

VII.1. Lambs to Rams: Elders/Deacons

The apostle Paul, in giving these inspired instructions to both Timothy and Titus, was speaking to the subject of divine management of the Lord's body, the church. These were instructions given specifically to members of the body and were not concerning those outside who only the Lord will judge (*1 Cor 5:12*). The church needs to heed these instructions if she is to remain pure since her leaders are tasked with a weighty charge (*Mat 15:14; Heb 13:7*). 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 list the qualifications.

Elders

1. **Desire**- Gk.3713- *reach* out after (*long* for).
2. **Must**- Gk.1163- *it is* (*was*, etc.) *necessary* (as ***binding***): - behaved, be meet, must (needs), (be) need (-ful), ought, should. **Be**- Gk.1511- **Present infinitive** from G1510; *to exist*. Thus, he is to be **at present** and, as the infinitive suggests, as **long as** he meets **all** the following qualifications, in such a state as is scripturally commanded.
3. **Above reproach**- Gk.423. Thayer "*not apprehended, that cannot be laid hold of; hence cannot be reprehended, not open to censure, irreproachable*".
4. **Not arrogant** (Gk.829- *self pleasing*) or **quick tempered** (Gk.3711- *irascible [irritable, grumpy]: - soon angry*)
5. **Husband of one** (Gk.3391- *one or first*) **wife**. At the time of the writing, polygamy was common but was categorically forbidden of Christians according to Jesus' statement in Mat 19 concerning marriage, divorce and re-marriage. The koine Greek word for 'one' implies that the elder, who had multiple wives prior to conversion, give up all those wives and that he remain married to his 'first' wife (*not to be misunderstood as Gk.4413- foremost; which would denote that he could only be married once*). Any faithful brother who meets all the eldership qualifications, even one who was divorced because of a wife having committed "sexual immorality" (*adultery- Mat 5:32*), who himself is

scripturally qualified to marry, and who marries another woman who is also 'scripturally' eligible, thus fits the "husband of one wife" restriction. But, if the wife of an elder dies, he is no longer qualified to serve in that capacity as the husband of one wife. Widowers therefore, cannot serve as elders since there is no scripture that states such, and to do so would only be adding to the inspired Word. (*Deu 4:2; Isa 55:8; Rev 22:18-19*)

6. **Sober minded**- Gk.4998- *safe (sound) in mind*, that is, *self-controlled (moderate as to opinion or passion*. Thayer- "*curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate*".
7. **Respectable**- Gk.2887- *orderly*: -of good behavior, modest.
8. **Hospitable**- Gk.5382- *fond of guests*: -given to (lover of, use) hospitality.
9. **Able to teach**- Gk.1317- *instructive*. Thayer- "*apt and skillful in teaching*".
10. **Not-** (*Gk.3361- negation*) a **drunkard**- Gk.3943- *staying near wine*. Interlinear- "not given to wine". An elder is to be "given to hospitality" but "not given to wine". We must never forget that our bodies belong to the Lord as temples of the Holy Spirit (*1 Cor 6:19-20*) and are to be respected as such. If that is to be understood and practiced by the common Christian, why should the elder be relieved of this?
11. **Not-** (*Gk.3361*) **violent**- Gk.4131- a *smiter*, that is, *pugnacious (quarrelsome)*.
12. **Not-** (*Gk.3361*) a **lover of money or greedy of gain**- Gk.146- (*gain*); *sordid*.
13. **Must manage** (*Gk.4291- to stand before, that is, [in rank] to preside*) **his own household** (*Gk.3624- Thayer- "the inmates of a house, all the persons forming one family, a household"*) **well/ with all dignity** (*Gk.4587- venerableness, that is, probity [honesty, integrity]*) **keeping his children** (*Gk.5043- a child. Thayer- "offspring; plural children*) (*Question: How long are offspring still offspring? Don't they*

continue as such when they 'leave the nest'?)
submissive (Gk.5292- subordination)/ **his children**
 (Gk.5043) **are believers** (Gk.4103- Thayer- "one who
 has become convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and
 author of salvation, [a believer]: with addition... of
 persons in whom faith or trust is reposed"), **not open**
to charge (Gk.2724- a complaint, that is, criminal
 charge: -accusation) **of debauchery** (Gk.810- un-
 saved-ness) (This must include those who have had
 their fellowship withdrawn from.) **or**
insubordination (Gk.506- un-subdued, that is,
 insubordinate [in fact or temper]: -disobedient, that is
 not put under, unruly) 1Ti 3:5 "for if someone does not
 know how to manage his own household, how will he
 care for God's church?" (Eph 6:1)

14. **Not-** (Gk.3361) **a recent convert-** Gk.3504- *newly
planted, that is, (figuratively) a young convert.*
15. **Well** (Gk.2570- *good [literally or morally], that is,
valuable or virtuous [for appearance or use]*) **thought**
of (Gk.3141- *evidence given*) **by outsiders-** Gk.1855-
 Thayer- "those who do not belong to the Christian
 church".
16. **Lover of good-** Gk.5358- *fond of good, that is, a
promoter of virtue.*
17. **Upright-** Gk.1342- Thayer- "*rendering to each his due;
and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on
others, whether expressed in words or by shown by the
manner of dealing with them*". **Holy-** Gk.3741- Thayer-
*"undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously
observing every moral obligation, pure, holy, pious"*.
Disciplined- Gk.1468- *strong in a thing (masterful),
that is, self-controlled (in appetite, etc.): -temperate.*
18. **Must hold firm to** (Gk.472- *to hold oneself opposite
to, that is, [by implication] adhere to; by extension to
care for*) **the trustworthy** (Gk.4103) **word** (Gk.3056)
as taught (Gk.1322- *instruction [the act or the
matter]: -doctrine*) in order to be able **to give**
instruction in sound doctrine and also rebuke

those who contradict it. This concerns being “devoted... to the apostles’ teaching” (*Act 2:42*) “and to the word of [God’s] grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among those who are sanctified” (*Act 20:32*) and “[receiving] with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls” (*Jas 1:21*). Emphasis added.

