



**QUALIFICATIONS  
OF  
BISHOPS (ELDERS)  
AND  
DEACONS**



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# PREFACE

Before I get started I would like to make it clear that I am not speaking for any group nor anyone else for that matter but am simply attempting to put forth what I believe the Lord has revealed to me and hopefully continuing to reveal to me. Please do as scripture exhorts and prove (*test*) all things but I implore you that your test be kept strictly with what scripture says and not according to what other men say or have said or any tradition. Please read Acts 17:10-12, I Thessalonians 5:21 and I John 4:1.

This study started out as a reply to a question that I received about ordaining elders. Initially I had posted it simply as the answer that I gave along with the question that was posed to me. But, after several updates I felt it was better to discard the initial question and just focus on the topic at hand and I wanted to add in a section on Deacons as well.

This is a very important study! It deals with church order and who it is that is leading, supervising, providing for and serving the local flock. If a church claims to believe that the Bible contains the words that were breathed out by God then by default they must also believe that those words are to be adhered to.

I just heard about a Baptist pastor who was married but as a stress releaser (*so he claimed*) he would dress up in women's clothes and take pictures of himself and post them online. I knew of a pastor whose wife got a job in another town so he left the church he was pastoring, moved there with her and started pastoring a new church which paid more. I know of an elder who is living with a lady whom he calls his girlfriend. I also know of several elders who were divorced and remarried or married a divorced woman. I know of a pastor who divorced his wife of many years and married the church secretary and continued to preach there. I could probably give a whole page of similar examples. But taking just these examples I have been given to bring up, may I ask a question? The question is: Do you think or believe that these men belong in leadership? Are they qualified to lead the body of Christ? I hope that by the end of this study you will come to the same conclusion that I have with this question. My answer is **NO!** they are not qualified and do not belong in leadership!

In the two sections that outline the “**QUALIFICATIONS OF A Bishop (Elder)**” and “**QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON**” I have included some cross-reference verses. I felt they were important to quote instead of just referencing them. In quite a few of them you will have noticed that Paul is not asking anything more of the Bishops (Elders) or Deacons than he himself has exemplified. One example that I want to mention is in his first letter to the brethren at Thessalonica “Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and **unblameable** we behaved ourselves among you that believe: (**I Thess.**

**2:10)** [*emphasis added*”]. Another example worthy of mentioning is in his second letter to the brethren at Thessalonica: “For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man’s bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might **not be chargeable** to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. (**II Thessalonians 3:7-9**) [*emphasis added*]”.

My hope is that you will find this study encouraging and edifying. But most of all I hope that you will find it Scriptural and only according to truth!

I am willing to discuss (*not debate*) this topic if anyone has any questions or concerns. I would ask though that if you want to discuss something that you don’t just send me a quote from so-and-so or simply a verse without any comments. Please be as specific as possible with a question if you have one and if you disagree please take the time to explain why you disagree. And please be respectful and don’t just respond with name calling.

Tom Adams



# WHAT IS A BISHOP (ELDER)?

When I think of the term “Bishop” or “Elder” I think of a man who is an overseer or shepherd of the local church or flock which is part of the whole flock.

And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, *are* men, *and* I *am* your God, saith the Lord God. (**Ezekiel 34:31**)

For he *is* our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, (**Psalms 95:7**)

Know ye that the Lord he *is* God: *it* is he *that* hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. (**Psalms 100:3**)

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young. (**Isaiah 40:11**)

He is a man who is willing to serve the Lord and His people with his whole heart and life. He is someone who devotes his time to reading, studying and proclaiming God’s truth and has a calling for such. He is the one who prepares the meal for the flock to feast on. He is one of the first to sound an alarm to warn the flock of false teaching when it infiltrates the flock. He does not condone sin in his own life nor in the lives of the flock but calls it out when necessary. He is also someone who takes the time to get to know and be a part of the lives of the local flock.

The office of a Bishop (Elder) is an extremely important position to the New Testament church. It is so important that not just anyone can fill it. A man has to be ordained to fill the position. The word “ordain” simply means “*to place, designate, appoint*”. So a man who is in the office of a Bishop is one who has been appointed by someone in leadership or by the church itself. We see that Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to ordain elders (**I Timothy 1:3**) and he left Titus in Crete to do the same (**Titus 1:4-5**). Here were two men that had proven themselves to Paul and he trusted them to complete their mission there.

Here is a portion from Scripture where it shows that Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in several churches.

And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came

into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. (**Acts 14:19-23\***)

The importance of the office of the Bishop (Elder) is exemplified when Paul makes it clear that they are to be honoured. They have a huge job in front of them with a lot of responsibility.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer *is* worthy of his reward. Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. (**I Timothy 5:17-20**)

To “rule” literally means to “*stand before or preside over*”. And the Greek word for “well” means “*well*” and it has a moral connotation to it. In other words it means “*honestly*”. The Greek word for “be counted worthy” means “*to deem entitled or to deem fit*”. The word “double” means just like it says “*double, two-fold*”. And “honour” means “*of value, esteem of the highest degree*”. Honour also has the connotation of monetary value which is why the last part of verse mentions “The labourer *is* worthy of his reward.” So, this first verse above means “Let the elders that stand before you honestly deemed entitled to esteem of the utmost or highest degree and pay him for what he is worth...”

Paul also realized that they would rub some people the wrong way and so he was given to protect the honour of the elder by a clause that we see in the last two verses of the portion of the passage of Scripture above.

Paul is telling Timothy to not receive an accusation or complaint from anyone unless there are at least two or three witnesses to the incident, teaching or whatever it was. So, basically this is saying that “If someone has aught against the elder, there **MUST** be at least two witnesses and better yet if there is three that come forward before any accusation is received or looked further into.”

Why is this so? Why does the Bishop (Elder) get what appears to be more leniency? It is because there are very strict qualifications or guidelines for a Bishop (Elder) to meet. That is what the first part of this study is for: To go over those qualifications (*the second*

*part deals with the qualifications of a Deacon*). When the man meets **ALL** the qualifications, **AND HE MUST MEET ALL OF THEM**, then he is ordained to that position. So, since he is already scrutinized and tested the likelihood that he is actually in error should be slim. But, if two or three witnesses come forward with the same sin or error than it **MUST** be looked further into.

We as believers are not to gossip about others nor are we to be busybodies. So, I can't help but believe that Paul's words to Timothy "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." don't mean that he couldn't listen to an accusation or complaint but that until there are two or three accusations on the same incident or teaching that he couldn't take any action on it. And I believe that is what should be happening today in modern churches as well. The hierarchy should be listening to any accusation against an elder but put it on the shelf until more of the same come in. Yes, there are times when something is said or an action done by an elder in front of the congregation that is so outlandish that there are immediately two or three witnesses to it. Unfortunately though if there are things going on with the elder that he ought not to be doing, many times it is only in front of one person at a time. And if he does it one time then he has probably done it before or will do it again.

