

## Chapter 3 “Office Of Overseer”

**1TI 3:1 It is a trustworthy [reliable] statement [saying]: if any man aspires to the office of overseer [bishop], it is a fine [noble, excellent, good] work he desires to do.**

**“It is a trustworthy statement”** - (1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; Tit. 3:8).

**“If any [Christian] man aspires to the office of overseer”**

- 1) “office” - There is no word in the original corresponding to this word, but the translators have rendered “episkope” by the phrase “office of a bishop.”
- 2) Used 4 times in N.T. See KJV
  - “visitation” - Lk. 19:44; 1 Pet. 2:12.
  - “bishoprick” or “office” - Acts 1:20.
  - “office of bishop” - 1 Tim. 3:1.

The verb form of this word is “episkopeo” and occurs 2 times in N.T. “oversee, take the oversight.” (Heb. 12:15; 1 Pet. 5:2).

- 2) “Office” is used in the older sense of “function, work, duty.”
- 3) It is not used in the modern sense of a office to which one is appointed or assumed for a period of time - long or short. It is best to think of it as a work or service.
  - “work” - Gr. “ergon” is a task or function or service.
  - Lit. “faithful” [Gr. pistos] [is] the word, if anyone aspires to oversight, he desires a good work.”
1. It is right and proper to aspire to be a spiritual overseer of the church, but it is not a qualification.
  - a. One should take the office willingly. (1 Pet. 5:2).
  - b. No one should be forced or pressured to serve. (1 Pet. 5:2).
  - c. It does take a lot of preparation to be a good elder, and it takes continuous preparation to remain a good and effective elder.
2. It takes years of study and submission to the will of God.
3. We should encourage more of our young men to aspire one day to be elders.
4. Good elders do not happen by accident.

## “it is a fine work he desires to do”

1. There is no greater work than to oversee God’s family (the church).
2. It is a work that should be accepted with great faith, great humility, great zeal, great dedication, and with great love.
  - a. Elders are not mere controllers of the building and money.
  - b. They are to be dynamic leaders working under the “Chief Shepherd” - Jesus Christ.
3. Observe Paul affirms it is “a fine work.”
  - a. It was not merely an honor
  - b. It was not a office to wield autocratic power.
  - c. It is a work with awesome responsibility.

## Names For This Office

1. **Bishops** (episkopos) - bishop, overseer, ruler.
  - a. It occurs 5 times in N.T.. (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7; Phil. 1:1; 1 Pet. 2:25).
  - b. It appears 2 times in the uninspired footnotes of the KJV in 2 Tim. 4:22; Tit. 3:15.
2. **Elders** (presbuteros) - “Older one.”
  - a. It does not necessarily mean one in advanced in years.
  - b. The men described have children under their control. (1 Tim. 3:4).
  - c. Most men are not advanced in age at that point in their lives.
  - d. New Testament churches had a plurality of elders. (Acts 20:17, 28; 14:23; Tit. 1:5).
3. **Shepherds** (poimen - poymane) - One who tends a flock - feeding, protection. etc. See Eph. 4:11.
  - a. Acts 20:17, 28.
    - 1) Elders called “bishops, overseers.”
    - 2) They are instructed to “**poimaino**” [poy mi no] meaning to “feed, tend shepherd.” See 1 Pet. 5:2.
  - b. Peter gave these instructions to “elders” (shepherds). ( Pet. 5:1-4).

1PE 5:1 Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed,

1PE 5:2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness;

1PE 5:3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

1PE 5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

4. **Pastors** (poimen) - It means “shepherd, pastor.”

a. The word comes from a Latin word meaning “shepherd.” See Eph. 4:11

b. This word translated “pastor” is elsewhere translated “shepherd.”

5. **Presbyters** (presbuterion - pres boo ter ee on) - presbytery, a body of elders.

a. It occurs 3 times in N.T..

1) It is used in Luke 22:66 of the assembly of elders [the Sanhedrin].

LUK 22:66 And when it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their council chamber, saying,

2) Again in Acts 22:5 it is used in this way. “whole council of elders” ESV “”all the eldership” YLT  
“all the council of the elders” - NASB.

3) The singular of the word is “presbyter” and has the idea of “older one” in an official sense.

4) The plural is used of a body of elders in a local congregation.

1TI 4:14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the **presbytery**.

