

~ Biblical Leadership Qualities ~

Text: I Timothy 3:8-13

Theme: Every man in the local church should be fulfilling these requirements so that they may be qualified to be a deacon, even if they aren't a deacon.

Intro:

1. Since it's Father's Day, I was thinking this week about what I might challenge our men with this evening and this passage in I Timothy came to mind.
 - a. Now, before anyone says, "Pastor, this passage is addressing the qualifications of elders and deacons, not every man in the church," I understand where you're coming from.
 - i. However, the qualifications for elders and deacons are not given as an extra level that the super spiritual Christian must attain to in order to be a leader in the church. The qualifications are given as a minimum requirement that must be met in order to be fit for leadership.
 - ii. In other words, anything less would disqualify an individual from leadership in the church. This isn't some sort of next level Christianity; it is the base level from which we are to grow and go forward with the understanding that there will be those who do not meet the qualifications and are therefore not fit to be put into one of the ecclesiastical offices of the local church.
 - b. Consider the simple question, "Where are deacons and elders elected from?"
 - i. They are elected from among the congregation. If no-one in the congregation was expected to live up to these standards, then there would be no-one in the congregation to choose from when it came time to fill these offices.
 - ii. It is clear that scripture intends us all to live up to the high ideals of scripture and it is the failure to live up to those standards that excludes a man from leadership in the church.
2. With that introduction in mind, I want to look at Biblical leadership qualities and draw the application from I Tim 3:8-13 which gives us the qualifications of a deacon. We will divide these verses into three categories.
 - I. The Character of a Biblical Leader (Vs 8-10)
 - II. The Family of a Biblical Leader (Vs 11-12)
 - III. The Reward for a Biblical Leader (Vs 13)

Main:**I. The Character of a Biblical Leader (Vs 8-10)****A. A Biblical Leader's Conversation (Vs 8a)****1. A Biblical leader's gravity****a. What does it mean to be grave?**

- i. The word "grave" means, "Serious, dignified, respectable, or majestic." It refers to someone who's behaviour is composed, well put together, and respectable.
- ii. The root of the word carries the idea of someone who acts with piety and reverence for the place, people, and conversations that are in connection with.
- iii. By contrast, a person who is not grave is someone who doesn't adjust their conduct and conversation to suit the circumstances and who projects a low level of respect for the people they interact with and for the places that they go, in context, that would be a low level of respect for the local church as the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

b. What does it not mean to be grave?

- i. Some people have the idea that to be grave means you can never have a laugh and that you almost have to show no emotion and just appear detached and aloof from everyone and everything around you.
- ii. That is not what we are talking about. Gravity involves knowing what appropriate behaviour for each situation is.
 - Laughing at a party but grieving at a funeral.
 - Clowning around with your kids at home but being composed while song-leading on Sunday.

2. A Biblical leader's tongue**a. What does it mean to have a double tongue?**

- i. The word translated as "double-tongued" means, "hypocritical, insincere, doubtful." It means, don't speak two different things.
 - It has been said that *"Your talk talks, and your walk talks, but your walk talks louder than your talk talks."*
- ii. This is the definition of hypocrisy when you say one thing but do something else.

b. A Biblical leader is someone who is sincere, who says what he means and means what he says and isn't double-tongued.**B. A Biblical Leader's Conduct (Vs 8b)****1. A biblical leader's conduct in relation to wine**

- a. The whole Bible contains warnings against strong drink and drunkenness so that really shouldn't be debateable.
 - i. For a Christian leader to be a drunk is not only sinful but does immense damage to his testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - ii. Not only is drunkenness still looked down upon as something that people of high social status should not be known for, but drunkenness also leads to a lowering of moral inhibitions which leads to immorality, violence, and other sins that otherwise might have been avoided had the individual been sober.
 - b. The warning here is more than just an injunction against drunkenness.
 - i. Notice that the warning is specifically against being given to much wine. The understanding is that it was common to drink this wine which carried negative consequences and should be treated as a danger to one's testimony.
 - The word "given" means, "to have a care for, or give attention to."
 - The idea warning is about the behavioural problems that arise from the consumption of much wine.
 - ii. Without getting into the details of Bible wines and the alcoholic content in them, we can see that there is a danger in drink that we are being warned about and it is wise for a Christian leader to stay away from spiritual dangers like that.
2. A biblical leader's conduct in relation to wealth
- a. The Bible never makes it out to be a spiritual thing for a man to be wealthy or to desire wealth.
 - i. Yes, God can bless you with wealth and there isn't anything inherently wrong with being wealthy just as there isn't anything inherently spiritual about being poor, however, the bible does warn of certain spiritual dangers for those who have a preoccupation with wealth.
 - ii. The warning about not being greedy of filthy lucre is one that many church leaders down through the years would have done well to take heed to.
 - How many pastors, treasurers, and deacons have been found guilty of taking money out of the offering or stealing from the church accounts to line their own pockets.
 - If a man seems to be greedy for money, the church should not put him into the position of a deacon or

treasurer, where he may be tempted to steal from God.