**IF** the Bishop (Elder) is found at fault or in sin then he is to be rebuked before the whole congregation. And if it is serious enough then he has disqualified himself and he no longer meets the qualifications for that position and should willingly step down. And if he truly has a love for the Lord and His people he **WILL** willingly step down! The office of a Bishop (Elder) is not a gift of the Spirit but it is a privilege and honour and not something to take lightly! Think about it for a minute. Here is someone who is supposed to be the shepherd, the one who is responsible for and looks out for the needs of the flock, and he has put himself and his needs or ego above them. Because of that he is to be placed in front of the flock and is to be publicly rebuked for his wrong-doing for **EVERYONE** to see. This "should" never need to happen and that is why the qualifications that Paul lays out to Timothy and Titus are **SO VERY IMPORTANT!**

There are three words that are used interchangeably in the Scriptures for the shepherd of the local flock. They are "Bishop", "Elder" and "Overseer".

The Greek word translated "*episkopos*" is translated as "Bishop" eight times and once as "overseer" in the New Testament. It comes from two words which are "*epi*" and "*skopeo*". The first Greek word "*epi*" is a primary preposition and means "over" and the second Greek word "*skopeo*" means "to look or watch". When you put those two together you have someone who "watches over" and has the sense of being a superintendent.

The Greek word translated “Elder” is “*presbyteros*” and is the New Testament sixty-eight times. It basically means “older or elderly”. It can have something to do with the physical age of the man but not always. When, in context, it is referring to a leader of the church it has more of a meaning of the spiritual age or maturity of the person. Timothy was an elder and Paul left him in Ephesus to ordain elders for the local churches there. Yet we also see that Timothy was not an old man.

Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (**I Timothy 4:12**)

The 1828 Webster Dictionary says this about a “Bishop”: “In the primitive church, a spiritual overseer; an elder or presbyter; one who had the pastoral care of a church. The same persons are in this chapter called elders or presbyters, and overseers or bishops.”

Continuing on in the fourth chapter of First Timothy Paul makes mention to a specific group of men that were instrumental to Timothy:

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. (**I Timothy 4:14**)

This group of men were called “the presbytery”. The Greek word is “*presbyterion*” and it means “*the order of elders*”. This is referring to a group or plurality of Elders and is the ideal hierarchy of a local church. If the church is not large enough to warrant multiple Elders then the single Elder should have a group of Elders that he is in subjection to.



# QUALIFICATIONS OF AN ELDER

The qualifications of a Bishop (Elder) are not hidden in Scripture nor are they something to take lightly! These qualifications or standards are very clearly laid out in two different letters by Paul to two different men and both of which he refers to as his son. The qualifications are included in Paul's first letter to Timothy and his letter to Titus.

Let's see these two passages next to each other first:

“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. Must then the Bishop be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. (**I Timothy 3:1-7**)”

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. (**Titus 1:5-9**)”

Now let's look at them separately and in a different format than what was given above. This way hopefully we will be given to see how each of the qualifications stand out and are emphasized. Each of them are distinct and particular and yet taken as a whole they are all interconnected.

Paul starts it off with telling Timothy by saying: “This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. (**I Timothy 3:1**)”

To have a desire for the office of bishop is a good work. But, this desire is not to be a selfish desire for gain and to make sure it isn't the rest of the requirements that the Lord gave to Paul **MUST** be met which are:

A bishop then must be...

- Blameless
- The husband of one wife
- Vigilant
- Sober
- Of good behaviour
- Given to hospitality
- Apt to teach
- Not given to wine
- No striker
- Not greedy of filthy lucre
- Patient
- Not a brawler
- Not covetous
- One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)
- Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.
- Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

**(I Timothy 3:2-7)**

And Paul gives Titus some of the exact same requirements along with handful of different ones: “To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

If any be...

- Blameless
- The husband of one wife
- Having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly
- For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God
- Not selfwilled

- Not soon angry
  - Not given to wine
  - No striker
  - Not given to filthy lucre
  - A lover of hospitality
  - A lover of good men
  - Sober
  - Just
  - Holy
  - Temperate
  - Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.
- (Titus 1:6-9)**

Let's take a little time to go over what these qualifications actually mean one by one.

## **I TIMOTHY 3:2-7**

“A bishop then must be...” Please don't overlook this little word “**MUST**”. It is also in our other qualification list in verse 7 of Titus 1. This word means just what it says “must, need, necessary” and is the qualifier for both of these lists. There are **NO** IFs, ANDs or BUTs about it. These qualifications are **REQUIRED** to be met in order for a man to be a Bishop (Elder). In fact in the Textus Receptus (*Greek Version of the New Testament*) the word for “**MUST**” is the very first word. It says “Must then the Bishop be...” To me that word order gives it even more of an emphasis and shows necessity!

Must then the Bishop be “**BLAMELESS**”. The word “blameless” does not mean to be sinless. We all know that this is an impossibility in our flesh and if one claims to be without sin he is a liar (**I John 1:10**). Let me state something right up front. This word is **NOT** speaking about being “blameless” before God because **NO MAN** is that. This word is speaking about being “blameless” before our fellow man and before the congregation. The word “blameless” means “*inculpable, unrebukeable, without blame and without or above reproach*”. The word “inculpable” means “without fault; unblamable; that cannot be accused (1828 Webster Dictionary)”. In other words the man

is not to have any sort of lifestyle that can bring reproach upon him or the church (*i.e.*, gay lifestyle, living with girlfriend, etc., etc.). These verses below show that to be “blameless” is not something that is unheard of but is something that every believer is called to be.