6. **Stewards** (oikonomos) - one entrusted with something, a steward.

a. Titus.. 1:7

b. Elders have been entrusted with the family of God.

## **Churches**

1. New Testament autonomous churches had a plurality of elders or bishops. (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Phil. 1:1).

2. These men had authority over the church as under-shepherds of Christ. (1 Pet. 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-30).

3. They were to lead both by authority and by example. (1 Pet. 5:1-4; 1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:7, 17; Tit. 1:10, 11).

### **Note:**

1. Those who believe elders have no authority are ignorant of the New Testament.

2. Though they are not to “Lord it over” the flock, they are to exercise leadership and authority over the flock.

3. They are under-shepherds of the Great Shepherd - Jesus. (1 Pet. 5:4).

## **New Testament Churches Were Autonomous**

1. A plurality of elders governed a single church. (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Phil. 1:1).

2. The idea of one man governing a congregation or a plurality of congregations is foreign to the New Testament.
3. A church, not having elders, should be governed by the men of congregation since men are to be the leaders.
4. This arrangement should not be encouraged, but should be used only until men are qualified to serve as elders.
5. Some preachers or congregations do not want elders because of a power struggle.
6. This is usually a question of control or power.

### **Selection Of Elders**

1. There is no method designated in the New Testament.
2. Here are scriptural ways it can be done.
  - a. Member nominate and objections evaluated by elders.
    - 1) Members at large can raise objections or give approval.
    - 2) Someone or a group must still decide if one is to be appointed as an elder.
  - b. Certain number of members must nominate before a man is considered.
    - 1) Though the eldership is not a popularity contest, it may be unwise to consider someone who has been nominated by only one person.
    - 2) This is especially dangerous where the membership does not get involved in the selection and go along with about anyone nominated and do not want to rock the boat.
    - 3) Elders must be qualified, and must have the respect of the congregation.
  - c. Elders nominate and permit congregations to raise objections.
    - 1) Most elders are open to the suggestions of the congregation on these nominations.
    - 2) One danger is that lukewarm or compromising elders appoint men like themselves.
    - 3) One plus is that this method holds down confrontation from one who comes into the eldership to become a troublemaker.
    - 4) Faithful elders will usually only nominate those who are faithful and who are not troublemakers.
  - d. If no elders, a committee or members at large might nominate. The church can raise objections.
  - e. It appears that it is scriptural for an evangelist to appoint men to the eldership. (Tit. 1:5).
    - 1) The details of these appointments are not given.
    - 2) It is clear the men appointed must meet the qualification for an elder.
    - 3) It is assumed members are involved in these appointments.

- 4) There is no evidence that elders were appointed in congregations and the membership had no input.
- f. The apostles appointed the seven selected by the church. (Acts 6:1-6).
- g. The people found the men qualified (Acts 6:3), and the apostles appointed them. (Acts 6:6).

## Comments

1. An elder must be able to **deal with problems** on a daily basis.
  - a. Our literal, fleshly families have problems.
  - b. The best of spiritual families will have many problems, and there must be some tolerance for problems especially temporary problems.
  - c. Even the wife and children are affected by problems. How they are affected has strong influence on an elder and his ability to serve.
  - d. Many elders wear down because of the constant daily demands or other problems.
2. He must be able to **keep information confidential** - business meetings, working with members.
3. He must be able to **get along with others** - fellow-elders, deacons, members, etc.
4. He must be **willing to compromise on non-scriptural matters**.
  - a. Much of what goes on in a congregation is a matter of judgment or preference.
  - b. It is vital that elders learn the difference, and not be dogmatic or divisive over these matters.
5. He must be able to **accept criticism**.
  - a. Elders receive some praise.
  - b. They receive a lot of criticism and cannot serve effectively if they cannot handle it.
6. These qualifications listed are not for elders only.
  - a. Most of them are required of all Christians.
  - b. Elders are not exempt because they are leaders, but should show great maturity in these traits.
7. One should not feel guilty or useless or rejected because he does not qualify to be an elder.
  - a. God never intended all be elders.
  - b. Some of the best people in the church are not qualified or suited or motivated for the eldership.
  - c. Each member of the body of Christ is vital. (1 Cor. 12:14-31).

**1TI 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,**

“**overseer**” - Gr. “episkopos” - “bishop, overseer.”

“**above reproach**” - They were to be godly men with no scriptural objections to their appointment.