- b. **1 Timothy 6:10** *“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”*

C. A Biblical Leader’s Conscience (Vs 9-10)

1. The theology of a biblical leader
 - a. A good leader in the local church is one who is well grounded in the faith.
 - i. Again, this applies to all men in the local church. You ought to be grounded in the faith, to know sound doctrine from false doctrine, and to be able to teach others also.
 - ii. This means that leaders in the local church cannot be young Christians. In fact, look back at verse 6 of our chapter and you’ll see that in the qualifications of an elder it specifically says he is not to be a novice, which means young and inexperienced in the things of God.
2. The testing of a biblical leader
 - a. Before a man is put into a position of leadership in the local church there must be a period of testing, to prove that he is sincere.
 - i. For example, before my pastor in Adelaide was prepared to recommend me as a pastor to any other church he put me through some in-house training, from the Bible College to a pastoral internship; from teaching the Sunday School, to teaching the youth group and preaching sometimes on Sundays. Those are opportunities for the local church to assess the individual and see if they prove themselves worthy of the ministry.
 - ii. The biblical approach to church leadership is very different to the modern approach of, “You’ve just been saved? Great! Now grab your Bible, get up on stage, and teach us something.”
3. The trusting of a biblical leader
 - a. Having been tested and found to be sound in doctrine and theology, and to be a man of good character, then he may be trusted to carry out the role of a leader in the local church.
 - i. Verse 10 could be paraphrased, “Having been tested and been found blameless, let them deacon.” The word deacon meaning, “to serve, be an attendant, wait upon.”

- ii. In other words, once a man has been tested and found faithful in the ministry, he should be active in serving the local body and in that way, he will be a spiritual leader.
- b. Of course, if a spiritual leader is going to be actively serving in the local church, then he needs to be faithful in attending the services and ministry events of the local church.
 - i. You can hardly be a spiritual leader in the church if people don't see you being active in the church ministries.
 - ii. A spiritual leader will set the example and be active in supporting the work of the ministry and in evangelism, whether that be through letterboxing, door-knocking, or personal witnessing opportunities.
 - iii. You can't lead from the behind everyone else.

II. **The Family of a Biblical Leader** (Vs 11-12)

A. A Biblical Leader's Home (Vs 11-12)

1. A Biblical leader's wife

- a. A leader in the local church is to be the husband of one wife.
 - i. Again, while this is a qualification for a deacon, it is to be the goal for every man in the local church.
 - ii. We do not believe in divorce and remarriage. A Biblical leader ought to be the husband of one living wife, who he seeks to remain faithful to until death doth them part.
- b. A spiritual leader's wife must be a woman of good character as well.
 - i. His wife is also to be a woman of good conduct, not a slanderer or a gossip.
 - ii. His wife ought to be sober, "not given to much wine," acting with gravity and respect for the local church, and faithful in everything she puts her hand to, being diligent in her work.

2. A Biblical leaders' children

- a. A spiritual leader ought to have his own house in order.
 - i. The Bible encourages us to honour elders in the church who rule well, but that ruling well is something that starts at home.
 - If a man can't even get his own house in order, how is he supposed to provide leadership in the local church?
 - ii. The word "rule" carries the idea of being a leader, standing up and setting the example.
- b. Be a godly example at home first.

- i. Disorderliness in the home has an extremely negative effect on our testimony, especially if people can see that who you present yourself as at church is not the person you are at home.

III. The Reward for a Biblical Leader (Vs 13)

A. A Biblical Leaders' Degree (Vs 13a)

1. A spiritual leader who properly fulfills the requirements of this passage earns himself a good degree among the brethren.
 - i. That word "degree" means, "standing, or rank."
 - How many of you have heard someone say something like, "That time he spent working (or studying) there will put him in good standing when he goes for this other job."?
 - That is effectively what the word degree means. It is saying that a man who meets the qualifications that have just been laid out is a man who puts himself in good standing among the brethren.
 - He is a man who is respectable, worth looking up to, and pleasing to God.
 - ii. Again, it should be the desire of all our men to be a godly leader of this calibre.

B. A Biblical Leaders' Boldness (Vs 13b)

- i. The blessed reward here is, again, predicated on the faithful keeping of the previously mentioned qualifications. A man who has proved himself faithful in all these other things will certainly have boldness in his faith.
- ii. Albert Barnes notes, "The sense is, that by the faithful performance of the duties of the office of a deacon, and by the kind of experience which a man would have in that office, he would establish a character of firmness in the faith, which would show that he was a decided Christian."¹

Conclusion:

1. These godly characteristics are to be seen in every Christian brother, not just in those who have a desire to serve in either of the ecclesiastical offices.
2. The challenge this evening is for each of us to make practical application of these qualifications to our personal lives and see if we measure up to what God expects of spiritual leaders in the local church.

¹ Albert Barnes, [*Notes on the New Testament: I Thessalonians to Philemon*](#), ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 150.