



B. The Qualifications of a Deacon (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

1. The qualification of conscience (1 Timothy 3:8-9)

a. He must be grave (1 Timothy 3:8).

- (1) In the present usage, the word is found three times in scripture (1 Timothy 3:8, 11; Titus 2:2) with an additional two times if one includes the word *gravity* (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 2:7).
- (2) The word *grave* is associated with works like serious or sober and have to do with being grounded.
 - a) Sobriety helps the believer “not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think” (Romans 12:3). In other words, it keeps him grounded rather than haughty.
 - b) Pride is one of the greatest destructive forces in the world. Pride led to the fall of Satan and will likewise destroy the believer’s walk with the Lord along with his testimony before others.
 - c) Sobriety is a companion to gravity (1 Timothy 3:11; Titus 2:2) and causes a believer to perceive himself as he is.
 - d) The Devil fell when he began to think more highly of himself (Isaiah 14:12-14). In his heart, he thought to exalt his throne and be like the most High.
 - e) If the believer is not sober, he too can begin to think thoughts of pride. Just as it was with Satan, this pride will be his downfall.
 - f) For these reasons, a prerequisite for a man being considered for the office of a deacon was that he be grave. If he were not grave prior to holding the office, the office most certainly would hasten his demise and bring about great troubles in the church.

b. He must not be doubletongued (1 Timothy 3:8).

- (1) This is the only occurrence of the word in scripture and its surrounding context makes it somewhat difficult to be certain of the intended meaning.
- (2) However, the use of the word *double* suggests something that would be one being duplicated to incorporate a second.
 - a) On a couple of occasions, the Bible speaks of those who were or were not of a double heart (1 Chronicles 12:33; Psalm 12:2).
 - b) On a couple of occasions, the book of James speaks of being double minded (James 1:8; James 4:8).
 - c) In each of these cases, being double hearted or double minded appears to be something that is split and going in opposing directions.
 - d) With that being said, one would think that a doubletongue would be one that is used for godly purposes one moment and for ungodly purposes the next. Perhaps no verse better encapsulates this truth than James 3:10.

- c. He must not be given to much wine (1 Timothy 3:8).
 - (1) The phrase *given to wine* appears four times in scripture, all in the pastoral epistles.
 - a) Two of these appearances specifically say “Not given to wine” and identify a qualification of the bishop (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7).
 - b) Another appearance says “not given to MUCH wine” and is an expected characteristic of the “aged women” (Titus 2:3).
 - c) Our appearance matches that of the aged women but speaks this time to the qualifications of a deacon.
 - (2) A study of wine in the New Testament can cause great divide.
 - a) Some suggest scripture allows no wine for believers.
 - b) Others suggest that God is only opposed to drunkenness.
 - (3) One who studies scripture with an open mind knows the dangers of drinking alcohol and understands that God is opposed to its involvement in the lives of believers. At the same time, Paul recommended that Timothy “use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities” (1 Timothy 5:23).
 - (4) Two things need to be understood about wine:
 - a) The Bible uses the word *wine* to describe both fermented and unfermented drink and context must be considered in order to determine which is being described.
 - b) Wine was used for multiple purposes including medicinal (1 Timothy 5:23). Today, any medicinal use could be covered in prescriptions or over-the-counter medication.
 - (5) Regardless of what one believes, we cannot ignore that:
 - a) “It is good” not “to drink wine...whereby thy brother stumbleth...is offended, or is made weak” (Romans 14:21).
 - b) As believers, we are admonished to “be not drunk with wine...but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).
 - (6) Combining these truths and understanding the harmful effects of alcohol, it is clear that total abstinence is the safest choice and the one that would be most pleasing to the Lord.
- d. He must not be greedy of filthy lucre (1 Timothy 3:8).
 - (1) The admonition is the avoidance of greed. In this case, the object of temptation is lucre that is filthy.
 - (2) In order to fully understand this, one ought to consider the six uses of the word *lucre* in the scripture (1 Samuel 8:3; 1 Timothy 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7, 11; 1 Peter 5:2).
 - (3) In each case, the lucre is clearly filthy, with all but one (1 Samuel 8:3) specifically declared as such.
 - (4) Lucre is not always money, and the truth being communicated is best described from both angles in 1 Timothy 6:10.
- e. He must hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience (1 Timothy 3:9).
 - (1) What is to be held—“the mystery of the faith”
 - (2) How it is to be held—“in a pure conscience”



2. The qualification of experience (1 Timothy 3:10)
 - a. Let these also first be proved.
 - b. Then, after being found blameless
 - c. Let them use the office of a deacon
3. The qualification of home-life (1 Timothy 3:11-12)
 - a. The qualifications of the wife (1 Timothy 3:11)
 - (1) She must be grave.
 - (2) She must not be a slanderer (see 2 Samuel 19:27; Psalm 50:20).
 - (3) She must be sober.
 - (4) She must be faithful in all things.
 - b. The qualifications of the man (1 Timothy 3:12)
 - (1) He must be the husband of one wife.
 - (2) He must rule his children and his own house well.
4. The reward of service (1 Timothy 3:13)
 - a. The required service
 - (1) The manner—"they that have used the office of a deacon"
 - (2) The quality—"well"
 - b. The reward for service
 - (1) **Good** degree; likely a statement indicating increased honour
 - (2) **Great** boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus
5. Additional thoughts on the office of a deacon
 - a. Foundational information
 - (1) There are only five specific Bible references to a deacon or to deacons (Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8, 10, 12, 13).
 - (2) The word *deacon* means servant and is indicative of an office (1 Timothy 3:10, 13).
 - (3) Titus was not commanded to set up deacons in the churches, indicating this was an optional position (Titus 1:5).
 - (4) Although many run to Acts chapter 6 to find the first deacons, those men are technically never called deacons.
 - a) If they were not deacons, the Bible names no deacons.
 - b) If they were deacons, it provides more insight into the character and calling of deacons (Acts 6:3).
 - i) Their character
 - (a) Of honest report
 - (b) Full of the Holy Ghost
 - (c) Full of wisdom
 - ii) Their calling—Appointed to be "over this business" of serving the widows' tables
 - c) Regardless, this passage may be used for general teaching for the choosing of deacons and the work they are to do. In the sense that deacons are servants, these men are deacons.
 - b. The work of a deacon
 - (1) To serve the needs of the church
 - (2) To serve under the leadership of the pastor since the name of the position means servant and a deacon is never called to rule as is the bishop