1. No man is sinless (Rom 3:23; 1 Jno. 1:7, 9).
2. “Must be a good man whose life cannot be spoken against.” Tay.
3. He must have a reputation beyond reproach and not open to censure.
4. Heresay must not be used to disqualify a man, but only fact.
5. “He must have a good reputation with those outside the church.” (1 Tim. 3:6a).

“**the husband of one wife**” - lit. a man of one woman (wife).

1. This means a **bachelor** cannot be an elder. Even Paul did not qualify as an elder, but Peter did. (1 Cor. 9:5; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).
2. This means a **woman** cannot be an elder.
3. This means an elder **must be married when appointed** and **not have more than one wife or less than one wife**.
  - a. Polygamy was not generally practiced in the 1st century.
  - b. There is no evidence it was practiced in the church.
  - c. Marriage is not required for all Christians. (1 Cor. 7).
    - 1) Apostles and preachers were not required to be married., but they had the right. (1 Cor. 9:5).
    - 2) Under some circumstances widows were not encouraged to marry. (1 Cor. 7:39, 40, 26) and under some circumstances they were. (1 Tim. 5:14).
    - 3) Elders and deacons only are required to be married. (1 Tim. 3:2, 12).
4. It means an elder must be **faithful to his one wife**.
  - a. “faithful to his one wife” - NEB
  - b. He must not be unfaithful to his wife - not a fornicator or womanizer.
  - c. It means he is to be a good and faithful husband.
5. It must not be a second marriage that violate God’s will or violates the qualification “above reproach.”

Not unscripturally Divorced The one who is scripturally divorced is “the husband of one wife.”	Not unmarried	Not unfaithful to his wife See NEB “faithful to his one wife”	Not in a homosexual marriage 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Rom. 1:18-31
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<p>Not a polygamist</p> <p>This was practiced by some Jews and Greeks.</p>	<p><b>Some say not a digamous</b>  A second marriage after the termination of the first. (This is not forbidden in scripture. (1 Cor. 7:39, 40; 1 Tim. 5:14). This doctrine was not developed until 2<sup>nd</sup> &amp; 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries. Moffit “he must be married only once” is not what the text says.</p>	<p>Not a womanizer or fornicator.</p> <p>We know some who claimed to be teachers were womanizers.</p>	<p>Not a bigamist</p> <p>Act of entering into a marriage while still legally married to another.</p>
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**Additional Notes:**

1. See 1 Tim. 5:14 - “*having been* wife of one husband”
  - a. There is no evidence for polyandry [having more than one husband at a time] in N.T. times.
  - b. She must have been faithful to her husband - not a fornicator and not have been in an unscriptural marriage.
  - c. Widows who did not meet this qualification were not to be included in the “enrolled widows” who served the church and were supported by it. (1 Tim. 5:9).
  - d. This did not mean they could not be helped. (Acts 6:1-3; Jas. 1:26, 27; Gal. 6:10; 1 Jo. 3:17, 18).
2. It is not logical that Paul would penalize a widow for a second scriptural marriage and this mate also died. (Matt. 19:9; 1 Tim. 5:14; 1 Cor. 7:39, 40).
3. The Greek words of 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; 5:9 are literally translated “a man (aner) of one woman” and “one man woman.” (aner).”
  - a. Greek henos andros gune - Lit. one man [husband] woman [wife] or wife of one man [husband]
  - b. “having been” is from “gegonuia.”
    - 1) This is 2 Perfect active participle nom. sing. of “ginomai.”
    - 2) NIV “has been faithful to her husband.”
  - c. The word “woman” (gune) is used in the sense of a “wife.” The word “man” (aner) is used in the sense of “husband.”

**Questions**

1. **Can a man who has been divorced be an elder?**
  - a. This is much debated.
  - b. A man who is scripturally divorced from his first wife is “the husband of one wife.”
  - c. Though one be technically “the husband of one wife,” there may be a lot of questions from those within the church and those outside the church about his character and his ability to manage his household well.
  - d. The complication of two households likely would make the eldership more difficult and perhaps create problems.

The same problem might occur in any second marriage even if it does not involve the eldership.

- e. Many scholars do not think it is an automatic disqualification, but all the facts must be considered.
- f. Churches sometimes have teachers or preachers who have been married before and claim to be the innocent party.
  - 1) These people often have great influence on the church.
  - 2) In some instances they may have as much or more influence on the church as the elders do.

