deacons.
- 25) Another difference we find in these qualification for deacons is in **verse 11**. Record **1 Timothy 3:11** below.

Some commentators believe (such as Adam Clarke) that this verse refers, not to wives of deacons, but to deaconesses. David Guzik states that the original wording permits either possibility. The fact that wives of the overseers (pastors/elders) are not mentioned have led some to believe that this verse most likely refers to women in the office of deacons, but in either case, these women are to pass a test of qualification, just as the men.

The word used in this verse for “slander” means a “false accuser” and is actually the same word used for “devils” or Satan. That is how seriously sinful slander is to God. Record the following verse below.

**Psalm 101:5 & 7 -**

**Proverbs 10:18 -**

- 26) Paul concludes his list of the qualifications for deacons in **verse 13**. What does this verse say?

- 27) Read **verses 14-16**. Paul tells Timothy in **verse 15** the reason why he is writing these instructions to him. What is that reason?
- 28) What does he call the church in this verse?

As we come to our final verse in this chapter, some scholars believe this verse may have actually been a hymn sung by the early church.

**Charles Spurgeon** states, **“Observe that the comprehensive summary of the gospel here given is contained in six little sentences, which run with such regularity of measure in the original Greek, that some have supposed them to be an ancient hymn; and it is possible that they may have been used as such in the early church.”**

- 29) Contained in this verse is the whole Gospel, which Paul states, without controversy, is the **great mystery of godliness**. From this verse, write down, item by item, what that mystery is.
- 30) Using your list above, write down next to each of the following Scripture references which “mystery” the Scripture refers to.

**Matthew 3:16** \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 22:41-43** \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 24:51** \_\_\_\_\_

**John 1:14** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ephesians 3:8** \_\_\_\_\_

The mystery of the Gospel, in every glorious detail, has been entrusted to the church, who is the guardian over it to keep it and protect it. The church is to be the “pillar” which lifts up this truth for all the world to see, and the “ground” and foundation upon which that truth stands. How important, then, is our **conduct** within the church, to be the picture of Christ’s relationship to it. And how important it is for that **mystery of godliness** not to be compromised!

31) What is your greatest take-away from this lesson in chapter three?

This study was written and prepared by Shawn Van Hook, 2023