



Congregational Organization

Qualification of Elders – Pt 1

1 Timothy 3:1-7





Titles or Descriptions

- Elders, presbyters – a reference to their age, experience, maturity
- Bishops, overseers – describes their work
- Shepherds – illustrates their work



Qualifications vs. *Dis*qualifications

- There is an important attitude about these qualities.
- Are they given to qualify or disqualify men for service? – Titus 1:5
 - ILLUSTRATION: Recruiters vs. Human Resources
- **What does the Scriptures Say?** (Romans 4:3; Galatians 4:30)
 - Not, ‘What I think the Scripture means!’
 - If we make these more *lenient*, we are taking away from God’s word.
 - But, if we make them *stricter*, we are adding to God’s word!

What is the *Issue?*

- These are not **arbitrary qualifications**, they are logical!
- Each quality relates to his ***stewardship of the house of God.***
- They validate his ***right, ability and quality*** to collaborate a congregation of the Lord's church.
- **This is the issue!**



There Four Categories of Qualities

- Moral – Is this man ***morally*** suitable to oversee a local congregation?
- Knowledge – Does this man have the **necessary knowledge** to shepherd a local congregation?
- Managerial – Does this man have the **ability and experience** to manage the congregation?
- Social – Will this be man **available for** the members of his local congregation?



A Suggested Approach

- Take each characteristic and turn it into a question.
- “... If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.”
- Does this man desire the position of a bishop?
- Some questions must be answered ‘yes’ or ‘no’.
- Others require some judgment.
- None of the questions should require *interpretation! I.e. “How fervently must he desire the position?”*
- ILLUSTRATION: “He must *desire* the position. (I think) if he desired it, he would have a resume’ prepared.”

Preliminary Questions

Three
Characteristics



Is this a **Male**?



This *is* a faithful saying: If a **man** desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. (1 Timothy 3:1 NKJV)



if a man is blameless, the **husband** of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. (Titus 1:6 NKJV)

- In 1 Timothy 3:1, Paul uses a general term for human (***anthropos***), however, in verse 6 and Titus 1:6, he is more specific.
- He uses the Greek word ***aner*** to specify the husband (aner) of one wife (***gune***).
- ***Aner*** is never used of a woman

- This is a great example of a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ question. Is he a male or not?
- Not, “ He may be a male, but he’s not *masculine enough* for me.”
- *We will not address “sex assigned at birth” or how a person “identifies”, that’s another lesson.*

Does He **Desire** to be an Elder (1 Timothy 3:1) ?

- The Greek word, *orego*, means to stretch out toward, **aspire** (1 Timothy 3:1)
- He must want to **serve** (Matthew 20:25-28).
- He must not **serve** out of compulsion (1 Peter 5:2)
- He should not **serve** out of greed (Ibid).
- He must understand the role and work of an elder, believe he is qualified and desire the office.



Is He elderly?

- The term *elder* comes from *presbuteros* and is derived from *presbus*, an old man (Titus 1:5).
 - This is absolute, not relative
 - He does not have to be the oldest man in the congregation.
 - He does not have to be older than the average age of the congregation.
- Is he a youth, a young man, or a **mature** (elder) man?



How old is old enough? Old enough to be married, old enough to have children, old enough to demonstrate his ability to manage his children and house well, etc.



Moral Qualities

15 Characteristics



Is He Blameless?

- *What disqualifies everyone is obviously **false** (1 Timothy 3:2a; Titus 1:5)!*
- Blameless does not mean **perfect!**
- The Greek word, *anepileptos*, means **without reproach**.
- Vine defines it as, “not open to censure, irreproachable”.
- It cannot mean he never did anything wrong; has it been resolved, or is it still open to censure?

Is He Temperate, Sober-Minded?



- Is he temperate, sober-minded (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6,8)?
- ILLUSTRATION: A “Happy Drunk”
- Can he be serious?
 - “They watch for your souls” – Hebrews 13:17
 - This is a serious work; it must be approached with the utmost gravity!

Is He of Good Behavior?

- Orderly, decorous, **modest**, respectable (1 Timothy 3:2).
 - Would his behavior hamper the work?
 - Would his behavior bring reproach on the church?
- “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to **walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,**” (Ephesians 4:1 NKJV)

On This Date 25 Years Ago: Kenny Chesney & Tim McGraw Were Arrested For Riding a Police Horse & Allegedly Choking A Cop



By Eamon Rice — June 3, 2025 — ENTERTAINMENT



Is He Given to Wine (1 Tim. 3:3a; Titus 1:7e)?