**2. Can a man become an elder if his first wife died?**

- a. Yes. See 1 Cor. 7:39, 40; Rom. 7:2,3.
- b. He would have to be married and meet all the qualifications.

**3. Can a man become an elder if his wife has been married before?**

- a. The New Testament does not deal with this question.
- b. It is certain that she must be a very spiritual person, and should be role model for the congregation.
- c. A woman who had scripturally divorced would be free to remarry.
- d. Such an appointment, if it takes place, should certainly be carefully scrutinized to be sure it does not cause reproach to come on the eldership and the church.

**Some Questions About Wives**

**1. Must they [elders' wives] be Christians? Yes.**

- a. This is implied by the kind of family the elder must have to serve. He is to have an exemplary family.
- b. 1 Tim. 3:11 seems to refer the wives of both elders and deacons.
  - 1) The word “women” is from the Greek “gune” meaning “wife, woman.”
  - 2) They must be faithful believers.
  - 3) See 1 Cor. 9:5. The apostles were married to wives who were believers.
- c. A man married to a non-Christian would not be “above approach” in the church and would find it difficult, if not impossible, to fulfill all his duties as an elder.
- d. It takes a very special woman to be an elder’s wife.
- e. It is a every day job with great responsibility, and at times great stress.
- f. An elders wife has great impact on the effectiveness of the elder.



2. **What if an elder's wife dies while he is in office?**

- a. It does not seem logical this would automatically disqualify him.
- b. This does not take away from his spirituality or the spiritual qualities he has already demonstrated.
- c. He should resign if his reputation has been harmed, but resignation should not be automatic.

3. **What if an elder's wife becomes sick or disabled for a period of time or permanently.**

- a. Most believe the elder could continue to serve if the sickness or disability were for a short period of time.
- b. There would not be full agreement on long term sickness or disability.
- c. The answer is probably determined by considering if the elder is able to fulfill his duties.

4. **What if an elder's wife becomes unfaithful while he is in office?**

- a. This would disqualify him by bringing disgrace on his family and in some instances him.
- b. He does not have control of his family and would find it difficult to serve as an elder in respect to duties and reputation.
- c. Elder, like all husbands, are the leaders in the home. (Eph. 5:22).

- **“temperate”** (*nephalios*) - sober[serious], temperate [not excessive, moderate], abstinent in respect to wine; N.T. met. - vigilant [alert, watchful], circumspect. Metonymy is used of one word for another: (1) The container for the thing contained (2) A man keeps a good table instead of good food..

1. 1 Tim. 3:2, 11; Tit. 2:2. See 1 Tim. 3:13

2. It is used figuratively here for “self-controlled, restrained.”

3. It can also mean “alert, watchful, vigilant”

4. McCord has “clear-headed.”

**Note:**

- The original word sometimes meant a non-drinker, a complete abstainer even from mild use of wine.
- The secondary meaning is that of soberness or sanity of mind.
- It does not appear to have been used in the original sense here. (1 Tim. 5:23).
- Strong drink is certainly dangerous and should be avoided.
- **“prudent”** (*sophron*) - of sound mind, sane, temperate, discreet, cautious, wise, good judgment - 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8; 2:21). Modest, chaste - Tit. 2:5.

1. NIV “self-controlled” - Mof. “master of himself” - NKJV & ASV - “sober-minded” “sensible” - McCord, RSV

“self-restrained” –Con

2. A virtual synonym of the preceding word “temperate.”

3. See Tit. 2:5; 1:8; 2:2.

“**respectable**” (kosmios) - decorous, decent, modest, orderly, well-ordered - 1 Tim. 2:9; 3:2. “of good behavior” - NKJV McCord “orderly.”

1. Adjective signifying “decent, modest, orderly.” (1 Tim. 2:9).

2. The idea may be “of good behavior, orderly behavior, well-ordered behavior.”

3. “and leading an orderly (disciplined) life” – Amp.

