

## 1 Timothy 3

### I. (v.1) Another “trustworthy” or “faithful” saying in Timothy and Titus

- A. This is in contrast to the speculations (1 Tim 1:4), genealogies, worldly fables (1 Tim 4:7) and controversial questions (1 Tim 6:4) that the text warns against.
- B. A faithful "saying" deserved to be commended, repeated, and emphasized
- C. This would have the effect of encouraging those who desired this ministry

### II. If any man aspires the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do

#### A. Office of overseer

- 1. This phrase is a translation of ἐπισκοπή, *episkopē*, which can mean a visitation or the overseership
- 2. The ἐπισκοπ, *episkop* family of words:
  - a. Verb: ἐπισκέπτομαι, *episkeptomai* - To inspect, examine, go see, visit
  - b. Verb: ἐπισκοπέω, *episkopeō* - To look at, care for, oversee,
  - c. Noun: ἐπισκοπή, *episkopē* - A visitation, position of overseer
  - d. Noun: ἐπίσκοπος, *episkopos* - Overseer, one who keeps watch over<sup>1</sup>
- 3. Calling this ministry *episkopē* indicates that the overseer is one who keeps watch over the church in an official capacity

#### B. Desires an honorable work

- 1. There are two words which could be translated “desire” in this passage
  - a. If any man the aspires for overseership,  
Aspire is ὀρέγω, *orgeō* - To be eager for, long for, desire
  - b. . . . it is an honorable work he desires
    - 1) Desires is ἐπιθυμέω, *epithumeō* - Long for, desire, covet, lust
    - 2) This is a much stronger word than the first
    - 3) The use of the stronger word emphasizes that the overseership is not merely a position, but a "work."
- 2. It is a good/honorable work
  - a. There are two adjectives in Greek translated as “good”
    - 1) ἄγαθος, *agathos* - Good, upright, just, perfect, beneficial  
Something is good in that it is useful
    - 2) κάλος, *kalos* - Good, fine, beautiful, honorable, honest  
Something that is intrinsically good
  - b. The text uses *kalos* to describe the honorable work of overseer
  - c. (Acts 20:28) - Indicates why this work is honorable. It is shepherding the church that our Lord Jesus paid for with his own precious blood.
  - d. This use of this word attaches great value to the work of an overseer

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<sup>1</sup> In non-biblical Greek, this word was used as a title to describe deities and also men who had a responsible position in the state. See Lothar Coenen, "ἐπίσκοπος" In *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* edited by Colin Brown, 1:188-192 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 189.

### III. The singular word “overseer” in verse 2 does not necessarily mean that there is to be only a single elder in a church.

- A. This is written to Timothy in Ephesus, which had a plurality of Elders (Acts 20)
- B. The word for overseer is **always** in the plural in the New Testament with the exception of I Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:7
- C. The reason why these have it singular
  - 1. It is a generic singular, a singular noun representing an entire class of people. eg. “A Soldier is trained to sleep in the mud.” This doesn’t mean that there is only one soldier in the Army
  - 2. Other uses by Paul of the generic singular:
    - a. Concerning Women (I Timothy 2:11)
    - b. Concerning Widows ( I Timothy 5:5, 19)
    - c. The Lord’s Bondservant (2 Timothy 2:24)

### IV. The trustworthy saying is followed by "δεῖ οὖν" -- "It is necessary therefore..."

- A. Since the work of an overseer is an honorable work, it follows that the work must be done by a man of honorable character
- B. Paul provides public and observable qualities to determine character
- C. The qualities focus on 2 areas
  - 1. Internal - Personal self-discipline, maturity and character
  - 2. External - Ability to relate to, care for, and teach others

### V. The Criteria for the Honorable Man

- A. (v.2) Be above reproach
  - 1. ἀνεπίλημπος, *anepilēptos* - Irreproachable  
Etymology - That which cannot be laid hold of, not open to censure
  - 2. This appears to be an over-arching quality of character that encompasses all that follows
  - 3. Does not mean overseers are to be sinless (I John 1:8; Romans 3:23)
  - 4. It does mean he should have a character that is an example (I Pet 5:3)
  - 5. His character should make it difficult for a legitimate charge to be brought against him (Nehemiah 6:13)
- B. (v.2) He is above reproach in his marriage “husband of one wife” (NASB)
  - 1. He is to be an example in family relations by being faithful to his wife
  - 2. Assumes elders are married (there is no word for “bachelor” in the O.T.)
  - 3. Although it is generally agreed that this verse means that an elders is to be married and faithful to his wife, there is disagreement beyond that.
  - 4. Interpretations:
    - a) The text is simply saying that an overseer is to be a married man
      - 1) There is not adjective in Greek for “married”, so this would be a way to say that an elder needed to be a married man.
      - 2) If this were the intention, why doesn’t the text just say that an overseer must be “a husband”, or “the husband of a wife”, instead of “husband of *one* wife”?
    - b) An overseer must not be a polygamist
      - 1) Deuteronomy 21:15-17 - Polygamy was an accepted practice,

