

1 Timothy 3

Introduction: Glance down through 1 Timothy 3 and just tell me what this chapter is all about.

- **vss. 1-7** – qualifications of overseers
- **vss. 8-13** – qualifications of deacons
- **vss. 14-16** –
 - purpose of the book
 - “behavior” in the household of God
 - the mystery of godliness

What do you notice from 1 Timothy 3?

- The seriousness of church and church leadership
- These qualifications must be the result of the grace of God
- There is a reward for good church leadership

Qualification of overseers / elders – vss. 1-7

- See 1 Timothy 5.17 and Titus 1.5ff for equating “overseer” and “elder.”
- **vs. 1** – introductory statements:
 - trustworthy saying
 - ministry aspirations
 - overseeing the church is a “noble task”
- **vs. 2** – positive attributes:
 - above reproach –
 - not open to legitimate attack or criticism (Knight, 155)
 - THE overarching requirement.
 - husband of one wife – “one woman man”
 - not a requirement that an elder be married, not widowed, etc.
 - sober-minded – “sober, clear-headed” (Knight, 159)
 - self-controlled - “prudent, thoughtful” (Knight, 159)
 - respectable – “orderly, well-behaved, virtuous” (Knight 159)
 - hospitable
 - able to teach – “skillful in teaching” (Knight 160), see Titus 1.9
- **vs. 3** – negative attributes:
 - not a drunkard
 - not violent but gentle
 - not quarrelsome
 - not a lover of money
 - An overseer’s life shouldn’t be controlled by alcohol or money and shouldn’t be given to strife.
- **vs. 4** – family requirements
 - manages his household well
 - manages his household with dignity (not heavy-handed control but dignity and love)
 - submissive children – at least those still within the home
- **vs. 5** – relationship of family requirements to the household of God
 - This emphasizes the “household” theme in the Pastoral Epistles.
- **vs. 6** – maturity a requirement (to prevent pride and its consequences)
- **vs. 7** – community requirements (for the purpose of testimony)
- These requirements emphasize the need for an overseer / elder to be able to get along with people and teach them and care for them spiritually.

Qualifications of deacons – vs. 8-13

- **vs. 8** – character qualifications (both positive and negative)
 - dignified
 - not double-tongued
 - not addicted to wine, not greedy
- **vs. 9** – doctrinal qualifications
 - Deacons can't just be capable businessmen!
 - Must hold to the content of the Christian faith.
 - Must have a clear conscience.
- **vs. 10** – maturity qualifications
 - must be tested
- **vs. 11-12** – family qualifications
 - Their wives must be... dignified, not slanderers, sober-minded, faithful (see Knight 170-3 for the merits of the 4 possible interpretations of γυναῖκας)
 - husband of one wife
 - manages children and household well
- **vs. 13** – reward for serving well as a deacon is “good standing and great confidence in the faith”
 - Note that overseer qualifications begin with a commendation of the office (3.1) and the deacon qualifications end with one.

Purpose of the letter – vs. 14-15a

- “I hope to come to you soon... if I delay...” leans toward the greater probability that Paul will be delayed. (Isn't it interesting how a delay is used in the sovereign plan of God to give us a summary of the ecclesiology of Paul?)
- “how one ought to behave in the household of God”
 - once again emphasizes the “household” theme in the Pastoral Epistles
 - gives the purpose, not just for chapter 3 but for the whole letter
- “The household of God” is equal to “the church of the living God”.

The Greatness of the Church – vs. 15b

- “Living God”, in contrast to dead idols, gives weight to the statement and seriousness to the church and her calling.
- “Pillar and buttress of the truth” does NOT mean the church is the foundation of the truth, but the sense is more in terms of upholding the truth for the world to see it.
- It is the church's responsibility to display / represent the truth of God to the world.

The Confession of the Church – vs. 16

- “mystery of godliness”
 - “mystery” = revealed truth, divine knowledge that is hidden from human perception but has been revealed in Christ
 - “godliness” = piety, religion, that which humans owe God in reverence and faith (This is NOT godliness in the sense of sanctification.)
 - “mystery of godliness” = the foundational revealed truth of our religion (see Knight, 182)
- 3 couplets:

Christ's work accomplished	manifested in the flesh	vindicated by the Spirit
Christ's work proclaimed	seen by angels	proclaimed in the nations
Christ's work acknowledged	believed on in the world	taken up in glory