“**hospitable**” (philoxenos) - “a lover of strangers”

• “opening his house freely to guests” –Bas

1. All Christians must be hospitable. (Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9).

2. Elders must show hospitality to strangers, and especially believers - evangelists, missionaries, etc.

3. He loves to entertain in his home. “opening his house freely to guests” - Bas.

4. **Limitation of hospitality** (2 Jno. 9, 10)

“**able to teach**” (didaktikos) - apt or qualified to teach - 1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24. “and with a gift for teaching”–Wey

1. “qualified to teach” - Berkeley “A ready teacher” - Bas. - “able to teach” - NIV

2. It is unthinkable that one would be appointed as a spiritual shepherd who could not teach (feed) the flock with the word of God. Elders (shepherds) are to feed the flock. (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2).

3. It is unthinkable that one would be appointed as a spiritual shepherd to the church who was not knowledgeable enough to stop the mouths of the false teachers. (Tit. 1:11; Acts 20:28-30).

4. One must be able and willing to teach, and defend God’s word.

5. He does not have to be a preacher, though some were. (1 Tim. 5:17).

**1TI 3:3 not addicted to wine or pugnacious [a striker, quarrelsome], but gentle [forbearing], uncontentious, free from the love of money.**

“**not addicted to wine**” - “no brawler” - ASV - “not given to wine” - KJV, NKJV, Amp. “not given to drunkenness” - NKJV

1. The Greek “me paroinon” [not an excessive drinker] is “not given to wine.” (Tit. 1:7).

2. The root meaning goes back to the effect of wine on the individual who carries over wine. “no brawler” - RSV

3. The word can be used to mean “not quarrelsome, insolent, overbearing.”
4. See 1 Tim. 3:8 “me oino pollo prosechontas” - not being addicted or engaged to much wine. “prosecho” - be addicted to, engage in, be occupied with
5. Wine may refer to unfermented wine or it may refer to fermented wine in New Testament times.
  - a. The common drink was fermented wine that was highly diluted with water.
  - b. It was not intoxicating if consumed in small amounts.**
  - c. See notes on “Deacons”

“**or pugnacious**” - not violent, not a strike, not quarrelsome. Gr. “plektes” [plek tace]

1. “not quick-tempered” McCord
2. He is not one who loses his temper and hits or attacks another person.
3. An elder who is “quick-tempered” or “violent” will do great damage to the flock of God.

“**gentle**” - epieikes [ep ee ay kace]

1. forbearing, gentle, kind
2. A man of a mild disposition. He is not harsh and unreasonable.
3. This does not mean an overseer does not stand up for the right.

“**uncontentious**” -- Gr. “amachus” [am ah koos] - “not a fighter,” **peaceable**

1. Not contentious, “
2. avoiding quarrels - NEB - “not quarrelsome” - NIV

“**free from the love of money**” - Gr. “aphilarguros” [a fee lar goo ros] - not avaricious, not loving money, not greedy

1. “not greedy for money” McCord - See 1 Tim. 6:10; 1 Cor. 5:11
2. It should be kept in mind that some elders were paid. (1 Tim. 5:17,18).
3. It is right for those who spend their time overseeing the flock to be paid.
4. “not after money”– Ber. – “liberal” – Con

**1TI 3:4 He must be one who manages [rules] his own household [family] well, keeping his children under control [in subjection] with all dignity [respectfulness]**

“**He must be one who manages [rules, controls] his own household well**” -

- Gr. “proistemi” “Able to manage his own household properly” – Mof.

- “having his children in subjection” - KJV
- “hupotasso” - to be in subjection - See Tit. 2:5; 1 Tim. 2:12; Luke 2:51.

1. His control over the household will show his ability to direct.
2. A man who is dominated by his wife or children or both would not qualify.
3. This does not mean he is a dictator or is harsh or brutal with his family. See Eph. 5:22-31.

**“Keeping his children under control [in submission]”** - Gr. “hupotage” - subjection, subordination, obedience.

1. “And whose children are kept under control and well-behaved.” TCNT – “having faithful children” - KJV - Tit. 1:6.
2. See Tit. 1:6 & question 6 under “Questions About Children”

**“with all dignity”** - Gr. “semnotes” [sem no tace] - reverence, dignity holiness, seriousness.

“See that his children obey him with proper respect” - NIV

“keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way” - RSV

“and whose children are kept under control and well-behaved” - TCNT

“having his children in submission with all reverence” - NKJV

## Questions about children

### 1. Must an elder have more than one child?

- a. The word “children” is used generically. (1 Tim. 5:4; Gen. 21:7; Lk. 14:26; Eph. 6:2; Matt. 22:24; 1 Tim. 5:9).
- b. It often means one or more, but it can be used in strictly a plural sense. (Matt. 2:18; 3:9).
- c. It is used generically when used as a command.
- d. Some, especially those with a lot of children, say 1 child is not much of a test.
  - 1) Some say 2, 3, 4, 5 is not much of a test.
  - 2) This kind of argument is interesting and may have some validity, but it goes beyond the scriptures.
  - 3) We should be concerned about the faithfulness of the children - not the number.