- a) Although polygamy was accepted, like divorce, it doesn't appear to be God's ideal
  - 1) (Gen 2:24) Quoted by Mk 10:2-9, God's creation was one man & one woman
  - 2) (Gen 4:19) Polygamy was part of the degeneration of mankind as seen in Cain's line
  - 3) (Dt 17:17) It was unlawful for Kings
  - 4) Prophets used monogamy to describe God & Israel's relationship to each other
  - 5) (I Cor 7:2) - alludes to the ideal, each to have their own wife
- b) Because it was not God's ideal, it was not permitted for an elder to be a polygamist
- 2) However, the text doesn't say they were not to multiply wives, but they are to be the Husband of one wife
  - a) Prohibition against polygamy is probably not the prime purpose for this instruction
  - b) Early Christians felt that polygamy was wrong, though it was not expressly forbidden in scripture
  - c) O.T. highlights negative outcomes of polygamy
  - d) Hebrew for second wife literally meant "rival wife"
- c) An overseer must be married, & only once in his lifetime
  - 1) Divorce was rampant in the first century. Since divorce was against God's ideal & the elder has to be above reproach, he was not to be divorced
  - 2) Most apply this to divorce, but the text says nothing about divorce, just that he should be the "husband of one wife"
    - a) There was a perfectly good and well used word in Greek for divorce. Why didn't it say "never have divorced"?
    - b) What about if a wife dies and the husband is remarried? Does this go against God's ideal? Is a man no longer an honorable one if his wife dies and he remarries? (Rom 7:1-4)
  - 3) Remember the over-arching quality, the overseer is to be above reproach, an honorable person.
    - a) A 2nd marriage after the death of a spouse is clearly sanctioned (I Cor 7:39).<sup>2</sup> He would still be above reproach.
    - b) Therefore, this is likely not a blanket prohibition against 2nd marriages.
- d) An overseer is to be faithful to his wife
  - 1) The phrase is: μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα,
    - a) *mias* - one *gunaikos* - woman *andra* - man
    - b) "A man of one woman" In Greek, *mias* is placed first to emphasize it
    - c) Similar phrase in English - "One woman man"
  - 2) This phrase prohibits polygamy

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<sup>2</sup> According to the New Testament, a 2nd marriage after abandonment of an unbelieving spouse is also sanctioned (I Cor 7:27-28 NASB)

- 3) This phrase also prohibits promiscuity & having a concubine
  - a) Having a concubine, or a “lover” was a common and accepted practice in Greek culture
  - b) "The first situation that wrecked marriage among the Greeks was the fact that relationships outside marriage carried no stigma whatsoever, and were in fact the accepted and the expected thing. ...Demosthenes laid it down as the accepted practice of life: “We have courtesans for the sake of pleasure; we have concubines for the sake of cohabitation, we have wives for the purpose of having children legitimately, and of having a faithful guardian for all our household affairs. ... ”<sup>3</sup>
- 4) A husband who is not a womanizer and is faithful to his wife would be “above reproach” in his marital life.

C. (v.2) He must be temperate

1. KJV- Vigilant; TEV/NEB-Sober; RSV/NIV-Temperate; Phillips-A man of self-control
2. νηφάλιος, *nēphaios* - Temperate (in the use of alcoholic beverages), sober, clear-headed, self controlled
4. Often used figuratively for being free of excess, thus being clear headed.
5. Other uses: 2 Timothy 4:5; I Peter 1:13; 4:7; 5:8 (verb-*nēphō*)

D. (v.2) He must be prudent

1. KJV-“Sober”; NIV/TEV-“Self Controlled”; RSV-“Sensible”
2. σώφρων, *sōphrōn* - Adj., prudent, thoughtful, self-controlled
3. Other forms of the word
  - a. σωφρονέω, *sōphroneō* - To be of sound mind, to be reasonable, to be sensible
  - b. σωφρονίζω, *sōphronizō* - To bring someone to his senses, to advise
  - c. σωφρονισμός, *sōphronismos* - The teaching of morality, good judgment or moderation, self-discipline
  - d. σωφρόνως, *sōphronōs* - Soberly, moderately, self controlled
  - e. σωφροσύνη, *sōphrosunē* - Reasonableness, rationality, good judgment
3. Used in I Peter 4:7 - Be of sound judgment (*sōphroneo*) and sober spirit (*nēphō*)

E. (v.2) He is to be respectable

1. KJV-“Of good behavior”; RSV-“Dignified”
2. κόσμιος, *kosmios* - Respectable, modest, honorable, well-behaved
3. Same word used in I Tim 2:9 - “I women to adorn themselves ... modestly”
  - a. This is an instruction against extravagance
  - b. This is an instruction to respectable humility
  - c. A flashy, loud, extravagant demeanor is the opposite of what this is talking about here.

F. (v.2) He is to be hospitable

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<sup>3</sup> William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), 153-155.

1. KJV-"Given to Hospitality"; TEV-"Must welcome strangers in his home"
2. φιλόξενος, *philoxenos* - Hospitable
  - a. Etymology of the word
    - 1) *philo* - Love, affection
    - 2) *xenos* - Stranger
  - b. The word originally meant, "love of strangers"
3. Other uses: 1 Peter 4:9-10; Heb 13:1-2; Rom 12:13
4. Examples: Philemon 22; Acts 10:6; 2 John 10,11 (helped support preachers)

G. (v.2) He is to be able to teach

1. This does not mean that he needs to be eloquent, dynamic, or gifted
  - a. (1 Cor 3:10-15) The gravity of leadership
    - 1) Those who build the church are to be "careful how they build"
    - 2) The poor building, which does not survive "the day" is likely talking about preacher-centered Christians
      - a) An exhortation to draw attention to Christ not self
      - b) Faith grounded more in the teacher than the savior is a weak faith that can implode when a teacher is knocked of his pedestal
  - b. (1 Cor 2:1-4) Not with eloquent words of wisdom so that faith is in God and not man
2. (Titus 1:9) A parallel instruction
  - a. The overseer is to "hold fast to the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching"
    - 1) ἀντέχομαι *antechomai* - To cling to, hold fast, be devoted to.  
eg: Matt 6:24 - "be devoted to one . . ."
    - 2) διδασχὴ *didachē* - The act of teaching, what is taught (syn for *didaskalia*)
  - b. Reasons he is to "hold fast to the faithful word..."
    - 1) To be able to exhort in sound doctrine
      - a) παρακαλέω *parakaleō* - Appeal, urge, exhort, encourage comfort
      - b) ὑγιαίνω *hugianō* - To be sound, correct, well grounded, in good health  
eg: Lk 5:31 - "Well"
      - c) διδασκαλία *didaskalia* - Instruction, doctrine, (syn. for *didachē*)
    - 2) To be able to refute those who contradict
      - a) ἐλέγχω *elegchō* - To show fault, show error, prove guilty, rebuke, reprove. Examples:
        1. (2 Tim 4:2) *Reprove*, rebuke, exhort . . .
        2. (1 Tim 5:20) *Rebuke* in the presence of all
        3. (Heb 12:5) Nor be faint when *reproved* by Him
        4. (Eph 5:11, 13) *Expose* them
        5. (Jude 15) . . . *convict* all the ungodly . . .
      - b) ἀντιλέγω *antilegō* - To object to, contradict, prove guilty, rebellious, be obstinate. Examples:
        1. (Rom 10:21) . . . *obstinate* people
        2. (Jn 19:12) . . . *opposes* Caesar
        3. (Lk 20:27) ...the ones speaking against the

resurrection . . .

