

## Lesson 2

### BIBLICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LEADERSHIP

1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9

#### I. General Thoughts

- A. These are the biblical requirements (qualifications) for an elder in a church, but they can be applied to any leader in Christ's Kingdom.
- B. God is not looking for perfect people but for people who desire to follow Christ and the moral Law of God. All leaders fail from time to time but leaders who fail confess their sin, accept responsibility for their actions and move on.

#### II. Desire Qualifications (1 Tim. 3:1)

- A. A person must desire to be a leader before he can be a leader.
- B. It is not wrong to desire to be a leader. However, desire alone does not make one a leader.

#### III. Personal Qualifications

##### Moral

1. Above reproach (1 Tim. 3:2). He is not a stumbling block to others, having nothing in his life which would cause disgrace to the Lord or cause people to gossip about him. When he sins, he confesses, repents, walks by faith in Christ and seeks the filling of the Spirit (Phil. 1:21; Eph. 5:18).
2. Husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:2).
  - a. The strict interpretation is one wife in a lifetime. He is to have only one wife in his whole life. If his wife dies, he is to remain single. Objections: (1) The Bible allows for remarriage after death of a mate (1 Cor. 7:39). (2) It would also forbid a single man from holding the office of elder.
  - b. The broader interpretation is one wife at a time, forbidding any type of polygamy. (1) The Greek word means "a one kind of a woman man," indicating faithfulness to one woman. (2) The Bible allows re-marriage after the death of a mate. (3) This view would allow a person divorced before salvation to remarry and hold an office providing he marries a believer. (4) This view also allows for a Christian man who is the innocent party in a divorce to remarry a Christian woman and hold the office of elder (Matt. 5:31).
  - c. This verse implies that a leader should have a stable marriage and not be involved in extra-marital affairs. It also implies honesty and communication to produce a spirit of oneness.
3. Temperate (1 Tim. 3:2). He is to be moderate in all things, not given to excesses of any kind. He knows when to stop—food and drink, work and play, saving and spending, rebuke and encouragement, etc.
4. Self-control (1 Tim. 3:2). He demonstrates self-control in attitude and actions, using good common sense about life—not impulsive, given to extremes, over-reactive, given to panic.
5. Respectable (1 Tim. 3:2). He has an orderly life that includes neatness, promptness and personal dress.
6. Not given to much wine. An elder may drink wine but he is not to be addicted to wine or linger over the cup. Wine was drunk as a food staple. Due to the abuse of alcohol, it might be best not to use it (setting aside a Christian's liberty) for the good of the church and culture (Rom. 14:21). Certainly leaders should think twice before using wine (Prov. 31:4-5).
7. Not quarrelsome (1 Tim 3:3). He is not a troublemaker, contentious person. Differences are settled peaceably whenever possible with love, gentleness, patience and kindness.

8. Not violent (1 Tim. 3:3). He does not lose patience with people and resort to physical blows to settle arguments. He is not always seeking a fight. He seeks all the facts before drawing a conclusion on the matter.
9. Gentle (1 Tim.3:3). He must be willing to address injustices in a quiet, peaceful way without being harsh. He must listen to the wrongdoer, working to restore rather than bringing immediate church discipline.
10. Not a love of money (1 Tim. 3:3). He is not to love money for himself or be greedy for bigger and better personal or church funds. It does not say an elder cannot be wealthy but he cannot love money. Christian leadership brings with it many temptations to abuse finances and also to be bribed by money. Many evangelists and preachers get rich in the ministry and to do so cheapens the gospel and dishonors Christ. God's leader should be adequately remunerated (1 Cor. 9:7-14; 1 Tim. 5:17-18). It is not money but the love of money which is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:9-10). Love of money corrupts and causes one to compromise his convictions. The issue for Christian leaders is contentment. They must believe they are where God wants them and trust God to meet their needs and their family's needs (Phil. 4:11-12). If we believe that God is truly in control, we should be satisfied with our life's situation. Pursuing wealth conflicts with pursuing Christ (Matt. 6:19-33).
11. Not overbearing (Tit. 1:8). He should have a positive, Christlike life, centered in doing good, wholesome things.
12. Upright (Tit. 1:8). He must have a holy walk with the Lord Jesus Christ, separated unto Him and desirous to conduct his life and the life of the church according to the Word of God.
13. Holy (Tit. 1:8). He must have a life consecrated unto God, relating job, money, attitudes, ministry, wife, children, friends, etc., unto Christ.