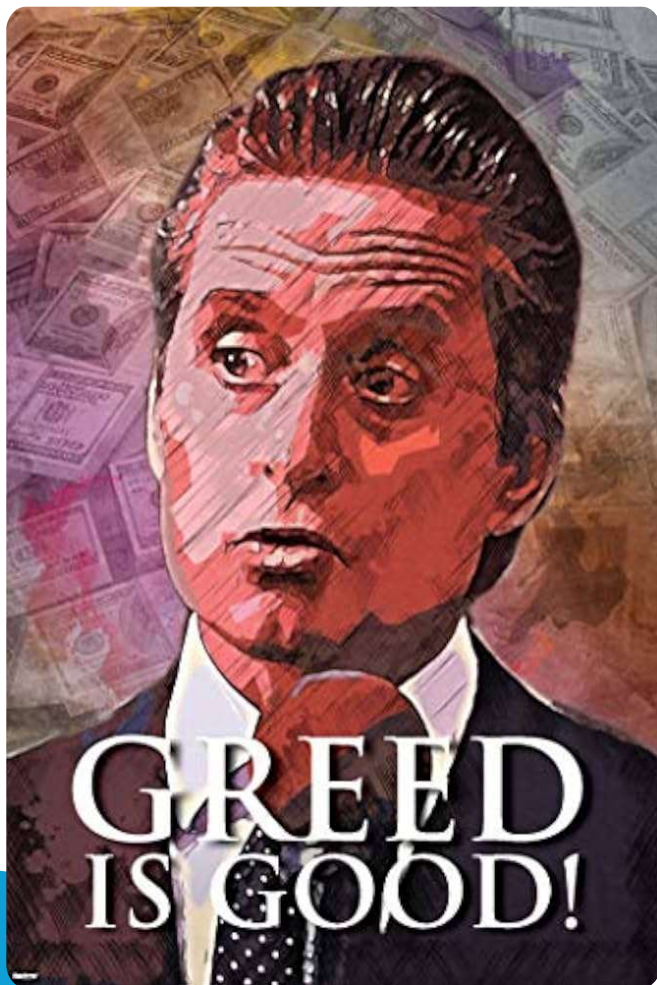
- This should require little explanation.
- Is he a 'toper'?
 - A toper is a person who habitually drinks alcohol in large quantities or excessively. It is a term used to describe a heavy drinker or a chronic drunkard, often implying someone who drinks frequently, such as a frequent visitor to pubs or bars.
- There is no good reason for a Christian to need an alcoholic beverage.





Is He Violent (1 Tim 3:3b; Titus 1:7g)?

- Again, little explanation is necessary.
- "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." (Matt 10:16 NKJV)
- Owning firearms, practicing martial arts *does not make a man violent!*
- **Violence** makes a man violent.



Is He Greedy for Money (1 Tim 3:3c; Titus 1:7g)?

- He will be a steward of the Lord's money.
- This can be significant.
 - ILLUSTRATION: St. Monica's in Maple Heights
 - Presents an inordinate temptation to one who is greedy.
- It is also a poor example.

Is He Covetous (1 Tim 3:3f) ?

- Distinction between jealousy and envy. If a man is jealous, he wants something *like* another person has. If a man is envious he wants *what* another person has.
- While one can be covetous of *anything*, the Greek word here *philarguros*, means *unavaricious*, **very greedy** for money; It is like 'greedy for money' but stronger.



Is He Gentle (1 Tim 3:3d) ?

- The Greek word *epiekes*, means 'appropriate'. Does he behave inappropriately? Is he a 'gentleman'?
- His conduct will be scrutinized by outsiders and his flock; will he embarrass you?

Is He Quarrelsome (1 Tim 3:3e) ?

(.a)
/'kwɑ:rəlsəm/ - [quar·rel·some]

quarrelsome

Apt or disposed to quarrel; given to brawls and contention; easily irritated or provoked to contest; irascible; choleric.

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But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor *do* the churches of God. (1Co 11:16 NKJV)

Does He Love What is Good (Titus 1:8b) ?