c) Refuting false teaching is necessary for sound teaching

- c. The word of God is central in the work of overseer
- 1) The word is what nourishes the soul
  - 2) A mature understanding of the word helps to recognize heresies
  - 3) (Acts 20:28f) A necessary part of guarding the flock is to be immersed in the word

H. (v.3) He must not be addicted to wine.

1. KJV-"not given to wine"; NIV-"not given to much wine"; RSV-"no drunkard"
2. πάροινος *paroinos* - Drunkard, addicted to wine  
Used only here and in Titus 1:7
3. The overseer must not allow himself to be under the influence of mind altering substances which cloud his judgment
4. This fits with the other descriptions of the overseer being a clear-headed person

I. (v. 3) He must not be pugnacious -but- gentle

1. Pugnacious: KJV-"no striker"; RSV/NIV-"not violent"; NEB-"not...a brawler"
  - a. πλήκτης *plēktēs* - Pugnacious, quick-tempered, violent  
Used only here and in Titus 1:7
  - b. Kin to the word, *plessō*, meaning to strike.
    - 1) Suggests a man inclined to settle disagreements contentiously with a fist
    - 2) This paints the picture of a bully, one who will resort to force to get his way
2. Gentle: KJV-"patient"; RSV/NIV-"gentle"
  - a. ἐπιεικής *epieikēs* - Yielding, gentle, kind, considerate
  - b. Examples
    - 1) (I Pet 2:18) gentle
    - 2) (Phil 4:5) forbearing spirit
    - 3) (James 3:17) gentle

J. (v.3) Not greedy of filthy lucre

1. This phrase appears only in the King James Version
2. Among Greek manuscripts, this phrase appears first in a 12<sup>th</sup> century manuscript, then two 13<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts and a 14<sup>th</sup> century manuscript
3. Since this is not part of the original reading, it will not be dealt with here

K. (v.3) He must be uncontentious

1. KJV-"not a brawler"; RSV/NIV-"not quarrelsome"
2. ἄμαχος *amachos* - Peaceable, peaceful
  - a. Used only here and Titus 3:2
  - b. Grk word is from *a* (against) + *machē* (quarrel, fight)
3. Passages concerning quarreling:
  - a. (James 4:2) fight (*machē*) and quarrel (*polemeō*-fight, dispute)
  - b. (I Tim 6:4) "disputes about words" (*logomachias*)
  - c. (Titus 3:9) disputes (*machē*) about the law
4. This should not be confused with contending for the faith

- a. ἀγωνίζομαι *agōnizomai* - To fight, struggle
  - b. Examples of this kind of struggle:
    - 1) (1 Tim 6:12) *Fight* the good fight
    - 2) (2 Tim 4:7) *fought* the good fight
    - 3) (Jude 3) *contend earnestly for* (*epagōnizomai*)
- L. (v.3) He must be free from the love of money
- 1. KJV-"not covetous"; RSV-"no lover of money"; NIV-"not a lover of money"
  - 2. ἀφιλάργυρος *aphilarguros* - Not loving money, not greedy for money
  - 3. Examples:
    - a. Hebrews 13:5 - Let your character be "free from the love of money"
    - b. 1 Tim 6:10 - "love of money" (*philarguria*) the root of all sorts of evil
    - c. 2 Tim 3:2 - Characteristic of false teachers
  - 4. This instruction prevents overseers being in it for the money
    - a. (1 Tim 5:17f; 6:5) Indicates monetary compensation was given to overseers in the church
    - b. (Jn 10:12-13) Those who minister for money are what Jesus called "hired hands" who do not care for the sheep
    - c. (Ezek 34:8) Shepherds of Israel were condemned for feeding themselves and not caring for the flock
- M. He must be one who manages his own household well (v.4-5)
- 1. KJV-"one that ruleth his own house"; RSV-"he must manage his own household well"; NIV-"He must manage his own family well"
  - 2. προϊστάμι *proistēmi* - be at the head of, rule, direct, lead, care for, manage
  - 3. Examples of *proistēmi*
    - a. 1 Tim 5:17 - Let the elders who "rule" well...
    - b. 1 Thess 5:12 - ...labor among you, and "have charge" over you...
    - c. Rom 12:8 - one who "leads", with diligence
  - 4. Managing the household well involves keeping his children under control with all dignity
    - a. ὑποταγή *hypotagē* - submission, obedience, subordination
      - Examples:
        - 1) (1 Tim 2:11) submissiveness
        - 2) (Tit 2:5, 9) be subject (verb form, *hypotassō*)
        - 3) (Rom 13:1) be in subjection to (verb form)
      - b. σεμνότης *semnotēs* - dignity, respectability, proper conduct
    - 5. The home is the proving ground for the overseer
      - a. If a man does not know how to manage (*proistēmi*) his own household, how will he take care for the church of God?
      - b. "Managing" is not just about a position, but about service - An elder is to "care for" the church, and care for his family
      - c. If an elder can keep his children under subjection with respect, this gives confidence in his ability to inspire the same in the church.
    - 6. The use of the word, *proistēmi* in both the home and the church demonstrates that the elder is to be an authoritative figure in the church as well as his home.
- N. He must not be a new convert
- 1. KJV-"not a novice"; RSV/NIV-"not be a recent convert"
  - 2. νεόφυτος *neophutos* - newly planted, used figuratively of a recent convert

