

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY, 14TH 2019 // 1 TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 3 tell us the requirements for leadership within the church and the purpose for God's church.

WHAT A PASTOR SHOULD BE (1 TIM. 3:1-7)

The church in Ephesus had been ravaged by false teachers who had misled many that desired to be known as leaders but had absolutely no qualifications for leadership.

- Desiring to be a leader within the church is a "noble task" (vs. 1), but there are qualifications.
- The one office of leadership within the church Paul begins with is that of the "overseer".

The word he uses is "episkopos"- it's been translated as bishop or overseer.

- The NT uses two other words interchangeably to also describe this role- elders (Titus 1:5) and pastors (Eph. 4:11).
- Regardless of what we may call them, those who occupy this office are those who are charged with leading and overseeing the spiritual affairs of the church.

So to all the people who were claiming that they were leaders and teachers, Paul details what an "episkopos" (pastor) should really be like.

- A true pastor must be "above reproach"- not perfect, but someone that deals with his sin between himself and God and himself and others.
- "Husband of one wife"- literally a "one woman man"; completely committed to his marriage.

"...sober-minded"- that doesn't mean he can't have fun, he just knows when it's time to get serious and what to be serious about.

- "...self-controlled"- a true pastor needs to be in control of his tongue, temper, and vices.
- "...respectable"- his life is well-ordered and worthy of imitating.
- "...hospitable"- open to strangers, friendly, generous to new people and kinds of people.

"...able to teach"- the pastor must be capable of communicating God's Word in a clear way and must possess an understanding of Christian doctrine.

- "...not a drunkard"- any Christian, but specifically a pastor, must display incredible self-control, restraint, and wisdom in this area.
- "...not violent...gentle...not quarrelsome"- constant arguments and strife don't follow this person.

"...not a lover of money"- "no-one can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24), so a pastor's decisions can't be influenced by paychecks and benefits, but rather by the influence of the Spirit and the Word.

- "He must manage his own household..."- every home and family experiences tension and no family is perfect, but the mood of a pastor's family should be that of love, obedience, honor, and respect.

"...not a new convert"- someone who occupies the office of pastor needs to have a level of spiritual maturity and a spiritual depth that can only be developed over time.

- Spiritual immaturity manifests itself in spiritual pride, and this was Paul's primary reason for not placing a new convert in this office.
- "...a good reputation with outsiders"- he's evangelistic and has a good standing in the community.

TWO STANDARDS FOR HOLINESS?

- The wrong way to read this passage is to read it and assume that standards of holiness only apply to clergy and not to "ordinary Christians".
- Those leading us in our journey of becoming transformed by the Spirit into the image of Christ must be also committed to being transformed and show fruit that God's Spirit is in their lives.

SERVING IN THE CHURCH (1 TIM. 3:8-13)

Paul then turns to another office of leadership within the church, that of "deacons".

- The responsibilities of overseers/pastors/elders are fairly clear in the NT, but the responsibilities of "deacons" aren't as clear.
- That's probably why we have so many opinions amongst denominations as to what the role of a "deacon" within the church should be.
- But what does the word actually mean? (Mark 9:35)

The word literally means, "servant", and it almost always refers to someone who is in some form of ministry or service.

- In Acts 6, we see in the early church two groups of leaders emerging from the church in Jerusalem- "elders" to lead in oversight, prayer, and in the ministry of the word, and "diakonos" to lead in specific areas of serving within the church.

- Both are incredibly important and needed!

Don't get hung up on the title- what matters is the responsibility and the qualifications.

- A deacon must be "dignified, not double-tongued"- they must have a serious mind about spiritual and leadership issues and they must be truthful in speech and can't be gossips.
- "Not addicted to wine or greedy"- these two vices will destroy a person and a church!

They must "hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience" (vs. 9).

- This is a warning against allowing into church leadership someone who holds to unbiblical doctrines.
- They also must "be tested first" (vs. 10)- there has to be a time where any potential leaders are watched by the church elders before they're approached to lead.

Vs. 11 could be more accurately translated, "women also" rather than the wives of deacons.

- Romans 16:1 tells us that a woman named Phoebe was a deacon in the church, and Paul mentions 17 other women who were apparently leaders within other churches.
- Serving and leading in the church isn't just for the men- and neither are these qualifications!

Anyone who leads in the service of the church must also be faithful in their marriage and lead their own household well (vs. 12).

- Those who "serve well" gain a good standing for themselves- they're a blessing to others in the church and community.
- They also gain "...great confidence in their faith"- this relates to the boldness that can only come when we're willing to step into higher levels of service and leadership.

SERVING IN THE CHURCH (1 TIM. 3:8-13)

Paul gives his reason for writing in vs. 15, "that we may know how one ought to behave" in the church.

- When we hear the word, "church", what do we think of?
- Some of us think of a building, a specific event, an organization, or a non-profit entity.
- What does God have in mind when He describes the church?

"...The Household of God"

- In ancient times, a household was owned by a master of the house, who would appoint stewards and servants to oversee his affairs.
- The family of the master would benefit from obedient and faithful stewards and servants.
- The picture is of the church being a place of warmth, refuge, and love and of our responsibility to manage it well!

"...the church of the living God"

- Language like this would've taken first-century Jewish Christians and those familiar with the scriptures back to the O.T. and maybe even Jacob's meeting with God at Bethel
- God now dwells in and amongst His people (Eph. 2:22)- we now are the ark, the temple, and the tabernacle!

"...a pillar and buttress of the truth"

- We're guardians of God's Word and His truth.
- We're to guard the truth of God's word and live out its claims in our day to day lives.
- This is a call to the church in Ephesus to stand against false teaching, false teachers, and false doctrine and to teach the Word.
- We have the responsibility of passing this on to the next generation- we must be diligent!

Paul concludes this section with a confession on the "mystery of godliness" (vs. 16).

- This was probably a well-known hymn in the first-century church that was used in worship, and Paul may have included its familiar words to provoke listeners to evaluate their conduct and life in light of what it said.
- A "mystery" in this sense isn't something that can't be figured out- it's something that was previously hidden but is now revealed.

The mystery is of "godliness"- God-consciousness or God-centeredness that permeates everything you do.

- So how do we know God and live in our lives centered in Him and in conscious of His presence in our lives? We know God through Christ- who was made "manifest in the flesh", (fully man) "vindicated in the spirit ...seen by angels" (fully God).

The glory of Jesus was and is "proclaimed in the nations and believed on in the world".

- The proclamation of the risen Christ to the nations is now the responsibility of the church.

Christ was "taken up in glory"- Christ's ascension is assurance of His return, and if He's coming back someday for His church, shouldn't we be busy doing the work that He's given us to do?

PERSONAL INTEGRITY, CHARACTER, AND OUR INNER LIVES.