The above is a breakdown of each of the qualifications of an elder/bishop/presbyter (*all three designating the same office*). But what are the obligations that elders have toward members and what are the obligations members are to have toward the elders of their own congregations, since all congregations are to be autonomous? Notice Paul’s admonition toward the Ephesian elders before he left them for the last time.

Act 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God (*Christ, since...*), which He hath purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

1Pe 5:1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed (*Gk.4165- to tend as a shepherd [supervise]*) 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; 3 Neither as being lords over *God’s* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

Heb 13:17 “Obey (*Gk.3982- assent [to authority]*) them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give

account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Sadly, there will always be those who arise among the flock as elders whose egos tend to rule their own lives and thus within the church. But if all the qualifications given for such an important office are heeded, who wouldn't want to be submissive to such a man?

Deacons

1. **Likewise**- Gk.5615- *as thus*, that is, *in the same way*. Referring back to the qualifications of the elders but here with some amendments. Yes he is to desire the position and must not be forced into it but nothing is said about his being able to teach either. And just because nothing is stated respecting the wife of the elder, it can be assumed that their wives meet the same qualifications (*likewise*) as those of the deacons'.
2. **Must** (Gk.1163- *it is [was, etc.] necessary [as binding]*) **be dignified**- Gk.4586- *venerable*, that is, *honorable*: -grave, honest.
3. **Not**- (Gk.3361) **double-tongued**- Gk.1351- *equivocal*, that is, telling a different story.
4. **Not**- (Gk.3361) **addicted**- Gk.4337- (figuratively) to *hold* the mind (intellect) *towards*, that is, *pay attention to, be cautious about, apply oneself to, adhere to*. **Much**- Gk.4183- *much (in any respect)*. **Wine**- Gk.3631- A primary word (or perhaps of Hebrew origin [Heb.3196- *to effervesce; wine (as fermented)]*) (See notes above on bullet point 10.)
5. **Not greedy of dishonest gain**- (See notes on bullet point 12 above.)
6. **Must**- (Gk.1163) **hold** (Gk.2192) **the mystery** (Gk.3466- *a secret or "mystery" [through the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites]*) **of the faith** (Gk.4102- *persuasion, that is, credence; moral conviction, especially reliance upon Christ for salvation*) **with a clear** (Gk.2513- *clean. Thayer- "free from every admixture of what is false, sincere"*) **conscience** (Gk.4893- *co-perception, that is, moral*

- consciousness. From Gk.4894- to see completely; respectively meaning to understand or become aware, and to be conscious or [clandestinely] informed of)
7. **Be tested** (Gk.1381- to test; by implication to approve) **first** (Gk.4412- firstly [in time, place, order, or importance)
 8. **Prove themselves blameless** (Gk.410- un-accused, that is, [by implication] irreproachable) – Interlinear- “unimpeachable being”.
 9. **Wives likewise** (Gk.5615) **must** (Gk.1163) **be dignified**- Gk.4586- venerable, that is, honorable: -grave, honest.
 10. **Not-** (Gk.3361) **slanderers**- Gk.1228- a traducer: -false accuser.
 11. **Sober minded**- Gk.3524- sober, that is, (figuratively) circumspect [cautious]: -vigilant.
 12. **Faithful** (Gk.4103- objectively trustworthy; subjectively trustful) **in all things** (Gk.3956- all, any, every, the whole: -whatsoever).
 13. **Husbands of one wife**- (referring back to an elder’s qualifications; see bullet point 5 under elder qualifications)
 14. **Managing their children and their own households well**- (See bullet point 13 under elder qualifications as a comparison) Emphasis added.

1Ti 3:13 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.

VII.1. Questions

1. Which two books of the New Testament give lists for elder/deacon qualifications? a) I & II Timothy; b) I Timothy & Titus; c) I Timothy & I Peter.
2. True or false: Elders and deacons need only to adhere to most of the qualifications. a) true; b) false; c) the text does not say.
3. True or false: An elder who becomes a widower is no longer qualified to remain in that position. a) true; b) false; c) the text does not say.
4. Why is it important for an elder to have children who are Christians? a) how he manages his household would reflect on his ability to manage the Lord's church; b) so his children would grow up to take his place; c) neither a nor b.
5. Why is it important for an elder to adhere to the truth of the word of God? a) to be an example to the flock; b) in order to compare it to man's teaching; c) in order to teach sound doctrine and to convince those who contradict it.
6. Does "not much wine" mean deacons may consume a little wine? Explain. a) yes, deacons are not to abstain completely as do elders; b) no, much means "in any way" adding "not" means he is to completely abstain; c) yes, he is permitted to social drink.
7. Why is it important for a deacon to "serve well"? a) to gain a good confidence in the faith; b) to prove himself capable of

performing the task set before him; c) to show his leadership abilities.

8. What is the difference between the qualification an elder and a deacon as it applies to his children? a) the children of the deacon must be Christians whereas the elders children are only to be submissive; b) the children of the elder must be Christians whereas the children of the deacon must be submissive; c) there is no difference in these qualifications.