- a. Paints the image of a plant, new ones do not have deep roots
  - b. Example of the Corinthians- I Cor 3:1-3
- 3. So he wont fall into the condemnation of the devil
  - a. This could be the condemnation from the devil, or condemnation against the devil
  - b. Either way, it is likely a reference to conceit, arrogance, and pride
  - c. Pride is at the heart of the original sin in Genesis
- 4. Other maturity passages:
  - a. (Heb 5:11-14) Maturity of the “senses” Hebrews
  - b. (Eph 3:17-19) Being rooted and grounded in love
  - c. (Eph 4:14-15) No longer being “children” carried about by every wind of doctrine
  - d. Maturity is not just knowledge (I Cor 8:1) but love (I Cor 13:8-11)
- O. He must have a good reputation with outsiders
  - 1. μαρτυρία *marturia* - Testimony, witness, evidence, reputation
  - 2. (I Peter 4:12-19)
    - a. Being a good Christian may not automatically endear one to outsiders
    - b. Because he is a Christian, an elder may be persecuted
  - 3. The reproach and snare of the devil

## VI. Some observations about this list for overseers

- A. It is about skill as much as it is about character
  - 1. Some of the items give the personal qualities needed to be an overseer
  - 2. Some of the items give skill qualifications needed to be an overseer
- B. This list is probably not intended to be exhaustive, but representative
  - 1. There is similar list in Titus, but it is not identical
  - 2. This list is intended to give more detail to the characteristics of an honorable man who desires the honorable work of overseer
- C. Reflection questions:
  - 1. How does the use of the word, "overseer" paint a picture of the nature of this ministry role in the church?
  - 2. What personal qualities does an overseer in the church need to have? What is the rationale behind these?
  - 3. What skills or qualifications does an overseer in the church need to have? What is the rationale behind these?
  - 4. How would not having a good reputation with outsiders cause one to possibly fall into the reproach and snare of the devil? (v.7)
  - 5. What kind of father should an elder be?
  - 6. How do other instructions concerning leadership in the New Testament contrast to worldly views of leadership?
    - a. (Mk 9:33-37; 10:41-45) Greatness in leadership
    - b. (Jn 13:1-16) Example of leadership in Jesus
    - c. (Phil 2:5-11) The cosmic example
    - d. (1 Pet 5:1-5) Do not lord it over, but be examples

## VII. Official Servants in the Church

### A. The "deacon", διάκονος *diakonos*,

#### 1. In Greek, it is a generic word

##### a. Definitions in the word group

- 1) διάκονος *diakonos* - Servant, minister, helper
- 2) διακονέω *diakoneō* - To wait on someone, serve, minister, care for, help, support
- 3) διακονία *diakonia* - Service, ministry, aid, support

##### b. Examples of *diakonos*

- 1) (Mt 23:11) ...greatest among you shall be your *servant*
- 2) (Jn 2:5) ...his mother said to the servants...
- 3) (Rom 13:4) ...it is a *minister* of God to you for good
- 4) (Rom 15:8) ...Christ has become a *servant* to ...
- 5) (Rom 16:1) ... Pheobe, who is a *servant* of the church...
- 6) (1 Cor 3:5) What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? *Servants*...
- 7) (Eph 3:7) ...of which I was made a *minister* ...
- 8) (Phil 1:1) ... including the overseers and *deacons* ...
- 9) (1 Tim 4:6) ...you will be a good *servant* of Christ Jesus ...

##### c. Examples of *diakoneō*

- 1) (Mt 8:15) ...and she got up and *waited* on Him.
- 2) (Mt 20:28) ...do not come to *be served*, but to *serve*...
- 3) (Mt 25:44) ...or in prison, and did not *take care of you*?
- 4) (Mk 15:41) ... follow Him and *minister* to Him;
- 5) (Lk 8:3) ...who were *contributing to their support* out of their...
- 6) (Lk 12:37) ...and will come up and *wait on* them
- 7) (Lk 17:8) ...and *serve* me while I eat and drink;
- 8) (Lk 22:27) ...the one who *serves*...
- 9) (Jn 12:2) ...and Martha was *servicing*....
- 10) (Acts 6:2) ...neglect the word of God in order to *serve* tables...
- 11) (Rom 15:25) ...I am going to Jerusalem *servicing* the saints.
- 12) (2 Cor 3:3) ...you are a letter of Christ, *cared for* by us,
- 13) (2 Cor 8:18) ... work, which is being *administered* by us...
- 14) (1 Tim 3:10) ...and then *let them serve as deacons* if they....
- 15) (Philemon 13) ...he might *minister* to me in my imprisonment
- 16) (Heb 6:10) ... *ministered* and in still *ministering* to the saints
- 17) (1 Pet 4:10) ...employ it in *servicing* one another...

##### d. Examples of *diakonia*

- 1) (Lk 10:40) ...distracted with all her *preparations*; and she
- 2) (Acts 1:17) ...received his share in this *ministry*
- 3) (Acts 6:1) ...in the daily *servicing*...
- 4) (Acts 6:4) ... prayer and *ministry* of the word
- 5) (Acts 12:25) ... Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their *mission*
- 6) (Rom 12:7) ...if *service*, in his *servicing*
- 7) (Rom 15:31) ...and that my *service* for Jerusalem may....
- 8) (1 Cor 12:5) ...there are varieties of *ministries* and the same
- 9) (1 Cor 16:15) ...devoted themselves for *ministry* for the saints
- 10) (2 Cor 9:11) ...For the *ministry* of this service...
- 11) (Eph 4:12) ...equipping of the saints for the work of *service*
- 12) (1 Tim 1:12) ...putting me into *service*
- 13) (2 Tim 4:5) ...fulfill your *ministry*

- e. The *diakon* root to refer broadly to any kind of serving or ministry
- 2. Paul uses this word for those who serve in an official capacity in the church
  - a. (Phil 1:1) Refers to the groups of elders and the deacons
  - b. (1 Tim 3:8, 12) Lays out qualifications for official deacons
    - 1) The word, "likewise" in verse 8 indicates this is not a servant in the generic sense, but an official servant
    - 2) Laying out qualifications in similar manner as the overseers indicates that these are official servants

