

I Timothy 3:1-7

Commentary: Qualification for Elders

In this section Paul proceeds to give Timothy instruction for the appointment of Elders within the local church. The Ephesian church already had Elders long before Paul wrote this letter (Acts 20:17-35) however, some of those Elders (identified as false teachers in chapter 1) were not adhering to practices for godly living which threatened to infiltrate the entire church. It was vital to Paul that those that held the office of Elder not only preached the truth but also lived the truth in their daily life. Paul lists the qualifications that those desiring to be Elders should demonstrate, in order to help Timothy choose the right people to lead the church in the right way.

Instructions:

Carefully read through I Timothy 3:1-7 and then attempt to answer the questions which follow.

Read Paul 's instructions to the Corinthians in I Corinthians 5:6-7 and apply that understanding to the following question.

1) Why was it important that Timothy should address the disobedient Elders (false teachers from chapter 1) within the Ephesian church?

Paul makes it clear that seeking the position of Elder/Overseer is a noble pursuit (v1), but the man who does so must demonstrate certain specific characteristic traits.

2) What 10 positive qualities does the man seeking the position of Elder/Overseer need to demonstrate (v2, v3, and v7)?

3) What 6 negative qualities should the man seeking the position of Elder/Overseer need to avoid (v3 and v6)?

4) Can a woman be the "husband of one wife" (v2)?

5) Based on the answer given above, can a woman hold the office of Elder?

6) What kind of home life did Paul expect an Elder to have (v4-5)?

The word “novice” in this passage derives from the Greek word for “newly planted”. Apply the understanding about this word “novice” and answer the following question.

7) What term would the church of today use to describe a “novice”?

8) What is the risk of placing a novice in the office of Elder (v6)?

Paul makes the statement *“Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside”*. (v7)

9) Who are those that are “outside”?

Consider the commission of every believer given by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20.

10) In light of the great commission, why is it so important for an Elder to have a good reputation among people outside the church?