### 2. What if the children die while he is in office?

- a. The Bible does not discuss this.
- b. It is difficult to see how this would disqualify an elder.

- c. His ability to lead has not changed.
- d. His reputation has not been destroyed.
- e. Those who would ask an elder to resign on the death of his children usually would not apply this to an older elder who has grown children away from home.

### 3. **Can the children be adopted?**

- a. The Bible put no emphasis on how he got the children as long as it was lawful.
- b. There is no evidence Paul would make a distinction between adopted and natural children or some combination.

### 4. **What if the children become unfaithful?**

- a. Nearly all agree this would disqualify the elder if they are still under his control or management.
- b. There has been a lot of discussion about children who have left home and in some instances been away from home many years.
- c. It is difficult to see how their later unfaithfulness would disqualify the elder.
  - 1) They are not under his control.
  - 2) He cannot legally or in any other forceful way control these adult children.
  - 3) Influence is the only way, and this influence tells you a lot about the man.
  - 4) There have been, however, weak Christian men and non-Christian men who have raised faithful Christian children.
  - 5) This is a reason why this is not a stand alone requirement.
- d. Some elders raised faithful children who continued in this faithfulness for many years, and then at some later time fell from the faith. It is very questionable, at best, that this is the fault of the elder.
- e. **This does present some problem.**
  - 1) It leaves a very short window in which some men would have older, obedient children at home.
  - 2) Some are quite strict with children who are at home, but very lenient in regard to older men who are appointed elders.
  - 3) Some are appointed who never had faithful children, and this qualification is ignored.

#### **Notes:**

1. All of God's children have not been faithful - Israel, Christians. (Isa. 11:2).

**ISA 1:2 Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; For the Lord speaks, "Sons I have reared and brought up, But they have revolted against Me.**

2. Some contend that if a black sheep disqualifies an elder that this disqualifies God as a parent since He has black sheep.
  - a. Such is ridiculous.
  - b. We have been created free moral agents, and He does not seek to control us or force us to obey Him.
  - c. On the other hand, parents are held responsible to train children. (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21).
3. The influence of the elder is not the only factor, but it should be a major part in deciding to appoint an elder..
4. One elder had raised five faithful children and one unfaithful.
  - a. Should he serve or not?
  - b. It is hard to see he is automatically disqualified without proof of bad training.
  - c. What if the child became unfaithful after he was grown and left home?
  - d. The unfaithful child is a free moral agent.
5. **What if one of the children is mentally retarded?**
  - a. This is difficult. The child may or may not be a Christian, and may not even be accountable.
  - b. It is not likely this would disqualify a man especially if he is faithful in caring for the child and he meets the other qualifications for elders.
  - c. An elder would have to have accountable children to qualify.
  - d. Having only a mentally retarded child would not meet the qualification.

6. **Must the children be Christians?**

- a. The word “pistos” used here can mean “believing” or “faithful”. (Tit. 1:6).
  - 1) A comparison with Titus 1 would suggest that the word be translated “faithful.” An elder must have his children in submission.
  - 2) It does not seem reasonable that Paul gave one rule for those at Ephesus and another for those at Crete.

**TIT 1:6 namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. NASB - See also ASV**

**Tit. 1:6 if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination NKJV - See KJV**

- b. “having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.” NKJV.  
 “having children stedfast, not under accusation of riotous living or insubordinate.” YLT  
 “whose children believe” - NIV  
 “having believing children” - Marshall

- c. Having faithful children does not mean per se that the children be Christians.
- d. The context may demand it since the elder is to be “above reproach” and be of good reputation within and without.
- e. It is difficult to see how an elder could meet these qualifications if his children are not Christians.
  - 1) There is a debate if this means faithful to his earthly father or his heavenly Father.
  - 2) It probably means both since one faithful to his earthly father who has taught him godliness would also mean he would be faithful to his heavenly Father.
- f. This would not demand all the children be Christians, provided those old enough to become Christians were Christians. Can an elder have a baby? Can an elder raise a grandchild or some other relative?
- g. It is possible to translate “faithful” as “believing.”