## B. Function of Deacons

- 1. Not a teaching function.
  - The qualification of being able to teach is not included for deacons
- 2. Not a governing function
  - a. The word, deacon, communicates a serving or helping role
  - b. Unlike the overseer, deacons do not oversee
- 3. Not accurate to say they oversee the physical concerns while the elders oversee the spiritual concerns<sup>4</sup>
  - a. Even the so-called material things are spiritual things when related to Christian service and ministry
  - b. The work of deacons, since it involves some sort of ministry, is highly spiritual
- 4. Writings from the post-apostolic church reveal that deacons saw to the needs of the distressed and suffering in the church<sup>5</sup>
  - a. The early church did not have church buildings or other facilities, so the focus of much of ministry was on people rather than facilities
  - b. The focus of the early deacons was to be people helpers<sup>6</sup>
  - c. Overseers exercised pastoral oversight, while deacons exercised social oversight
- 5. (Acts 6:1-6) as a prototype, or model
  - a. The words, overseer and deacon are not actually used here
    - 1) Titles for various roles did not solidify until later
    - 2) Most of the roles in the apostolic church are referred to by description more than by a single title
      - examples: elder, shepherd/pastor, bishop/overseer
    - 3) Principles concerning leadership and official servants can be seen at work in this passage
  - b. Summary
    - 1) Leaders were to be devoted to prayer and ministry of the word
    - 2) Leaders not neglect prayer & ministry of the word to wait tables
    - 3) Leaders had the congregation appoint those to serve
    - 4) Congregation chose them based on qualifications laid out by

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<sup>4</sup> James D. Bales, *The Deacon and His Work* (Shreveport, LA: Lambert Book House, 1967), 69.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Strauch, *The New Testament Deacon* (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth Publishers, 1992) 75, 171-4. Strauch quotes writings of early church leaders that indicate deacons served food to brethren in need, distributed aid to poor widows and orphans, served communion to brethren and took communion to brethren who were ill, visited the needy and tended to them, and informed the overseers and the congregation of various needs among brethren.

<sup>6</sup> William Barclay, *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975) 85. Barclay highlights how the early church inherited the practice of collection money for the poor, and how the deacons likely collected, handled, and distributed resources for benevolence and therefore had to be men with proven integrity who could be trusted to handle these resources.

the leaders

- 5) After the congregation presented their choice, the leaders officially appointed them

c. Observations

- 1) This does not mean waiting tables is less than important
- 2) Waiting on those in need was important enough to warrant a selection process based on spiritual qualifications
- 3) The leaders took responsibility by delegating this important ministry to those who had spiritual qualities
- 4) This ministry arose as the result of a need

C. Character Qualities of Deacons

1. Must be men of dignity

- a. KJV-"grave", NIV-"worthy of respect", NKJV-"reverent", RSV-"serious"
- b. σεμνός *semmos* - worthy of respect or honor, noble, dignified, serious
  - 1) Denotes "an ethical and aesthetic outlook resulting in decency and orderliness."<sup>7</sup>
  - 2) Deacons are to be honorable people for an honorable ministry to those in need
- c. Deacons need to be people worthy of our respect

2. Not double tongued

- a. NIV-"sincere", JB-"whose word can be trusted", NEB - "not indulging in double talk"
- b. δίλογος *dilogos* - double-tongued, insincere
- c. Speech is important
  - 1) (Mt 5:37) Yes should be yes, anything else is evil
  - 2) (Mt 15:17-20) What comes from the mouth comes from the heart and can defile a man
  - 3) (2 Cor 1:17-18) Letting our yes be yes is a sign of faithfulness and trustworthiness
- d. A deacon must not use manipulative, deceitful, hypocritical, or insincere speech
- e. A deacon's word must be sincere, trustworthy, and with integrity

3. Not addicted to much wine

- a. KJV-"given to much wine", TEV-"drink too much wine", NIV-"indulging in much wine", JB-"moderate in the amount of wine they drink", NEB-"given to excessive drinking"
- b. προσέχω *prosechō* - to pay attention to, to devote oneself to
- c. Other uses of the word
  - 1) (1 Tim 1:4) Nor *pay attention to*
  - 2) (1 Tim 4:1) *paying attention to* deceitful spirits
  - 3) (1 Tim 4:13) *give attention to* the public reading of scripture
  - 4) (Tit 1:14) not *paying attention to* Jewish myths
- d. The Bible is clear on the potential hazards of strong drink
  - 1) (Prov 20:1) Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler

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<sup>7</sup> Walther Gunther, "σέβομαι" in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* edited by Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) 2:95.

- 2) (Prov 23:29-35) Intoxication makes you senseless to danger
  - 3) (Prov 31:4-6) Kings must not be under the influence or they may wind up perverting justice
  - 4) (1 Cor 5:11) Persistent drunkenness requires withdrawal of fellowship of brethren
  - 6) (1 Cor 6:9-10) Drunkards will not inherit the Kingdom of God
  - e. Deacons must be clear headed and not under the influence of a mind altering substance
    - 1) Alcohol and other mind altering substances have ruined countless lives
    - 2) Deacons who abuse alcohol or some other like substance would not be in a position to help others
    - 3) Not being in a right frame of mind opens one up to other sins
4. Not fond of sordid gain
- a. KJV-"greedy of filthy lucre", NIV-"pursuing dishonest gain", TEV-"greedy", RSV-"greedy for gain", JB-"squalid greed for money"
  - b. ἀίσχροκερδής *aischrokedēs* - fond of dishonest gain, greedy for money
  - c. Used only here and in Titus 1:7
  - d. Important for any Christian, and especially deacons
    - 1) (1 Tim 6:5; Tit 1:11) Greed is a characteristic of false teachers
    - 2) (Mk 12:40) Jesus condemned scribes for devouring widow's houses
    - 3) (Mt 23:25) Jesus accused Scribes and Pharisees for being full of robbery on the inside
    - 4) (Mt 21:12-13) Jesus drove out the vendors in the temple because they turned God's house into a robber's den
    - 5) (Jn 12:5-6) Greed is what overtook Judas
  - e. This is important for deacons
    - 1) Deacons handle money and other resources in their ministry
    - 2) Deacons must have integrity and trustworthiness in handling money that is not their own
5. Hold to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience
- a. Other translations:
    - 1) KJV-"conscientious believers in the mystery of the faith"
    - 2) Phillips-"hold the mystery of the faith with complete sincerity"
    - 3) NEB-"combine a clear conscience with a firm hold on the deep truths of our faith"
  - b. μυστήριον *mysterion* - secret, mystery (a revealed secret)
    - 1) In the New Testament, it is that which can only be known by divine revelation to those whom it has been granted
    - 2) Examples:
      - a) (Mt 13:11) To you it has been granted to know the *mysteries* of the kingdom of Heaven
      - b) (Rom 16:25) *mystery* . . . kept secret for long ages past
      - c) (1 Cor 2:7f) God's wisdom in a *mystery*, hidden
      - d) (Eph 1:9) He made known to us the *mystery*
      - e) (Col 1:26) *mystery* which has been hidden from the past ages . . . but has now been manifested to His saints
      - f) (1 Tim 3:16) Great is the *mystery* of godliness . . .