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. (**Luke 1:5-6**)

Who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (**I Corinthians 1:8**)

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; (**Philippians 2:15**)

Ye *are* witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: (**I Thessalonians 2:10**)

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (**I Thessalonians 5:23**)

Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. (**II Peter 3:14**)

In regards to this section on being blameless let me ask a couple of simple questions here:

“If a Bishop (Elder) divorces his wife, is he blameless in this? Scripture says he “causeth her to commit adultery. (**Matt. 5:32**)”

“If a Bishop (Elder) divorces his wife and marries another, is he blameless in this? Scripture says “Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. (**Mark 10:11**)”

“If a Bishop (Elder) marries a divorced woman, is he blameless in this? Scripture says “he that marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. (**Matt. 5:32**)”

Must then the Bishop be “**THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE**”. In this qualification for the Bishop (Elder) I see that it has four factions associated with it. It is first emphasizing that a Bishop (Elder) **MUST** be a man. The gender for the Greek word translated “husband” is male while the gender for the Greek word translated “wife” is in the female. Not to mention that in order to be a “husband” does not nature itself teach that one **MUST** be of the male gender! Secondly Paul is stressing that the Bishop (Elder)

**MUST** be married or have been married. Simple question: How can he be a “husband” if he is not married? Some may say “*This just means that if the man is married that he can only be the husband of one wife.*” Please tell me or show where the word “**IF**” is anywhere in this passage because I sure don’t see it nor do I see it even inferred. To say that this passage says this one has to **ADD** to Scripture. Some may say “*That’s not fair! I know of men who are single but meet all the other qualifications. Are they just out?*” There’s a saying that my wife has been known to say from time to time: “The FAIR is where you go to get cotton candy, corn on the cob, corn dogs and ride rides.” This has nothing to do with being fair but has everything to do with the standards that the Lord gave Paul to set forth. Thirdly Paul is stressing that the Bishop (Elder) **MUST** “be the husband of **ONE** wife”. I go over this third point in the third to last section of this study entitled **THE TERM “ONE WIFE”**.

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. (**Matthew 19:4-6**)

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. (**Mark 10:7-9**)

And fourthly there can be **NO** female Bishops (Elders). This passage clearly states “The husband” and unquestionably a female cannot be a “husband”. I don’t care what social media says, what psychiatrists say, what doctors say. A male is born a male and a female is born a female!

But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. (**I Timothy 2:12**)

*Some food for thought:* Paul is never referred to as a Bishop or Elder. He is the “Apostle” Paul but never referred to as “Paul the Elder” or “Elder Paul”. Could it be because he was not married so he did not meet the qualifications to be an Elder?

Must then the Bishop be “**VIGILANT**”. The Greek word basically means “sober or circumspect”. The 1828 Webster’s dictionary says this about “circumspect”: “Literally, looking on all sides; looking round. Hence, Cautious; prudent; watchful on all sides; examining carefully all the circumstances that may affect a determination, or a measure to be adopted.” He is to be aware of what is going on in the assembly like I mentioned in the **PREFACE**. In Peter’s first letter we see the same Greek word be translated as “sober”. Notice though that **ALL** believers are also called to be sober or vigilant.

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; **(I Peter 1:13)**

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: **(I Peter 5:8)**

Must then the Bishop be “**SOBER**”. The Greek word means a “*mind that is self-controlled, temperate, discreet*”. He is not to let others sway him in any direction and he is to remain unbiased. This is nothing new and these verses below simply show that **ALL** believers are also called to be sober as well.

A fool uttereth all his mind: but a wise *man* keepeth it in till afterwards. **(Proverbs 29:11)**

Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. **(I Thessalonians 5:6-8)**

But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. **(I Peter 4:7)**

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: **(I Peter 5:8)**

Must then the Bishop be “**OF GOOD BEHAVIOUR**”. These three words in the translation are only one Greek word and it means “*orderly, modest*”. He is to behave himself and dress accordingly. For an example: If the congregation is made up of hard working farmers who barely have the time to make it to church and come right from the field the Bishop should not be up in front in a three-piece suit. On the flip side of that is if his congregation is made up of mostly beach people and surfers he is not to show up to preach in a speedo! The only other time this same Greek word is used is in this same letter where Paul is exhorting the women to “adorn themselves in modest apparel...**(I Timothy 2:9)**”

Must then the Bishop be “**GIVEN TO HOSPITALITY**”. Again these three words in the translation are only one Greek word which means “*fond of guests, hospitable*”. He is to be giving. Not only of himself but also of his earthly possessions. We as believers are to set other’s needs above our own and sometimes that means we are to be hospitable as these verses below show.

Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. **(Romans 12:13)**

Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. (**Hebrews 13:1-2**)

Use hospitality one to another without grudging. (**I Peter 4:9**)

Must then the Bishop be “**APT TO TEACH**”. Only one word in Greek as well and it means “*instructive*”. He must be enabled to take what the Lord is teaching and showing him and make it understandable to the flock. Here is a perfect example of the Lord causing Paul to do such and then another example of Paul stressing to Timothy the ability to teach.

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said, *Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.* (**Acts 17:22-31**)

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and *that* they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. (**II Timothy 2:24-26**)

Paul starts this list off with what the qualifications an Elder must have. Below we shall see him continuing his list with what he **MUST NOT** have. The word “not” is a “primary particle of qualified negation (Strongs)”.

Must then the Bishop be “**NOT GIVEN TO WINE**”. Does this mean that an Elder cannot drink wine or alcohol? No it just means that he is not given to wine. He is not to be a drunkard. There is absolutely nothing wrong with partaking of a little wine here and there. In fact as you can see below that Paul instructed Timothy to “use a little wine for

thy stomach's sake..." The issue here is over-indulging which is something that **ALL** believers are called **NOT** to do. If a man is given to wine then it is a character issue because he is now under the power of it rather than the power of the Holy Spirit which disqualifies him from being a "Bishop (Elder)".

Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. (**Proverbs 20:1**)

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. (**I Corinthians 6:12**)

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; (**Ephesians 5:18**)

Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. (**I Timothy 5:23**)

Must then the Bishop be "**NO STRIKER**". The Greek word for "striker" means "*pugnacious*". According to the 1828 Webster's Dictionary, "pugnacious" means "Disposed to fight, inclined to fighting, quarrelsome". He cannot be a bully. If a man's first inclination is to fight (*and he regularly gives into that inclination*) instead of attempting to appease the situation calmly then he is not qualified in being a "Bishop (Elder)".

Being a hot-head and immediately being defensive when anyone says anything to you is frowned upon in Scripture.

A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but *he* that is slow to anger appeaseth strife. (**Proverbs 15:18**)

He that is slow to anger *is* better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. (**Proverbs 16:32**)

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. (**Matthew 5:39**)

And unto him that smiteth thee on the *one* cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not *to* take thy coat also. (**Luke 6:29**)

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; (**II Timothy 2:24-25**)

Must then the Bishop be "**NOT GREEDY OF FILTHY LUCRE**"\*\*. The Greek word for "given to filthy lucre" means "*sordid*". "Sordid" means "*immoral, base, vile, meanly selfish, self-seeking*". So, when we add in the negative aspect of it because of the first word "not" it means that the Bishop (Elder) must "not be desirous of base gain". This is

something that is stressed throughout Scripture to **ALL** believers but is especially heinous in someone who is in or has a desire to be in the office of a Bishop (Elder). Jesus gives us a perfect example of someone who Paul is warning us against: “But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. (**John 10:12-13**)” A “hireling” is **ONLY** there for the money! These men are not to be trusted because their whole life is self-centered and self-serving but not Christ-centered.