7. **Must the children of elders be sinless?**

- a. The answer is obviously no - No such children exist. No such accountable human being exists. (Rom. 3:23).
- b. The children are to be obedient, but even obedient children have problems and church should not be harder on them than on the elder and his wife.

**TIT 1:6 namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. NASB**

**Note:**

1. The word “believing” (pistos) is often rendered “believing.” (Acts 16:15; 1 Cor. 16:15; Eph. 1:1; 1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Tim. 6:2).
2. The words “having children who believe” can be rendered “having faithful children.”
  - a. The Greek “pistos” can mean “believing, faithful.”
  - b. Faithful, true, trusty (Matt. 24:45; 25:21, 23; Lk. 12:42; 2 Tim. 2:12).
  - c. Trustworthy - 1 Cor. 7:25; 1 Tim. 3:1
  - d. True, veracious - Rev. 1:5; 2:13.
  - e. Credible, sure, certain, indubitable - Acts 13:34; 1 Tim. 1:15.
  - f. Believing, yielding belief and confidence - John 20:27; Gal. 3:9.
  - g. The Christian believer - Acts 10:45; 16:1; 2 Cor. 6:15.

ACT 10:45 And all the circumcised **believers [pisto]** who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also.

ACT 16:1 And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son

of a Jewish woman who was **a believer**, but his father was a Greek,

2CO 6:15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has **a believer** [pistos] in common with an unbeliever [apistos]?

h. “Faithful” in 1 & 2 Timothy & Titus.

1TI 1:12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me **faithful**, putting me into service;

1TI 3:1 It is a **trustworthy** statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.  
Lit. “faithful (is) the word”

1TI 3:11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, **faithful** in all things.

1TI 4:10 For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior [potentially] of all men, **especially of believers**. Lit. “especially faithful ones.” “especially” is “actually, specifically, particularly” in this context.

1TI 4:12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. Lit. “example (pattern) of those the faithful ones”

1TI 6:2 And let those who have **believers as their masters** not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles. Lit. “faithful masters.”

2TI 2:2 And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to **faithful** men, who will be able to teach others also.

2TI 2:13 If we are faithless, He remains **faithful**; for He cannot deny Himself.

TIT 1:6 namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, **having children who believe**, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. NASB

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

TIT 1:9 holding fast the **faithful** word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

## The Family Test

**1TI 3:5 (but if a man does not know how to manage [rule, preside over] his own household [family], how will he take care of the church [congregation] of God?);**

1. Paul’s argument is that if one cannot control his own family how will he be able to control the church family.
2. One must prove himself by first controlling his family.
3. The comparison here suggests the children old enough should be Christians or at least children of good character.
4. One who had control without spirituality on the part of his children has not proven much.
5. There is a difference, however, between a young person who is living a good life and is in submission to his father and mother, and a young person who is living in rebellion to his parents and other authorities.
  - a. It is questionable that pressure should be put on a 10, 12, 13,14 year olds to obey the gospel so the father can qualify to be an elder.
  - b. This probably does not prove much, but on the other hand if there are not Christians among the other children the man is not likely “above approach” among those in the congregation.



c. Deacons must also meet this qualification.

1TI 3:12 Let deacons be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households.

### Observations.

1. It appears there is no real difference between the qualification of elders and deacons in regard to children.
2. What is required in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1:6 is that the children of elders or deacons must be in subjection to parents (that is be obedient to them).
  - a. They must not be guilty of wild behavior.

TIT 1:6 namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, **not accused of dissipation or rebellion.**

LUK 15:13 "And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and **there he squandered his estate with loose living.**

- b. The language here is descriptive of older children - not little children.
3. One could not be appointed as an elder or deacon whose children under his control were disobedient.
4. This does not mean the elder or deacon became disqualified to serve if the children after leaving home as adults became unfaithful.
5. God is a perfect Father, but He has children who become unfaithful. Jesus is a perfect Savior and Shepherd, but not all of His followers remained faithful. Paul was a great apostle, but not all of his converts remained faithful.
6. Though the language in Titus 1:6 could mean that an elders children must be Christians, the evidence is not conclusive.
  - a. It seems better to allow 1 Tim. 3 and Tit. 1:6 to have the same meaning.
  - b. God does not force His children to be Christians, and it is far from certain that He puts this requirement on elders or deacons.
  - c. The children must be obedient to parents and this would include good behavior, church attendance, etc, but not forced obedience to the gospel.
  - d. If none of an elder's children are Christians, this might very well be a cause of alarm and may effect his ability to shepherd if appointed. It most likely will effect his influence among members.