- 3) The mystery of the faith is talking about the truths of Christianity
- c. συνείδησις *suneidēsis* - Consciousness, moral consciousness, or conscientiousness
- 1) It is the moral compass that governs our actions, or the ability to think and evaluate morally
  - 2) Biblically, a clean or pure conscience is one that has
    - a) Been cleansed by Christ (Heb 9:14; Tit 3:5; 1 Pet 3:21)
    - b) Put off the old self & put on the new self (Eph 4:17-24)
      - 1] Walk not longer in the gentile futility of mind
      - 2] Heed the truth of Christ
      - 3] Renewal of mind and practice
  - 3) A deacon must be demonstrate Christian integrity in doctrine and in action, especially since he deals with people

#### D. Skill Qualifications of Deacons

1. Husband of one wife (see discussion under verse two)
  - a. In ministering to those in trouble or need, especially women, a deacon must be solid in his marriage to his wife
  - b. As an official servant minister, the deacon needs to be a good example
2. Good managers at home
  - a. Managers - προϊστήμι *prohistēmi* - be at the head of, rule, direct, lead, care for, manage
  - b. This helps determine ability to manage resources
    - 1) People and resources would be entrusted to the deacon
    - 2) If one cannot manage his household, how can he be expected to manage the church?

#### E. Testing

1. Let these first be tested
  - a. Tested - δοκιμάζω *dokimazō* - to test, examine, approve, qualify
    - a. (Lk 12:56) You know how to *analyze* the
    - b. (1 Cor 16:3) - Whomever you may *approve*
    - c. (2 Cor 13:5) - *Examine* yourselves!
    - d. (1 Thess 2:4) *approved* by God to be entrusted
  - b. Related words
    - a. δοκιμή *dokimē* Character, worth, proof, evidence
      - 1) (2 Cor 8:22) whom we have often *tested*
      - 2) (Phil 2:22) but you know his *proven worth*
    - b. δόκιμος - Approved, genuine, respected, valued
      - 1) (Rom 14:18) and *approved* by men
      - 2) (2 Cor 10:18) *approved*, but he whom the Lord
2. This is not necessarily a probation period
  - a. The word used does not demand a probationary period
  - b. Idea is of an examination process
  - c. As elders are to be tested and approved according to qualifications, so deacons must be as well

- d. They must be proved, or tested before being entrusted with their ministry
- 3. They served If they are without fault,
  - a. ἀνέγκλητος *anegklētos* - Beyond reproach.
  - b. Synonym for ἀνεπίλημπος in verse two.

#### F. Rewards for those who serve well as deacons

1. What the text does not say<sup>8</sup>
  - a. Double honor of elders as in 5:17
  - b. A promotion to the rank of elder (see below)
  - c. Financial gain for a job well done
2. Good service leads to a high standing, or good standing
  - a. Standing - βαθμός *bathmos* - Standing, position, status
    - 1) In its literal use, the word refers to a stair, base, or pedestal, something that can be used to stand something on<sup>9</sup>
    - 2) Figuratively, as in this verse, it refers to someone rank or standing
  - b. Some believe this means a deacon gains a higher step toward becoming an elder<sup>10</sup>
    - 1) The Bible does not indicated the deaconate is necessarily a stepping stone to the eldership
    - 2) Deacons who serve well may not be qualified to be an overseer
      - An overseer is to be able to teach, a deacon is not required to be able to teach
    - 3) The passage does not say a deacon gains a higher step to the overseership, but simply a "good" standing
      - a) Good is κάλος *kalos*, which can mean "honorable"
      - b) Deacons gains an "honorable" standing
  - c. The good standing is likely the reputation, affection, respect, and honor a deacon attains in his ministry
    - 1) The deacon is a minister to the people
    - 2) The deacon tends the day to day administration of resources to help the distressed and needy in the church
    - 3) Deacons would have a lot of face to face contact
    - 4) Deacons would be more intimately acquainted with people in their distress and needs
    - 5) When a deacon ministers well, it is easy to see how they gain an honorable standing<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Carl Spain, *The Letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus*, The Living Word Commentary, vol 14 (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 1984) 68. Spain points out the reward for deacons is much greater than these, which is the esteem of Christians.

<sup>9</sup> Strauch, 149.

<sup>10</sup> Barclay, 86. Barclay emphatically states that those who serve well as deacons "can look for promotion to the high office of elder," but the text itself does not warrant this interpretation.