He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live. (**Proverbs 15:27**)

For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. (**I Thessalonians 2:9**)

Neither did we eat any man’s bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: (**II Thessalonians 3:8**)

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. (**I Timothy 6:10-11**)

Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. (**Titus 1:11**)

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; (**I Peter 5:2**)

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*. (**I Thessalonians 5:14**)

Must then the Bishop be “**BUT PATIENT**” Here we see a contrast. The word “but” is a conjunction which joins what follows with what was said previously. A conjunction usually shows either similarities or a contrast. In this case it shows a contrast and that contrast is the word “patient”. “Patient” means “*fairness, gentleness, moderation*”. Being patient should always be something for the child of grace to strive for.

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. (**Psalms 37:7**)

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*. (**I Thessalonians 5:14**)

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient, (**II Timothy 2:24**)

Must then the Bishop be “**NOT A BRAWLER**”. These three words are one word in the Greek. It means “*to be peaceable, not a fighter*”. This is different than the word “striker”. A striker is someone who’s first inclination is to fight. A brawler on the other hand is someone who will strive to win at any cost even if it means cheating once they are in a fight.

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. (**Matthew 5:39**)

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. (**Romans 12:18**)

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; (**II Timothy 2:24-25**)

Must then the Bishop be “**NOT COVETOUS**”. This is just one word in the Greek and it means to be “*without covetousness*”. But what does it mean to covet or to be covetous? The Greek word for covetous means to be “money loving” or “fond of silver”. And putting the negative participle in front of it makes it mean that the Bishop (Elder) **MUST** not be a lover of money or silver. To covet something means that a person sees something and has a lust or strong desire for it and in general can have many different targets like status or life-style. But, in this context it is specifically talking about the love of money.

I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel. (**Acts 20:33**)

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. (**Romans 16:17-18**)

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. (**I Timothy 6:10-11**)

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. (**II Peter 2:1-3**)

Must then the Bishop be “**ONE THAT RULETH WELL HIS OWN HOUSE, HAVING HIS CHILDREN IN SUBJECTION WITH ALL GRAVITY; (FOR IF A MAN KNOW NOT HOW TO RULE HIS OWN HOUSE, HOW SHALL HE TAKE CARE OF THE CHURCH OF GOD?)**” This qualification has two factions assigned to it. The first is that the Bishop (Elder) **MUST** have children to qualify. Another simple question: If he does not have any children then how can he have them in subjection with all gravity? Paul could have very easily said “If he has children then...”. But, **NO!** he didn’t! He simply said that the Bishop (Elder) is to be “One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity”. So, there **MUST** be children and secondly he is to preside over them morally and honestly which is what “with all gravity” means.

Think about it for a moment and it makes perfect sense. Even with normal children, life at home can be very busy at times and the parents must make quick decisions. That is excellent training for a Bishop (Elder) who also at times must make quick decisions regarding the church family. That is why Paul adds his rhetorical question at the end and basically says that if a man is unable to rule or preside over his own house then there is no way that he would be able to take care of the church (*family*) of God.

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (**Ephesians 6:4**)

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. (**Hebrews 12:7-8**)

Must then the Bishop be “**NOT A NOVICE, LEST BEING LIFTED UP WITH PRIDE HE FALL INTO THE CONDEMNATION OF THE DEVIL**”. A novice is one “*who has been newly planted*” or better yet a “*young convert*”. The word “young” here has no implication of age for a “young” convert can be young in age to very old in age. It basically means “new”. Take Paul for an example: After his experience on the road to Damascus he was taken away for fourteen years before he stepped into the shoes of an Apostle. Here you have Paul who was taught by the best of his time, skilled in the law and religious circles but he was still “new” to the faith and needed to be taken away for a time to learn the truth. Paul is very clear why a “novice” cannot be an Elder and that is because he is more likely to give in to pride and think he is more than he ought to.

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. (**I Corinthians 3:1**)

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of

strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. (**Hebrews 5:12-13**)

**“MOREOVER HE MUST HAVE A GOOD REPORT OF THEM WHICH ARE WITHOUT; LEST HE FALL INTO REPROACH AND THE SNARE OF THE DEVIL”**. “But now wait a minute, why should we care what the world thinks of us? They are going to hate us anyway so why not make their lives miserable?” I have heard this excuse used for being a jerk to those who are without. Are we supposed to try and live up to what the world expects a “Christian” to act like? **No!** We are not. We live our lives as the Lord has directed us. On the same note we are to do everything we do as unto the Lord. We are to give it our all as if we were working to please the Lord. He is the one who has set us up in the position we are in. This statement falls right in line with the previous about not being a novice. Here are two good examples of men who displayed the characteristic of having a good report and more references to the importance of this characteristic.

And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there*, (**Acts 22:12**)

Demetrius hath good report of all *men*, and of the truth itself: yea, and we *also* bear record; and ye know that our record is true. (**III John 1:12**)

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. (**Romans 12:18**)

Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: (**I Corinthians 10:32**)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (**Galatians 5:22-23**)

So, taking what Paul tells Timothy here, I believe we can safely say that if a man is “blameless, not given to wine, not a bully, not a brawler, not covetous, not a novice, the husband of one wife, is the head of his family, his children respect and honor him, he is vigilant, sober, modest, given to hospitality, apt to teach, patient, and has a good report with them that are outside the church” then he is to be considered fit for the office of a Bishop.



## TITUS 1:6-9

“**If any be...**” Paul starts this list with “**If any be...**”. This statement to me is as strong of a statement as the one he said in I Timothy “**A Bishop then must be...**”

If any be “**BLAMELESS**”. I dealt with this above – the same Greek word for “blameless” therefore the same meaning.

If any be “**THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE**”. I dealt with this above – same meaning.

If the man in question is not blameless then he is disqualified. If the man in question is not married then he is disqualified. If the man in question is married to more than one wife because of divorce and remarriage he is disqualified. Then for consistency sake, this next qualification must fall into the same category.

If any be “**HAVING FAITHFUL CHILDREN NOT ACCUSED OF RIOT OR UNRULY**”. This qualification is two-fold. First, the Bishop (Elder) **MUST** have children like what was mentioned above. And secondly, those children cannot be accused of riot or be unruly. The word “faithful” means “*trustworthy*”, so therefore his children must be trustworthy. The word “riot” means “*excess, riot*” and the word “unruly” means “*insubordinate, disobedient*”. Then Paul was given to take it a step further. Not only **MUST** the children not be given to excess or insubordination but they can not even be accused of such. To me the complimentary verse to this passage is quoted above in I Timothy: “One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;” In other words if the man rules his own house well then his children will be in subjection to him and therefore they will not be accused of excess or insubordination.

“**FOR A BISHOP MUST BE BLAMELESS, AS THE STEWARD OF GOD**”. I dealt with part of this above – same Greek word for “blameless” therefore the same meaning. The word “steward” simply means overseer.