**1TI 3:6 and not a new [recent] convert, lest he become conceited [puffed up, blinded with pride] and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.**

- “**not a new convert**” - (neophutos) - lit. newly planted meaning not a novice, neophyte, recent convert” - KJV
- “conceited” (puffed up) - 1 Cor. 4:6, 19; 5:2; 8:1; 13:4).

1. He must not be a beginner in the faith, that is, a new Christian.

2. He does not define how long one must have been a Christian.
  - a. Paul appointed elders near the end of his second missionary journey, about 45-49 A.D. (Acts 13, 14).
  - b. It would seem some of them had been Christians only for 4 or 5 years.
  - c. Some men grow and mature much faster than others.
  - d. Maturity involves knowledge, but not knowledge only. (1 Cor. 8:1; 13:4).
3. We know nothing of the spiritual background of these elders.
  - a. One assumes these early elders were held to the same high standard Paul laid down in 1 Timothy 3 & Titus 1.
  - b. Some may have had strong religious training in Judaism, but this is not certain.
4. It is possible, though assumed, there could have been problems with some of these elders being appointed too soon. (Acts 14:23).
  - a. The 1<sup>st</sup> missionary was about 45 to 49 A.D.
  - b. This book was written about 62 to 67 A.D..
  - c. There were elders among the Jewish Christians prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> missionary journey. (Acts 11:30).
5. This might explain the rule “not a new convert.”
  - a. There may have been some bad experiences with appointing elders too soon.
  - b. It is possible additional revelation was given to Paul on this matter, but this is conjecture and speculation.
  - c. 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1 are the primary biblical qualifications for elders. See also 1 Pet. 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-30.

**Reasons He Must Not Be A New Convert (1 Tim. 3:7).**

1. **“lest he become conceited”** -
  - a. He might be filled with pride because he was chosen too soon. He might get “the big head.”
  - b. This can lead to all kinds of problems in the church.
2. **“and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil”**
  - a. “and incurs the doom passed on the devil.” Mof.
  - b. “fall under the same judgment as the devil” - NIV
  - c. “and come under the same condemnation as the Devil.” Wey.
  - d. Greek - “lest being puffed up into judgment he fall of the devil” -

3. Pride leads to sin and destruction (Prov. 16:18), and it is an abomination to God. (Prov. 6:16-19).

### Reputation Outside The Church

**1TI 3:7 And he must have a good reputation** [well spoken of, a good name] **with** [among] **those** [unbelievers] **outside the church, so that he may not fall into reproach** [disgrace, condemnation, scandal] **and the snare** [trap] **of the devil.**

1. Churches usually ask their members to evaluate prospective elders concerning willingness to serve and qualifications.
2. They should also carefully consider the reputation of the man outside the church.
  - a. Some men have a good reputation in the church.
  - b. Some of these same men have a notorious reputation outside the church.
  - c. This qualification is not always emphasized or considered, but it must be to please God.
  - d. A man who has good character among the brethren, but bad behavior elsewhere will do great damage to the church.

### 3. **Additional Qualifications** - Tit. 1:8, 9.

TIT 1:8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,

TIT 1:9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

- a. “Loving what is good” - See 3 John 11 & Rom. 12:9.
- b. “Sensible” - NIV “self-controlled”
- c. “Just”- NIV “upright”
- d. “Devout” - NIV “holy”
- e. “Self-controlled” - NIV - “disciplined” - McCord “self-controlled”
- f. “Holding fast the faithful word”
  - 1) NIV “He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught.”
  - 2) McCord “firmly holding the reliable message, according to the teaching”
  - 3) Wms “and a man who continues to cling to the trustworthy message.”
  - 4) This qualification means that the elder must be faithful himself.
- g. “able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict”

- 1) The elder must know the word and be able and eager to teach and defend it.
- 2) One should not serve as an elder who is not capable or too timid to keep this commandment.

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