3. Good service leads to confidence in the faith
  - a. Confidence - *παρρησία parrēsia* - boldness, confidence, assurance, openness
    - 1) (Heb 10:35) Do not throw away your *confidence*
    - 2) (1 Jn 4:17) so that we may have *confidence*
    - 3) In both of these verses in context, boldness is linked directly to action
      - a) In one case, it is linked to standing with those being persecuted for their faith
      - b) In the other case it is linked to perfect love, love that is completed by deeds and truth
  - b. This is a reminder that the road to boldness and confidence in the faith comes through putting it into action

### VIII. Some observations about deacons

#### Comparison of qualifications of Overseers and Deacons

Overseers	Deacons
1. <i>Above reproach</i>	1. Men of dignity
2. <i>Husband of one wife</i>	2. Not double tongued
3. Temperate	3. <i>Not addicted to much wine</i>
4. Prudent	4. Not fond of sordid gain
5. Respectable	5. Hold mystery of the faith with a clear conscience
6. Hospitable	6. Serve if <i>beyond reproach</i>
7. Able to teach	7. <i>Husband of one wife</i>
8. <i>Not addicted to wine</i>	8. <i>Good managers of their children and households</i>
9. <i>Manage own household well, keeping children under control with dignity</i>	
10. Not a new convert	
11. A good reputation outside	

#### A. Comparison of qualifications

1. While there is overlap, there are significant differences
  - a. Deacons are not required to be able to teach as elders are
  - b. Deacons are not double tongued, nothing is said of this for overseers
  - c. Deacons are not to be fond of sordid gain, nothing of this for overseers
  - d. Deacons are to hold their faith with a clear conscience, nothing of this is said of this for overseers
2. This is not to suggest that it is okay for overseers to be fond of sordid gain, be double tongued, or have an unclear conscience.
  - a. These lists are likely representative, not exhaustive
 

The list for the elders in Titus, while very similar, does not correspond exactly with the list in 1 Timothy 3, which seems to indicate this is not an exhaustive list

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<sup>11</sup> As an example of this, one of the most highly honored people in the world has been Teresa of Calcutta, often affectionately called, "Mother Teresa." Her ministry to the poorest of the poor gained her a level of respect, honor, and influence that few people gain in their life.

- b. The deacon's list of qualities emphasizes some qualities that elders should obviously have as well, but are highly important to the deacon
- c. If the deacon is handling money and other resources, and if the deacon is dealing with people, it these qualities are even more important

#### B. Thoughts to chew on:

"I pick on deacons - intentionally! *Why!* Because they suffer from benign neglect! In humor they are given attention! The spotlight focuses upon their title and work! There are few books, seminars, sermons, given deacons. Brethren are taught to love elders but not deacons. We have glorified elders and forgotten deacons. Mothers want their boys to become preachers and elders but not deacons! Prayers are made constantly for elders but not deacons. Even deacons usually say of themselves, 'I am only a deacon.' Some use the diaconate simply as a stepping stone into the eldership! Have you ever heard any man say, 'The goal of my life is to be a great deacon?' Any man too big to be a deacon is too little to be an elder! Any man not interested in serving as a deacon should never be considered for the eldership! Wake up brethren! It is a sin to neglect, ignore, or demean deacons! As we develop great deacons, we will qualify more elders! Our 'elder shortage' is actually a 'deacon shortage.' Theoretically, every deacon, in time, can develop into an elder! Many deacons spend their spiritual lives as deacons, some deacons resign as deacons, but few deacons become elders! Why don't more deacons become elders? By the way, why don't more deacons become deacons?"<sup>12</sup>

"In many congregations, deacons are nothing more than glorified janitors. Many have never been given any more responsibility than mowing the Church yard or opening and closing the building! Why should grown men be given assignments any ten year old could handle! Deacons do not wish to oust elders. . . they have to conspiracy to take over the Church! They are not spoiled brats wanting all the church glory! They do wish to be challenged! They do wish responsibilities commensurate with their qualifications! Deacons do have minds, hearts, time, and talents. Men qualified by 1 Timothy 3 can be given awesome responsibilities. They deserved the right to be used and to be heard. Deacons do count!"<sup>13</sup>

"You would be frustrated too, when given a serious task without authority. The key to successful leadership is the delegating of authority. Responsibility demands authority. The assignment carries within it authority. Deacons are not "errand boys." The apostles know to appoint qualified men in Acts 6; they also knew not to meddle! It is an insult to an adult to be given a job and title by elders only to be by-passed by them in carrying it out! If he cannot handle it - don't appoint him! If he can handle it - stay out of his way! The less involved in said areas frees elders to elder! 'Let elders elder and deacons deak.' ELDERS! GET OUT OF THE DEACON BUSINESS!"<sup>14</sup>

#### D. Reflection questions

1. The office of a deacon is give a very general word, servant, *diakonos*, which in the rest of the New Testament describes every Christian. What does this indicate about the deacon? How is he the same, or how is he different than a servant or minister in general?
2. Discuss the possible rationale behind the various qualifications for deacons which are unique to the deacon and not to the elder
3. How does the portrait of the New Testament deacon in this study compare with what you have previously thought about the deacon in the past?

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<sup>12</sup> Charles Hodge, *God's Deacons* (Fort Worth: Star Bible, 1979) 12.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.* 14.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.* 15.

### VIII. Women or wives (v.11)

- A. Who are these females?
1. Various versions:
    - a. KJV - "their wives"
    - b. NKJV - "their wives"
    - c. NIV - "their wives"
    - d. ASV - "women"
    - e. NASB - "women"
    - f. RSV - "women"
  2. Greek: Γυναῖκας *gunaikas* - "women" or "wives"
    - a. No possessive pronoun - "their" women/wives
    - b. The word could be translated as "women" or "wives"
- B. Does this word imply young woman, married, or unmarried, etc?
1. γυνή *gunē* - "Woman"<sup>15</sup>
    - a. Used in contrast to *anēr* male, husband
    - b. Also used for a wife, fiancée, widow, or concubine
    - c. Used for a mistress or a maid
    - d. Used to designate a female among the animals
    - e. Is the word used in the Greek Old Testament to translate the Hebrew, *ishah* - woman, wife, female.
  2. Other words are more specific:
    - a. γαμέω *gameō* - (As a participle) - married person.  
eg: 1 Cor 7:10, 33,34
    - b. ὑπανδρος *hupandros* - married, under authority of a man.  
eg: Rom 7:2
    - c. παρθένος *parthenos* - virgin, unmarried, chaste  
eg: Mt 1:23; 25:1; Acts 21:9; 1 Cor 7:25; 2 Cor 11:2; Rev 14:4
    - d. κοράσιον *korasion* - girl, damsel, maiden  
eg: Mt 9:24; Mk 5:41-42; Mk 6:22
    - e. τέκνον *teknon* - child, descendant(s)
    - f. παῖς *pais* - youth, servant, boy, girl
    - g. παιδίον *paidion* - young child, infant
    - h. μήτηρ *mētēr* - mother
    - i. μάμμη *mammē* - grandmother
    - j. χήρα *chēra* - widow
  3. The word used in v.11 is a generic word simply meaning, "female." The word itself does not indicate whether this is a married or unmarried woman
  4. Context must help determine whether the text means women or more specifically wives.
    - a. The word, ὡσαύτως *hōsautōs* - "likewise" may indicate another office or ministry involving women
      - 1) Paul introduces another class of people in addition to the elders and deacons earlier in the chapter

