

THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

I. Familial qualifications.

- A. These men are to only have one wife as well.
 - 1. This is also a qualification for elders as mentioned.
 - 2. Those who indulged in the practice of polygamy were not qualified to be deacons.
 - 3. Again, there is debate about whether or not a scripturally divorced and remarried man may serve in that role.
- B. They are also to rule their house well.
 - 1. Their children, while not having to be believers as the children of elders, must still show an obedient attitude and reverence for their father.
 - 2. The wife also shows to others that he rules the house by the way she is submissive to his God-given authority as head of the house.
- C. One thing we need to mention is the idea of whether or not multiple children are needed to be qualified or one.
 - 1. There are those that say there must be more than one child because there are members in congregations.
 - 2. However, notice Genesis 21:7.
 - 3. Also, if someone asks you if you have children and you have only one, don't you answer affirmatively?
- D. Also, Paul mentions qualifications the wives must meet.
 - 1. Most commentators believe that these same qualifications are to be met by the wives of the elders.
 - 2. Also, it must be said that these qualifications in verse 11 are for wives and not female deacons.
 - a. There are those that say this refers to female deacons.
 - b. There is no such thing as a deaconess because they cannot meet the previously mentioned qualifications.
 - 3. The wives are to be grave, which carries the idea of being honorable in character.
 - a. Notice this description of one who is grave: it does not merely indicate the earthly dignity lent to a person, but one who also owes his modesty to that higher citizenship which is also his, being one who inspires not only respect but reverence and worship.
 - b. The wives are examples to others in how to act.
 - 4. They are not to be slanderers, which means accusers.
 - a. This is the same word translated "devil."
 - b. It has to do with gossiping about others.
 - 5. They are to be sober, or in control of passions and emotions.
 - 6. They are also to be faithful in all things, which means trustworthy and keepers of their word.

II. Personal positive qualifications.

- A. Deacons are to be grave, which is the same qualification that their wives are to meet.
 - 1. Deacons are exemplary in their lives.
 - 2. Their reverence towards God should be seen by others.
- B. They are to hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
 - 1. The word mystery means something that was once hidden that is now revealed.
 - 2. The one qualified to be a deacon is one who holds the gospel closely and purely.
 - 3. His conscience is pure in the way that he serves God.
 - 4. He holds to the gospel and does not depart from it.
 - 5. About this, Barnes wrote, "A mere orthodox faith was not all that was necessary, for it was possible that a man might be professedly firm in the belief of the truths of revelation, and yet be corrupt at heart."
 - 6. A biblically pure conscience is one that has been trained by the gospel and is adhering to that training.
- C. He is to be proven.
 - 1. The word "also" shows this to be for elders as well.
 - 2. The man who is qualified to be a deacon has shown himself to be these things already.
- D. He is to be blameless just as an elder.
 - 1. There is nothing people can lay hold in his life to disqualify him from being appointed a deacon.
 - 2. He is not sinless, but forgiven of anything.

III. **Personal negative qualifications.**

- A. He is not to be doubletongued.
 - 1. This is the only time this word is used in the New Testament.
 - 2. According to Thayer it means: "double tongued, double in speech, saying one thing with one person another with another (with the intent to deceive)."
- B. Not given to much wine.
 - 1. The word much has caused some to say that a deacon can drink a little.
 - 2. Barnes stated: "It is not affirmed that it would be proper for the deacon, any more than the bishop, to indulge in the use of wine in small quantities, but it is affirmed that a man who is much given to the use of wine, ought not, on any consideration, to be a deacon."
 - 3. Again, Old Testament priests were forbidden to drink wine and we are priests under New Testament law.
- C. Not greedy of filthy lucre means they are not to be taking the position for whatever monetary gain they may get.

IV. **The result of their work.**

- A. Paul told Timothy that those who serve well as deacons obtain a good degree.
 - 1. The word degree literally means step or threshold.

2. It carries the idea of a grade of dignity in the congregation.
 3. The one who fulfills the duties of a deacon well obtain more honor and dignity in the congregation.
- B. Not only that, it allows them to be more confident in the gospel and in his Christian walk.
1. This man, through his experience gained in the work of a deacon has a greater faith.
 2. He has more confidence in God and His providence because he has seen God at work in the congregation.
 3. Hopefully, it leads the man closer to being qualified to be an elder.