#### **Social**

1. Hospitable (1 Tim. 3:2). He must be "a lover of strangers," opening his life and home to other Christians. This implies he must be a people-person—people oriented, people-centered, a people mover. He demonstrates relational qualities. Hospitality has nothing to do with entertainment or impressing people but everything to do with making people feel welcome and wanted. Obviously the wife has to be committed to this as well.
2. Manages His Own Family Well (1 Tim. 4:4). He must be the governmental and spiritual leader of his home, having his wife and children in submission. The constant demands of the ministry may cause a leader to neglect his family. Family and ministry must be kept in balance. He must spend quality and quantity time with his wife and children—spiritual activities and play. Children are to submit to the father but that is difficult to do if he is an absentee father (Deut. 6:4-9). The wife must submit to her husband (Eph. 5:21) but this is almost impossible to do if he is never home (communication with her husband is everything for a woman). If a man cannot govern his home, he cannot lead in the church.
3. His Children Obey Him With Proper Respect (1 Tim. 3:4). He must have children who honor and obey their parents. He must be able to discipline and control his children with love and patience.

#### **IV. Spiritual Qualifications**

- A. Not a Recent Convert (1 Tim. 3:6). He should not be a new Christian but show signs of genuine maturity in Christ. No matter how fine a leader, or how wealthy, or how dynamic a person, he should be a Christian for a good while before becoming an elder. The basic things of the Christian life should have become second nature to him. He doesn't waver on doctrine and is consistent on issues of Christian character and action. He should be one who has suffered somewhat for Christ. He is to display humility and thankfulness so as not to play into the hands of the devil. A new Christian needs time to mature and to grow in areas of discipleship so that he can handle the responsibilities required for one who would lead God's people.
- B. Believing and Behaving Children (Tit. 1:6)

1. Faithful Children. The word “believer” can be translated “faithful.” Therefore some have taken this to mean faithful (submissive) children who have good behavior patterns. It does not necessarily mean that they are saved children. This would be consistent with 1 Tim. 3:4. Furthermore, it is God who saves one’s children, not the father or mother. Yet, the parents do discipline their children.
  2. Believing Children. Another view is to see this as “believing” (regenerate) children. This is probably what this means, for it is the word *pistuo*, which is most often used for saving faith in Christ. The problem practically comes when children get into their teenage years and are very rebellious spiritually. The best position seems to be that an elder should have believing (saved) children as a rule, but there may be exceptions. For instance, if a man had four children and three were believers and one was not, would he be disqualified if the believing child was under control? The leader of the church would have to decide this issue.
- C. A Good Reputation (1 Tim. 3:7). He must have a good reputation with those inside and outside the local church. This involves his witness or testimony. He must be a man of integrity, known for his honesty and fairness, justice to all, regardless of race, class or economic status. His exemplary life opens doors for effective witness.

#### **V. Teaching Qualifications**

- A. Able to Teach (1 Tim. 3:2). He should be ready, willing and able to teach and be skilled in instruction of any one of the basics of the Christian Faith. An elder must teach but a deacon does not have to teach (1 Tim. 2:7; 4:6, 11, 13; 5:17; 6:1-3).
  - B. Encourage From the Bible (Tit. 1:9). He must hold to the gospel and the whole counsel of God as found in the Bible. He must have a practical working knowledge of the Word of God.
  - C. Refute Unbelievers (Tit. 1:9). He must be able to correct errors, expose false doctrine and guard the flock from heresies and false teachers. He must have a basic theological understanding of the Bible to do this effectively.
-