

Godly Oversight and Godly Overseers

Chapter 14

Audio Lesson: New Testament #68



Objective: To understand God's qualifications for church leadership.



For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.

– 1 Timothy 2:5-6

Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task.

– 1 Timothy 3:1

First Timothy is a pastoral epistle in which Paul detailed the purpose and priorities of the Church. Paul explained principles that are not affected by culture and should apply everywhere in all generations of the church. Paul presents the truth of the Gospel for the Church when he declares that there is only one God, not many, and there is only one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus.

For example, the verses that we read in 1 Timothy 2:9-12 make Paul unpopular with many women today. Paul was not saying that women cannot minister. But he was repeating something that he often said: There is a divine order in which Christ oversees the church, a man should oversee his wife and family, and men should oversee the local church. The Bible gives men and women absolute equality, but it assigns them different roles. God's Word clearly gives men the responsibility to be the leader of the home and in the church. So, a woman can perform any ministry in the local church *as long as* she is under the authority of the male elders of the church.

In chapter 3, Paul gave a long list of qualifications and responsibilities for elders and deacons. The elders have the spiritual responsibilities and the deacons are to take care of the practical areas of the church. Very strict standards are given for the elders and deacons, and even for their wives. Some of these standards include being faithful, being able to teach, not being given to drunkenness, not being violent but gentle, not being quarrelsome, not being lovers of money, being able to manage their family well, and having a good reputation in the community.

In chapter 4, Paul wrote about *apostasy* — when people leave the faith and follow deceiving spirits. Not everything that is spiritual is of the Holy Spirit. Some people are seeking a spiritual experience instead of seeking God, and they open themselves up to dangerous spirits. Paul reminded Timothy that the teaching of the church should be based on Scripture, and training in godliness is even more valuable than physical training. In chapter 5, Paul explained how to relate

to older men, younger men, younger women, older women, and widows as if they were family. He also urged the church to guard the reputations of its leaders.



1. **True** or **False**? 1 Timothy was written for elders of the church.
2. True or **False**? Paul teaches that, as long as people sincerely believe something, they will be saved.
3. **True** or **False**? Scripture says that men and women are equal, but they have different roles.
4. **True** or **False**? Paul taught that church leaders are to be held to a higher standard than members.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

5. Why did Paul not want women in leadership over men? (Choose all that apply)
 - a. **Men are responsible for shepherding in the home and the church.**
 - b. **It goes against God's model for the roles of men and women.**
 - c. Paul did not like women.
 - d. Women were inferior.
6. What are some of the qualifications for an elder? (Choose all that apply)
 - a. **Husband of one wife**
 - b. Wealthy and from a good family
 - c. Well-educated
 - d. **Good reputation even with non-Christians**
7. Why did the apostles decide that the Church needed deacons? (Choose all that apply)
 - a. They did not want to work so hard.
 - b. **Some widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.**
 - c. **The apostles needed to focus on prayer and the teaching of Word of God.**
 - d. Some men in the church wanted a position of honor.

8. What are some qualifications for a deacon? (Choose all that apply)
- a. **Worthy of respect**
 - b. **Sincere**
 - c. **Not given to drunkenness**
 - d. An excellent preacher
9. Why are the qualifications for elders and deacons and their wives so important?
- a. **The health of a church depends on godly leadership.**
 - b. Anyone who wants to be an elder or deacon should be allowed to become one.
 - c. They need to be popular with the community.
 - d. The qualifications can be relaxed if necessary to find someone to fill the roles.
10. As in the days of Paul, there are many deceiving spirits today. What did Paul teach should be the standard?
- a. All spiritual experiences are to be respected.
 - b. **All spiritual experiences are to be judged according to the truth of Scripture.**
 - c. All spiritual experiences are to be judged by church elders.
 - d. There should be no spiritual experiences in the church.
11. According to Paul, how are we to treat others in the church?
- a. Like members of a special club
 - b. Like royalty
 - c. **Like family**
 - d. Like neighbors



Being a leader in the church means great responsibility and hard work. What are some ways that you can support and encourage the leaders in your local church?



Praise God for the leaders in your church. Thank God for the leadership standards that He requires because they help promote an effective church. Ask God to help the leaders of your church to live godly lives, so they can be good examples for Him. Ask God to help those who preach to watch their doctrine closely, so that the people will not be led astray. Thank God, if He has put you in a leadership role, and ask Him for the strength to honor Him in that role.



Going Deeper

1. Why did Paul command such high standards for the elders and deacons who were going to lead the churches started by Timothy? _____

2. How would you describe and apply the differences between an elder and a deacon? _____

3. Locate and apply all the faithful sayings of Paul to Timothy in this first letter to him. _____

4. Why was Paul so emphatic in chapter 5 about the importance of the discipline that Timothy was to enforce when a pastor had a moral failure? _____

5. How do you apply the exhortation of Paul (in 4:7, 8), that we are to exercise ourselves in godliness as well as in physical exercise because exercise in godliness is profitable for this world and the next? _____

6. How do you apply the teaching of Paul in chapter 6 that we are not to be getting our values from the culture but from the Scripture? _____

7. How do you personally apply the solemn charge Paul gives Timothy (in 6:4-12) that a spiritual leader is to flee materialistic gain and pursue godliness? _____