Now we see Paul going back to the fact that an Bishop (Elder) must be blameless. Why would he do that and repeat himself? To me Paul is stressing the importance of

blamelessness and gives a little explanation on the different factions on what it means to be blameless. We could easily say it like this: “If any be blameless, for a bishop must be blameless,…” The first is a test while the second is the standard.

If any be “**NOT SELFWILLED**”. They are not to be self-pleasing or arrogant. They are not to look to themselves and their needs first but are to put the flock ahead of their own needs and wants. There is not to be any “I got this!” “Look at what I can do for the Lord!” mentality in a Bishop (Elder). He is to know full well his sins, negative traits and inabilities. He **MUST** recognize that **IF** anything is done it is **ONLY** because of God’s mercy and grace! He **MUST** give **ALL** credit to where it belongs which is to the Lord Almighty!

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds;) the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous *are they*, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. (**II Peter 2:1-10**)

If any be “**NOT SOON ANGRY**”. They are not to be prone to outbursts of temper, easily angered, easily provoked or inflamed with resentment (which is what the Greek word for “soon angry” means) but they are to be patient for they shall receive many questions and many accusations.

*He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.* (**Proverbs 14:17**)

*A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but *he that is* slow to anger appeaseth strife.* (**Proverbs 15:18**)

*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.* (**Proverbs 16:32**)

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. (**James 1:19-20**)

Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. (**Ecclesiastes 7:9**)

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. (**Ephesians 6:12**)

If any be “**NOT GIVEN TO WINE**”. This subject was dealt with above and has the same meaning.

If any be “**NO STRIKER**”. This subject was dealt with above and has the same meaning.

If any be “**NOT GIVEN TO FILTHY LUCRE**”. This subject was dealt with above and has the same meaning.

If any be “**BUT A LOVER OF HOSPITALITY**” Notice that Paul uses a contrast here again. The subject “a lover of hospitality” was dealt with above.

Paul now starts focusing on the positive qualifications with this contrast. What is the significance of the contrast? In other words why would Paul use a contrast instead of just stating that a Bishop must “be a lover of hospitality”? To me it stresses the vast difference between someone who is self-consumed and **ONLY** has his eyes on what he can gain monetarily verses the man who is not only willing to open up his abode, his dwelling place to others but cherishes doing so.

If any be “**A LOVER OF GOOD MEN**”. He is a promoter of virtue and he loves that which is good.

Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph. (**Amos 5:15**)

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death. (**I John 3:14**)

If any be “**SOBER**”. This subject was dealt with above.

If any be “**JUST**”. The Greek word means “*equitable*” which means that he is to deal fairly and equally with all concerned.

Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man. **(II Corinthians 7:2)**

Ye *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: **(I Thessalonians 2:10)**

If any be “**HOLY**”. This Greek word means “*properly, right, devout, pious*”. He is to be faithful or devout in all his duties to the Lord.

Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: But in all *things* approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and *yet* true; as unknown, and *yet* well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. **(II Corinthians 6:3-10)**

I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. **(I Timothy 2:8)**

Ye *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe: **(I Thessalonians 2:10)**

For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; **(II Thessalonians 3:7)**

If any be “**TEMPERATE**”. This simply means to be “*self-controlled*”.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. **(Galatians 5:22-23)**

That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. **(Titus 2:2)**

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you* that ye shall neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **(II Peter 1:5-8)**

If any be “**HOLDING FAST THE FAITHFUL WORD AS HE HATH BEEN TAUGHT, THAT HE MAY BE ABLE BY SOUND DOCTRINE BOTH TO EXHORT AND TO CONVINCe THE GAINSAYERS.**” He must properly hold the faithful word (*notice it is singular and not plural – there is only **ONE** truth*) as he has been taught. He will not be swayed by every wind of doctrine nor will he be swayed by the charismatic new-comer that comes with something new and exciting. God’s truth **NEVER** changes and by him exhorting that truth he may be able to convince the gainsayers, those which contradict and deny the truth.

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. (**Acts 2:42**)

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. (**Romans 16:17**)

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (**Galatians 1:8-9**)

That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (**Ephesians 4:14**)

As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, (**I Timothy 1:3**)

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; (**I Timothy 4:1**)

So, taking what Paul tells Titus here, I believe we can safely say that if a Bishop (Elder) is “blameless, the husband of one wife, has trustworthy and obedient children, not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.” then he is to be considered fit for the office of Bishop (Elder).

I hope that you have noticed something very important here with these two lists. These qualifications are extremely important for a Bishop (Elder) to have! I hope you see that the office of a Bishop, an Elder or an Overseer is not a minimal thing nor something to be taken for granted. These passages do not contain a wish list, they are not a list of suggestions nor a list of multiple choices but they are all a necessity. And that is why

Paul later says, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. (**I Tim. 5:17**)”

Another thing I hope you noticed is what was missing. Out of all these qualifications there is something missing that **MOST** modern churches put a strong emphasis on and yet neglect a lot of the qualifications in this list. Nowhere on this list do you see it say or even infer that a man **must** have Seminary training.

We are all sinners and no one is worthy in and of themselves to stand in the office of a Bishop (Elder) of a local assembly. Yet, by the Lord’s decree, Paul (*who considered himself to be the “chief of sinners”*) was given to clearly set forth qualifications and standards (**not suggestions**) of who these men (*for it cannot be a female*) are to be and to ignore them is setting one up for dire consequences.



# WHAT IS A DEACON?

When I think of the term “deacon” I think of someone who is first and foremost willing to serve the church in a different fashion than a Bishop (Elder) does. I personally don’t look at this position as completely necessary unless the body is big enough and the Bishop (Elder) is in need of assistance so that he can devote more time to prayer and ministry of the word. Here is an example from Scripture for the need of help from qualified men.

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. (**Acts 6:1-4**)

In a nutshell this passage is showing that the church was growing so fast that the apostles couldn’t tend to the physical needs of the brethren without neglecting their time in prayer and the ministry of the word. Because of that they needed assistance. So, they gathered all the disciples together and told them to pick out seven men who displayed certain characteristics. The apostles only gave three qualifications for the men they were looking for. They were:

- **Of honest report** – This means that these men were to have a good reputation and be known to have integrity.
- **Full of the Holy Ghost** – This simply means that these men were to exemplify a spirit filled life. It is not speaking about them displaying miraculous gifts but it is speaking about those men that were living a life under the influence of the Holy Ghost.
  - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (**Galatians 5:22-23**)

- **Full of wisdom** – In their duties of serving the church these men were needed to make wise decisions.
  - For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding. (**Proverbs 2:6**)
  - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding. (**Proverbs 9:10**)
  - Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: (**I Corinthians 2:6-7**)
  - But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. (**James 3:17**)

The Greek word for “deacons” is “*diakonos*” and it means a “*servant – one who does servile or menial work*”. According to Thayer it means “one who, by virtue of the office assigned him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use.” It is translated as “deacon” or “deacons” five times. Once in Philippians chapter one verse one and four more times in Paul’s first letter to Timothy. It is also translated “servant” in other places of the New Testament. Here are a few examples with bold emphasis added:

But he that is greatest among you shall be your **servant**. (**Matthew 23:11**)

And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, *the* same shall be last of all, and **servant** of all. (**Mark 9:35**)

I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a **servant** of the church which is at Cenchrea: (**Romans 16:1**)

And even though the passage above in the book of Acts doesn’t mention either “deacon” or “servant”, the work that these seven men were called to was that of being a servant.



# QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON

The qualifications of a Deacon are not hidden in Scripture nor are they something to take lightly! These qualifications or standards are very clearly laid out by Paul in his first letter to Timothy.

## I TIMOTHY 3:8-13

Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless. Even so *must* their wives *be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

In the first part of this chapter Paul clearly states the qualifications or standards of a Bishop (Elder) (*which was covered above*). Now we are getting to where Paul clearly states the qualifications or standards of a Deacon. Some of these qualifications are the same as the Bishop (Elder) but I am going to go through them again here because it is a different group.

Paul starts off with saying “Likewise the deacons...” The Greek word translated “likewise” means “*in the same way*” and is pointing us back to verse 2 where Paul says “A bishop then must be...” The word “*must*” here in verse 8 is not in the original language but was added by the translators. It does help clarify the verse but is really not needed **IF** we are given to see that since the “bishop then must be” then with Paul saying “likewise” that it is inferred that the qualifications or standards he is about to give regarding deacons “**MUST**” be present as well. These qualifications or standards are:

- Grave
- Not doubletongued
- Not given to much wine
- Not greedy of filthy lucre
- Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience

- First be proved
- Then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless
- Even so *must* their wives *be*
  - Grave
  - Not slanderers
  - Sober
  - Faithful in all things
- Be the husbands of one wife
- Ruling their children well
- Ruling their own houses well

Likewise *must* the deacons *be* “**GRAVE**”: The Greek word for “grave” means “venerable” which means to be “*honest and honorable*”. Below we see in Paul’s letter to the Philippians that to be grave (honest) is something that **ALL** believers are called to be and then two verses which show who they are who are not grave or honest.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* **honest**, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there* be any virtue, and if *there* be any praise, think on these things. (**Philippians 4:8**) [*bold emphasis added*]

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (**I John 2:4**)

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. (**I John 2:22**)

Likewise *must* the deacons *be* “**NOT DOUBLETONGUED**”: The Greek word for “doubletongued” means “*telling a different story*”. In other words the deacon must not tell different stories to different people. He must be consistent with what he tells someone at church and what he tells others outside the church. James makes it abundantly clear why it is so important not to be “doubletongued” or as he puts it “double minded”.

A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. (**James 1:8**)

Likewise *must* the deacons *be* “**NOT GIVEN TO MUCH WINE**”: Does this mean that a Deacon cannot drink wine or alcohol? No it just means that he is not given to “*much*” wine. This little clarifying word “*much*” is added here with the Deacons where the qualification of a Bishop (Elder) just says “not given to wine”. Basically it is saying the same thing though and that is to certify that the Deacon is not to be a drunkard. There is absolutely nothing wrong with partaking of a little wine here and there. In fact as you can see below, Paul instructed Timothy to “use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake...” The issue here is over-indulging which is something that **ALL** believers are called **NOT** to do. When a man is given to wine then it is a character issue because he is now under the power of it (*wine*) rather than the power of the Holy Spirit. This character flaw disqualifies him from being a “Deacon”. This is especially important due to the fact that in most cases it is the Deacons who administers the Lord’s supper to the flock which entails the serving of wine. And if this is a weakness for the man than this act becomes a stumbling block and/or temptation.

Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise. (**Proverbs 20:1**)

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. (**I Corinthians 6:12**)

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; (**Ephesians 5:18**)

Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities. (**I Timothy 5:23**)

Likewise *must* the deacons *be* “**NOT GREEDY OF FILTHY LUCRE**”: The Greek word for “greedy of filthy lucre” means “*sordid*”. “Sordid” means “*immoral, base, vile, meanly selfish, self-seeking*”. So, when we add in the negative aspect of it because of the first word “not” it means that the Bishop (Elder) must “not be desirous of base gain”. This is something that is stressed throughout Scripture to **ALL** believers but is especially heinous in someone who is in or has a desire to the office of a Deacon. Jesus gives us a perfect example of someone who Paul is warning us against: “But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. (**John 10:12-13**)” These men are not to be trusted because their whole life is self-centered and self-serving but not Christ-centered. One of the Deacon’s jobs in a lot of churches is to handle the offering money. There is absolutely no way that the church would want someone who had unethical or immoral desires for base gain to be the one in charge of taking care of the offering money that was given to the church.

He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live. (**Proverbs 15:27**)

For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. (**I Thessalonians 2:9**)

Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: (**II Thessalonians 3:8**)

For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. (**I Timothy 6:10-11**)

Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. (**Titus 1:11**)

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; (**I Peter 5:2**)

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*. (**I Thessalonians 5:14**)

Likewise *must* the deacons *be* “**HOLDING THE MYSTERY OF THE FAITH IN A PURE CONSCIENCE**”: The term “the faith” is here referring to the everlasting gospel. The proper understanding of the doctrine of the Gospel is a necessity for a man to fill the office of a deacon.

Likewise *must* the deacons *be* “**FIRST BE PROVED**”: This is not speaking about an interview or a test with a bunch of questions to answer. Some people have a knack for giving a wonderful interview and yet they end up not being qualified for the job in question. This aspect of being “proved” is a character test. Have these men proven themselves to be a servant and shown that they have a desire to put others needs ahead of their own? So, by default this man cannot be someone who just started attending the church because there is no history to look at. And that is why Paul says what he says in these following verses.

Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. (**I Timothy 5:22**)

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. (**I Thessalonians 5:21**)

Likewise *must* the deacons **“THEN ... USE THE OFFICE OF A DEACON, BEING FOUND BLAMELESS”**: After the man’s character has been examined and “proved” and “IF” he is found to be “blameless” then he WILL “use the office of a deacon”. The Greek word for “blameless” here is a different word than the one used for the qualification for an elder. This word means “*unaccused or irreproachable*”. And again, let me reiterate that **NO ONE** can be “blameless” before God and that is not what this is speaking about. This is speaking about being “blameless” or “not accused of any misdoings” before men and the members of the congregation.

