

## Shepherds & Servants 9

Are Qualified Servants

1 Timothy 3:8-13

Memory Verses: 1 Timothy 3:8

### MANUSCRIPT

Today's lesson is drawn from 1 Timothy 3 vs 8-13

We will be covering the descriptions of sincerity, content, holder of the faith and tried and true using the terms and descriptions from the book we have been using in our study.

We see the description of sincere In 1 Timothy 3:8 "Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain."

This short verse covers a lot of ground in few words. Let's look at "dignified" or "sincere" first.

How many times do we see people that talk out of both sides of their mouth as we say. We can relate this to politics or being political in addressing people. I feel we all may have some issues with the aspect of speaking the truth and not engaging in flattery as described in 2

Corinthians 1:17-18, we are instructed to let our yes be yes and no likewise no. Essentially being consistent from one to the next as to where to truth is and not simply telling each what they want to hear.

The text we used offers these evaluations for consideration:

Does the individual have a reputation for keeping his word? A deacon must be a man of his word. (True for all Christians and is a standard even outside the Church.)

Does the person speak consistently to different parties? This is important for any message and to not stir difficulties within a church and again, in any life situation.

Does the individual speak the truth in love? The truth is not always pleasant but it is the truth. The guidance for this is also referenced in Ephesians 4:15 "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,". We also find this in 1

Corinthians 13:13 "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love." Colossians 3:14 "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony."

Is the man fair in their evaluations when dealing with others and impartial in dealing with issues.

What is the benefit of having servants in the church that cannot be trusted, reliable and transparent in what they do.

Also, a Deacon must have self-control. Now let's look at the rest of this

verse. We'll use sober and content as the descriptors for this.

not addicted to much wine. I grew up being taught that alcohol was evil. For most of my family, this changed over the years to a different view by some. The issue is, does the man have the ability to control himself concerning the use of alcohol. We've all seen what the inability to control any vice can and does lead to, so everyone should consider this but especially leaders. The question posed is does the man drink alcohol? The evaluation is, does the man have the ability to say no when offered alcohol? This is interpreted as knowing when it is appropriate and when it is becoming excessive. My personal stance is that for me, I'm afraid to try it as I am not sure I could control it. However I'm not in a position to condemn the partaking in moderation for someone else.

Now let's look at the not greedy for dishonest gain.

This would indicate that one is fair and honest in financial matters. This also refers to the generosity in helping others. We've seen in history where churches hoarded their gains. We also know that money is a sign of power and that power can and does corrupt.

The question here is does the man exhibit godly generosity and avoid greed in their personal finances? Another is does he encourage others in generosity in church matters? This is difficult for me in some ways. I want to support and be generous, but at the same time careful with the funds to protect the church and others. I won't go into details here but simply say I can't help but want to look into those that I feel simply want to take advantage of the church. We are reminded of the building bigger barns analogy in Luke 12:15-21 "And he said to them, 'Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'" And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'" But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

Another aspect is the man honest in his financial dealings?

Also, what is the man's attitude towards wealth? Is he willing to share with others? This extends beyond financial resources and does the man share himself with others to help or show genuine care for others. Deacons disqualify themselves when they can't control their desires for alcohol or money.

As we move to 1 Timothy 3:9 we see that deacons must have a tested faith

**and doctrine.** “They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.”

☐ Can the man stand his ground in the faith? Something we may relate to is a good server in a restaurant that knows their products and can remember and recommend the best information with confidence. A candidate for deacon should have the same ability with the truth. They must truly believe in the scriptures also.

The questions:

Can the man give credible profession of their faith in Jesus?

Does the man show understanding of the gospel and can they articulate that understanding?

Has the man shown a pat of falling away or ebbing in and out of their faith? Does the man live the faith where it shows?

In the church the candidate for such an office must be a leader and example in the life and faith of a true Christian.

Moving to **verse 10** “And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless.”

☐ As we have seen in work environments and other activities, experience means a lot. There is a need for “trial by fire” situations to establish knowledge and judgement. This doesn’t mean persecution necessarily, but the experience in working through challenges is a great test and learning opportunity. This is also important in working through temptations as someone new in a position can be vulnerable to situations without experience and time to recognize situations before getting in over your head.

Questions to consider here are:

Is the man a mature Christian that is continually growing? We also need to consider that time is not necessarily the mark for maturity needed.

Has the man shown competence in service? I.e. has the man shown a pattern of serving in various areas.

Is there anything that may disqualify the candidate? This can be character or competence.

And very importantly, can the congregation support the individual? If there is anything that impacts this, the man cannot be effective within the church. This speaks to the congregation and its own capacity. In short, **deacons must show an understanding of the word and be able to express their beliefs not only in word but also in deed.**

**Verse 11; Deacons must be faithful to their wives and have faithful wives.**

“Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.”, brings another very important element to the effectiveness of an individual. The wife must have qualities much like the

man himself. As we can see with this, the process is somewhat a team effort. A man cannot be effective if he does not have this support.

Additionally, as we see in **verse 12** “Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well.” Shevi discussed this some last week. A man must be a good husband and father by demonstrating that they are, first of all, loyal, a good example and teach at home. How can a man lead others if he cannot look after and manage his own home.

Then we see the reward for those who serve well in **Verse 13** “For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.” **Deacons who serve well show the love of Christ** to the world.

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All of what we have been looking at and will continue to look at is the importance of choosing the correct men for the office of deacon. It is not to be taken lightly. We have seen that it is an office that is good to seek. However, it is important to look at why one would seek the office. In my view, any person that is “right for the job” would be reluctant to aggressively seek the office because they understand the responsibility and what true service entails. I encourage all to think seriously about choosing men for the position and those men that are willing to serve.

As the Praise Team comes back I ask for prayers in the process and selecting process as we move forward.

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