

1 TIMOTHY

Lesson 4 w/ Answers

1 Timothy 3:1-13

In this lesson, we will be examining what Paul wrote to Timothy regarding church leadership. Paul's instructions to Timothy are clear about what is expected of church leaders so that Timothy will not be influenced by the false teachers at Ephesus. Additionally, we will look at Paul's instructions dealing with two specific leadership positions with the church at Ephesus: Overseers and Deacons.

Nothing is more critical within the local church than the selection of God-honoring faithful leaders. This is true at all levels within the church, and it is as important today as it was then. Church leadership always plays a critical role in sharing in the shepherding of God's people, the work of the Gospel, and protecting the faith. Paul wanted to be clear to Timothy, his "son" in the faith, what those expectations were, as the church at Ephesus faced the challenges of the day.

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and consider the following:

1. Paul makes a statement in 1 Timothy 3:1-2, "if anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task." Regarding this position, he says that the most important criteria is what?
 - a. ANSWER: Paul indicates that the most important qualification is being above reproach. This is more important than any other requirement. Reproach, i.e., bringing discredit, or blame, or criticism, to one's position or to the church he serves, does great harm to the church's ability to proclaim the Gospel message.
2. What else is Paul pointing out in 1 Timothy 3:1 regarding the motives of anyone desiring to be a church leader?
 - a. ANSWER: Because the person is being considered for a position of authority within the church, that person's motives must be pure. He should regard this position as a "noble task." If that is not his motivation, then the church should not consider him. We should never seek a position of authority within the church for personal reasons. This is what Paul was being accused of, and clearly others at Ephesus were seeking these positions—and not out of noble desires. Our reasons and motives for wanting to be in a leadership position must also be above reproach. We should humbly serve the Lord in whatever capacity that we can serve within the church body, and never out of selfish ambition, jealousy, or greed.
3. Paul then cites a list of 12 qualifications for becoming an overseer. List each of them, and note why each specific one is important in a leadership position (see 1 Tim. 3:2-7):
 - a. ANSWER 1: The person should be the husband of one wife. Polygamy and promiscuity were rampant in the early church at that time, so this was taken to mean that no one with a divorce in their background was eligible. Later, the church would even expand the understanding of the passage further to include widowers who married again.
 - b. ANSWER 2: The person should be sober-minded and not easily influenced; they should be a serious, logical, studious, and spiritual person.
 - c. ANSWER 3: The person should be self-controlled and disciplined.
 - d. ANSWER 4: The person should be respectable. They should be recognized by those around them as having a lifestyle and witness that reflects biblical and community standards of behavior and morale values.
 - e. ANSWER 5: The person should be hospitable. This is a natural trait of anyone who follows Christ; they should willingly show love and care to others, often without being asked to do so.
 - f. ANSWER 6: The person should be able to teach. They should have a knowledge of God's Holy Word that can be passed to others.
 - g. ANSWER 7: The person should not be a drunkard; It is somewhat obvious that they would not consider someone who is unduly influenced by drugs or alcohol.
 - h. ANSWER 8: The person should not be quarrelsome. They should seek every way possible to live at peace with everyone, putting their interests below the interest of others, and with an ability to relate to all people.
 - i. ANSWER 9: The person should not be a lover of money. In other words, they should not be motivated to act, think, or behave in any way based on a love of money.
 - j. ANSWER 10: The person should manage their own household well, keeping their children submissive. This externally reflects the maturity and influence of the Holy Spirit within the individual.
 - k. ANSWER 11: The person should not be a recent convert. Mature Christians are needed for these positions, if they are to teach and set an example for others.
 - l. ANSWER 12: The person should be well-thought-of by outsiders. Without the respect and acknowledgement of others, leaders cannot positively influence the people whom they are attempting to lead.

4. Paul then lists 11 qualifications for a Deacon, i.e., one who serves the needs of the local church body. List them below; you will note that they mirror very closely the qualifications desired for Overseers pertinent to Question 3 above.
- a. ANSWER 1: The person must be dignified.
 - b. ANSWER 2: The person must not be "double-tongued."
 - c. ANSWER 3: The person should not be addicted to much wine.
 - d. ANSWER 4: The person should not be greedy for dishonest gain.
 - e. ANSWER 5: The person should hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.
 - f. ANSWER 6: Deacon candidates are to be tested first, and only asked to serve if they prove themselves blameless.
 - g. ANSWER 7: Deacon candidate wives must be dignified and not slanderers
 - h. ANSWER 8: The person must be sober-minded.
 - i. ANSWER 9: The person should be faithful in all things.
 - j. ANSWER 10: The person should be the husband of one wife.
 - k. ANSWER 11: The person should manage their children and their own households well.
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Paul was very specific about the qualifications of these two leadership positions within the church, and even today many churches continue to follow his instructions. These same qualities should be something that we seek in anyone who will fill, or is filling, a leadership position.

Further, we should recognize that within the lost communities surrounding us, many of these qualifications are what they believe indicate a person is a follower of Christ. How do you stack up against these qualifications? Are there areas that jump out at you that require you to change your behavior? Let's take time to examine ourselves and our walk with Christ, and explore how we can improve it, so that our witness in the community becomes even more effective.

In Christ,

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