### **EVEN SO MUST THEIR WIVES ...**

When we get to the next verse at first glance it seems that Paul is taking a detour from the qualifications for a Deacon. But, is he really? I don’t believe so! What I believe he is doing is focusing on another aspect of the qualifications for a Deacon. And that aspect is the Deacon’s wives.

The Greek word for “their wives” is “*gune*” and it means “*woman*”. Some have taken this to mean that this verse is referring to “Deaconesses” but I don’t believe so. The issue I see with it referring to a group called “Deaconesses” is two-fold. First there **ARE** qualifications for a Deacon (*which is what we are going through*) but there are **NO** qualifications given for a Deaconess. This silence speaks very loudly to me! Secondly is that whenever the Greek word “*diakonos*” is translated as a “Deacon” it is **ALWAYS** in the masculine gender. In contrast to that the Greek word “*gune*” is simply the word for a “woman” and is always in the feminine gender.

Also, I don’t believe that this verse is talking about women in general. When there are “specifics” then those “specifics” are directed to a certain group which in this case are the “women” or the “wives” of the men in question.

Notice that the beginning of this verse starts with “Even so” which means “*in the same way, likewise, or after the same manner*”. Those two words are pointing us to the fact that these “women/wives” **MUST** meet certain qualifications as well. So, we see that not only do the Deacons themselves have specific qualifications of their own but their wives **MUST** also meet some specific qualifications as well. **IF** either of them fail to meet these qualifications then the man in question does not qualify for the office of a Deacon.

Even so *must* their wives *be* **“GRAVE”**: This is the same as the qualification for her husband. She also **MUST** be honest and honorable.

Even so *must* their wives *be* “**NOT SLANDERERS**”: A “slanderer” is someone who accuses someone else falsely. In other words they accuse someone of something that they did not do and thus it “slanders” their name. The wife is to be involved in the flock but she is **NOT** to participate in gossip sessions or spreading rumors that she has heard.

The words of a talebearer *are* as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. (**Proverbs 18:8; 26:22**)

But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. (**I Timothy 5:11-13**)

Even so *must* their wives *be* “**SOBER**”: The Greek word basically means “*sober or circumspect*”. The 1828 Webster’s dictionary says this about “circumspect”: “Literally, looking on all sides; looking round. Hence, cautious; prudent; watchful on all sides; examining carefully all the circumstances that may affect a determination, or a measure to be adopted.” She is to be aware of what is going on in the assembly. And as you can see from Peter’s first letter below that we are **ALL** called to be sober.

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; (**I Peter 1:13**)

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (**I Peter 5:8**)

Even so *must* their wives *be* “**FAITHFUL IN ALL THINGS**”: The Greek word for “faithful” means “*trustworthy*”. She is to be trustworthy in everything she does.

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; (**I Timothy 1:12**)

Paul now gets back to the Deacons themselves.

Likewise *must* the deacons “**BE THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE**”: I see this qualification for the Deacon as three-fold. It is first emphasizing that a Deacon **MUST** be a man. The gender for the Greek word translated “husband” is male while the gender for the Greek word translated “wife” is in the feminine. Secondly Paul is stressing that the Deacon **MUST** be married. How can the Deacon be a “husband” if he is not married? Thirdly Paul is stressing that the Deacon **MUST** “be the husband of **ONE**

wife”. I go over this third point in the third to last section of this study entitled **THE TERM “ONE WIFE”**.

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. **(Matthew 19:4-6)**

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. **(Ephesians 5:31)**

Likewise *must* the deacons be **“RULING THEIR CHILDREN AND THEIR OWN HOUSES WELL”**: To me this qualification is three-fold as well. First the Deacon **MUST** have children to qualify. If he does not have any children then how can he rule over them well? Paul could have very easily said “If he has children then he is to rule over them well”. But, **NO!** he didn’t! He simply said that the Deacons are to be “ruling their children and their own houses well”. So, there **MUST** be children. Secondly the Deacon **MUST** be ruling over his children well. Thirdly he must also be ruling over his own house in general well. Think about it for a moment and it makes perfect sense. With normal children, life at home can be very busy at times and the parents must make quick decisions. That is excellent training for a Deacon who also at times must make quick decisions while taking care of the church (*family*) of God.

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. **(Ephesians 6:4)**

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. **(Hebrews 12:7-8)**



# THE TERM “ONE WIFE”

The term “one wife” is mentioned in I Timothy as a qualification for both the Bishop (Elder) and the Deacon and in Titus for the qualification of a Bishop (Elder). So, I felt it was a good idea to take some time and explain further what I believe this qualification means.

The Greek word for “**one**” means the “*primary numeral one*” and it also has the aspect of being the “first”. And quite interestingly it is the exact same Greek word used in these following verses (*bold emphasis added*):

I and my Father are **one**. (**John 10:30**)

As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but **one**. (**I Corinthians 8:4**)

But to us there is but **one** God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. (**I Corinthians 8:6**)

**One** God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. (**Ephesians 4:6**)

There is only **ONE** God. And in similar fashion a Bishop (Elder) and Deacon can only have **ONE** wife. As a contrast look at these verses.

The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. (**John 4:17-18**)

Here we see Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s Well. We read the full story in verses six through 26 of the Gospel of John chapter 4. Jesus is sitting at the well resting, and when the woman approaches the first thing he says to her is “give me to drink”. She was blown away why this Jew would talk to her seeing that she was a Samaritan. He says some magnificent things to her but what I want to focus on is the verses quoted above. The Samaritan woman states that she has “no husband”. Jesus says to her “Thou hast well said, I have no husband...and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.” Jesus is agreeing with her that she has no husband because the man she is living with now is not her husband. But, we can’t just skip over

the middle part which says, “For thou has had five husbands...” He is calling them “husbands”. In other words they all are still her husbands and therefore she has more than **ONE** husband but she currently was not with her husband but someone else.

From this can we not see that if a Bishop (Elder) or Deacon is divorced and remarried then he has more than **ONE** wife (*not to mention committing adultery*)? Or if he is married to a divorcee then he is committing adultery because she now has two husbands. And if we take into consideration what the verses below state, I believe that a man that is divorced and remarried or married to a divorcee is disqualified from being a Bishop (Elder), or Deacon.

Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery. (**Luke 16:18**)

It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. (**Matthew 5:31-32**)

And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. (**Mark 10:2-11**)

Let me finish this with one more verse for your consideration:

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. (**II Thessalonians 3:6**)

To me this is very **STRONG** language. Paul says “we command you, brethren”. This is not something to take lightly nor to just set by the wayside. This is something to pay attention to. He then takes it even one step further by stating that the command is “in the

name of our Lord Jesus Christ”. **There is authority in this statement!** The command is that “ye withdraw yourselves...” The word “withdraw” means to “*abstain from associating with*”. So, who is this group that we are commanded to abstain from associating with? The group is brethren that walk “disorderly and not after the tradition which he received of us.” What does it mean to “walk disorderly”? In the context of this verse it points to those “which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.” But what does the word “disorderly” itself mean? It means “out of ranks (often so of soldiers), inordinate, deviating from prescribed order of rule”. The word “inordinate” means “*excessive; immoderate; not limited to rules prescribed, or to usual bounds. (1828 Webster Dictionary)*” We see from the meaning of the word that it goes way beyond just being lazy or being busybodies. So, if Paul commanded the Thessalonian brethren to withdraw themselves from those that had become lazy and busybodies, how much more should we withdraw ourselves from men who are “deviating from the prescribed order of rule” which are clearly proclaimed in these qualifications of a Bishop (Elder) and Deacon?



## I CORINTHIANS 7:32b-33

He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife.

Some may ask: Why am I bringing these verses up in a study on the Qualifications of a Bishop and Deacon? Isn't there a glaring contradiction here between these two verses and the single qualification that both a Bishop and a Deacon **MUST** be married to one wife?

Regarding the first question, I am bringing these verses up because at face value they do have an appearance of contradiction and I wanted to deal with that. Before I answer the second question let's take a little time to go through these verses and see what they are saying.

In a nut shell, Paul is speaking to the men here in these two verses. He is stressing the reason for not getting married and staying single. He also goes over what happens when a man gets married.

Paul first covers when a man is "unmarried". When that is the case he cares for the "things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord". The Greek word for "unmarried" means just what it says "*not married, not in a state of wedlock*" and it doesn't specify whether they have never been married or have been previously married. It doesn't matter in this instance. And in this verse this word is in the masculine gender. And that is why I believe these two verses are directed specifically to men. The Greek word for "careth for" means "*to be over-anxious, to be anxious about, distracted, to care for*".

Those believing men that ARE NOT currently in a state of wedlock are over-anxious or distracted by that which belongs to the Lord. Their whole goal and desire is to do that which pleases the Lord. **Or at least that is how it should be!** Unfortunately we know that this is not always the case and in fact it is rarely the case. But one cannot deny the fact that those that are not married have the freedom in their lifestyle to devote more time to the things of the Lord like reading His word, studying His word, visiting brethren, helping those in need, etc.

On the flip side of that those men that ARE currently in the state of wedlock do not have the sheer freedom like those that are not married to focus as much energy and time in

that which belongs to the Lord. They are distracted by those things that belong to the world in how they may please their wife and provide for their family.

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. (**I Timothy 5:8**)

NO! I do not believe that these verses contradict the qualification! In fact, I don't believe that there are ANY contradictions in Scripture! Any supposed "*contradiction*" is simply a misunderstanding on our part and it shows that light or insight has not been granted to the inquisitor.

Paul does not limit his thoughts to just the men here but continues with similar thoughts and concerns for the women.

There is difference *also* between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please *her* husband. (**I Corinthians 7:34**)

Paul is again making a distinction between the "unmarried woman" (*virgin*) and the "married" woman (*wife*). And the distinction is basically the same as he showed for the men.

These three verses are talking about the believer in general. And your average Joe is doing good to keep up with the bare minimum. That is why Paul stresses that a Bishop is to be honored. A Bishop and Deacon are to be married with children because this is their training ground on how to rule and govern a family. Without this training they are unfit to be in either office.



# CLOSING COMMENTS

## Bishop (Elder)

Qualification	Verse
Blameless	I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6
Husband of one wife	I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6
Ruleth well his own house having his children in subjection with all gravity	1 Tim. 3:4
Having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly	Titus 1:6
Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught	Titus 1:9
Vigilant (Sober)	I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8
Not given to wine	I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7
Not greedy of filthy lucre	I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7
Sober	I Tim. 3:2
Of good behavior	I Tim. 3:2
Given to hospitality / Lover of hospitality	1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8
Apt to teach	I Tim. 3:2
Patient	I Tim. 3:3
Have a good report of them which are without	I Tim. 3:7
A lover of good men	Titus 1:8
Just	Titus 1:8
Holy	Titus 1:8
Temperate	Titus 1:8
No striker	I Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7
Not a brawler	I Tim. 3:3
Not covetous	I Tim. 3:3
Not a novice	I Tim. 3:6
Not selfwilled	Titus 1:7
Not soon angry	Titus 1:7

## Deacon

Qualification	Verse
Blameless	I Tim. 3:10
Husband of one wife	I Tim. 3:12
Ruling their own houses well	I Tim. 3:12
Ruling his own children well	I Tim. 3:12
Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience	I Tim. 3:9
Sober ( <i>wife</i> )	I Tim. 3:11
Not given to much wine	I Tim. 3:8
Not greedy of filthy lucre	I Tim. 3:8
Grave ( <i>Deacon &amp; wife</i> )	I Tim. 3:8, 11
First be proved	I Tim. 3:10
Faithful in all things ( <i>wife</i> )	I Tim. 3:11
Not doubletongued	I Tim. 3:8
Not a slanderer ( <i>wife</i> )	I Tim. 3:11

Above is a table showing the similarities and differences between the Qualifications of a Bishop (Elder) and a Deacon along with his wife.

The Bishop (Elder) has twenty-four qualifications that need to be met. Each of them are important but I can't help but notice that there are six duplicates and one triplicate. When I see duplicates and specially triplicates I see emphasis and it immediately makes me think of what Paul wrote to the Corinthian brethren:

This is the third *time* I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. (**II Corinthians 13:1**)

The Deacon has thirteen qualifications that need to be met. Out of those thirteen there are nine that are specific to the Deacon and three that are specific to his wife. And then there is one qualification that includes both the Deacon and his wife.

Even though there is a significant difference in the amount of qualifications between the two offices. It doesn't mean that one office is more important than the other. Interestingly out of all the qualifications we see that eight of them belong to both the Bishop (Elder) and the Deacon. Though each office has it's own responsibilities within the church family. Each church family should have at least one Bishop (Elder) and as the congregation grows that number should also grow along with adding in Deacons.

Let me end this study with these two verses.

These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. (**I Timothy 3:14-15**)

These two verses sum up the importance of why the qualifications for a Bishop (Elder) and Deacon are so important. According to these two verses, this whole letter that Paul was given to write was for the guidelines of how the believers ought to behave themselves "in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth."

In hope,  
November 2023  
Thomas R. Adams  
GodIsSovereign@mail.com

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\* All verses are quoted from the KJV.

\*\* There appears to be a discrepancy here with this section of the verse. It is included in

the Textus Receptus but it is not in some of the other manuscripts.