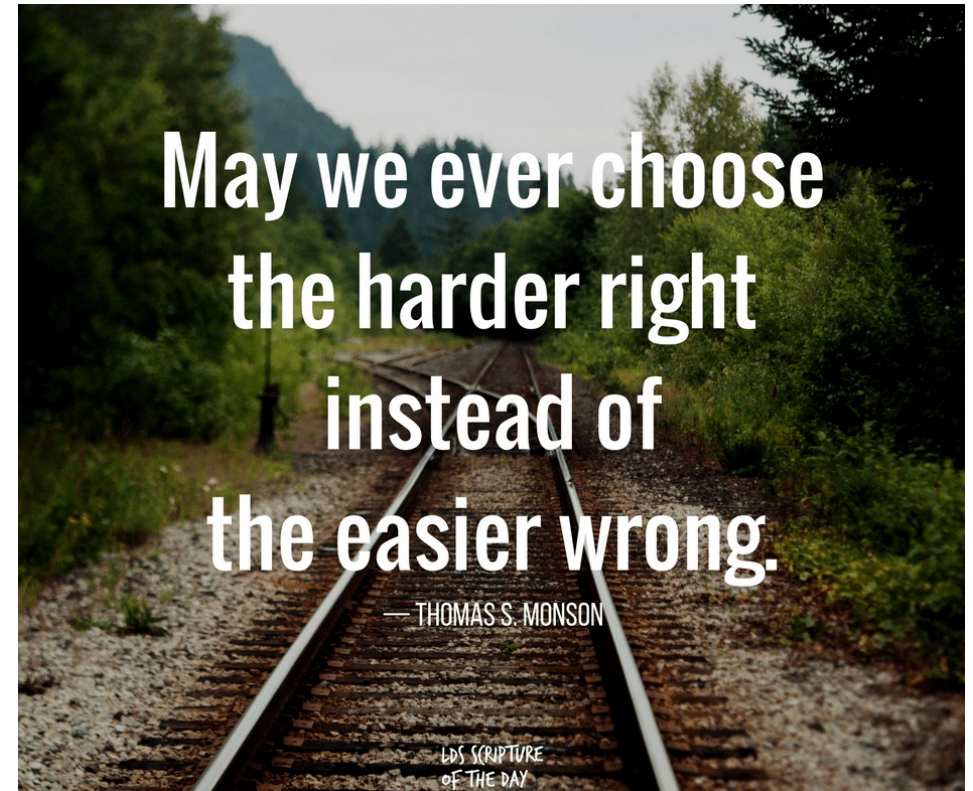


“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”

(Philippians 4:8 NKJV)

Is He Just (Titus 1:8d) ?

- The Greek word here is *dikaios*, **righteous**.
- It means to do what is right, either by the standards of God or the standards of men.
- Does he choose to do the right thing?



Is He Well Spoken of by 'Outsiders' (1 Timothy 3:7) ?

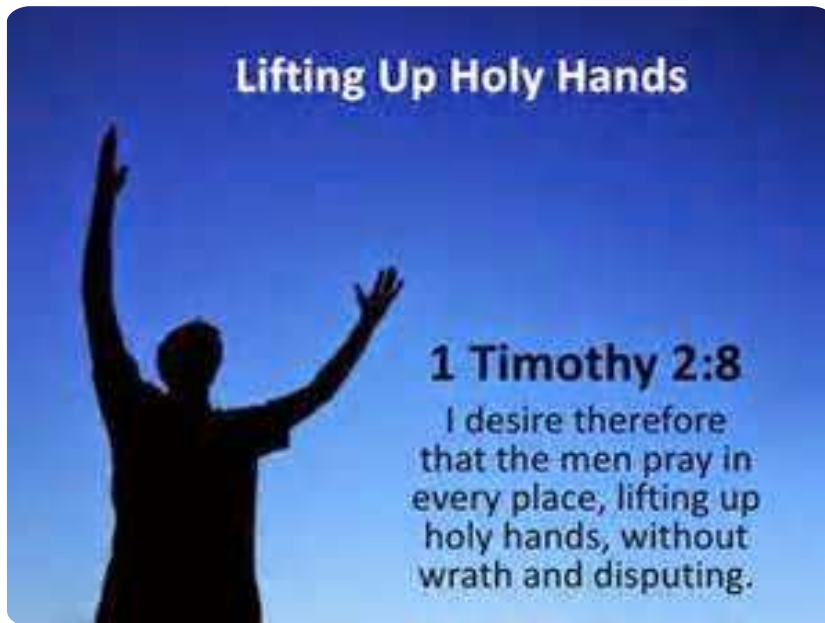
- “Oh! You go to Rivermont? Doesn't _____ go there? He's such a wonderful man!”
- “I wouldn't go to *that church*, because _____ goes there and he _____!”
- We are being scrutinized by the world, and they love hypocrites!





Is He Self-Willed (Titus 1:7c) ?

- Greek *authades*, self-willed, self-pleasing, arrogant.
- Does he have to have his way?
- Is he open to others' opinions or is his way the only right way? Cf. Philippians 2:5-8; Matthew 5:4



Is He Holy (Titus 1:8e) ?

- Remember: *What disqualifies everyone is obviously **false** (1 Timothy 3:2a; Titus 1:5)!*
- This is a different word from *hagios*, typically rendered holy.
 - It *does not mean* sinless, or perfect.
 - This is the Greek word ‘*hosios*’, “religiously right, holy,” as opposed to what is unrighteous or polluted. It is commonly associated with righteousness” (Vine)
- Does he ***follow the Lord’s*** instructions?

Social Qualities

Is He Hospitable (1 Tim 3:2f; Titus 1:8a) ?

- The Greek word for hospitable is *philoxenos*, the love of strangers.
 - It means to be fond of guests, hospitable. (Strong's)
 - He will need to be *open to members of the congregation and guests* as part of his service.



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Conclusion of Part One

Next week we will study
Knowledge and Managerial
Qualities and (Lord willing)
complete our study.