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<sup>15</sup> Erich Beyreuther, "Γυνή" in *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, edited by Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986) 3:1055-1071.

- 2) Paul lists qualifications similar to that of deacons
  - b. If this referred specifically to wives of deacons, then why is there no instructions concerning wives of elders?
    - 1) If this referred to deacons' wives, then deacons would have to have qualified. It would seem to follow that elders should also have qualified wives, though they are not mentioned in the text.
    - 2) The text does not specifically say, "their" (deacons) wives
  - c. Why is this inserted in the middle of instructions concerning deacons and not after the instructions concerning deacons are concluded?
    - 1) If this were not wives of deacons, why is it placed in the text in the middle of the instruction concerning deacons
    - 2) There appears to be some kind of relationship of the "women" to the deacons in this passage
      - a) The placement of verse eleven seems to indicate this
      - b) The word, "likewise" seems to indicate this
      - c) The qualifications being similar to deacons seem to indicate this
      - d) But does some sort of relationship between deacons and these women necessitate they are their wives?
  - d. The context does not seem to demand that these are specifically deacons wives, but are women servants in general
- C. Is there evidence of female servants in the early church?
1. One possible example from scripture
    - a. Rom 16:1 - Pheobe is a servant of the church at Cenchræa
      - 1) Didn't say she was a servant of Christ, but of the church
      - 2) Calling her a servant of the church seems to indicate she had some sort of official or specific ministry for that church
    - b. It is possible that the word, "servant" may refer to Pheobe being a servant in general, rather than holding a specific office.
  2. Extra-biblical examples in the early church
    - a. Pliny the Younger's Letter to Trajan
      - 1) Wrote a letter inquiring how to handle Christians in 112 A.D.
      - 2) "I thought it the more necessary, therefore, to find out what truth there was in this by applying torture to two maidservants, who were called deaconesses."<sup>16</sup>
      - 3) To my knowledge, this is the earliest non-biblical reference to a female servant, or deaconess in the church.
    - b. Apostolic Constitutions, book three section two
      - 1) This is a compilation of guidelines for church order, +/- 275 A.D.
      - 2) "Ordain also a deaconess who is faithful and holy, for the ministrations towards women. For sometimes he cannot send a deacon, who is a man, to the women, on account of unbelievers. Thou shalt therefore send a woman, a deaconess, on account of the imaginations of the bad. For we stand in need of a woman, a deaconess, for many necessities"<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed* (Oxford University Press: New York, 1977)

4. The letter of Pliny the Younger to Trajan was written in 112 A.D. describing Christian activity and inquiring what to do concerning Christians.

- 3) This gave a rationale for leaders appointing females servants at that time
- c. Olympias the Deaconess
- 1) We know of her from several letters written from Chrysostom to her. Her refers to as "divinely favored deaconess . . ." <sup>18</sup>
  - 2) Though she had been wealthy, she decided to live in simplicity as an ascetic, and devoted her time, work, and money to helping those in need.
- D. Some things to consider
1. The context seems to lean toward "wives" by the phrase in verse 12, "deacons are to be a man/husband of one woman (γυνή *gunē* )"
    2. The absence of the possessive "their" wives/women in verse eleven leaves the identification of whether wives or simply women are meant ambiguous enough so as not to be dogmatic
      - a. If this refers to wives, the lack of the word, "their" may indicate that this is not limited to deacons wives, but all church officers' wives
      - b. If this refers to women in general, the list of qualifications indicates this is something inherently different than deacons
        - 1) There is no family (management) qualification as with deacons
        - 2) There is no indication that they are not to be fond of sordid gain
        - 3) The "women" in v.11 are not called "deacons" or "servants"
        - 4) The differences in qualifications indicate something inherently different than the ministry of the deacons of verse 8.
    3. The context may or may not indicate wives
      - a. The verse on women/wives is in the midst of a section on deacons
        - 1) May indicate we are talking specifically about wives of deacons
        - 2) On the other hand, it might not due to the fact that epistles are not always neatly outlined term papers
      - b. Sometimes there are tangents in some epistles
        - 1) 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 <sup>19</sup>
          - a) This passage is a digression from the flow of thought in the context
          - b) 7:2 resumes the thought from 6:13
        - 2) Heb 5:11-6:20
          - a) This is a digression from the exposition on Melchezidek due to the immaturity of the hearers
          - b) The topic pauses in 5:10, and resumes in 7:1
        - 3) It is possible that "women" is a stand alone topic, rather than being connected to deacons as their wives
    4. I lean toward this being a reference to wives of church officers in general

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<sup>17</sup> Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds, *Ante-Nicene Fathers Apostolic Constitutions* vol. 7 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995) 431. *Christian Classics Ethereal Library* <<http://www.ccel.org>> 27 Dec 2011. According to the introductory material, the third book dates to the second half of the third century. *Apostolic Constitutions* is an expansion of an earlier work, *Didaskalia Apostolorum* for new Christians in Syria.

<sup>18</sup> Philip Schaff, ed, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* vol. 9 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995) 285-303. *Christian Classics Ethereal Library* <<http://www.ccel.org>> 27 Dec 2011. Olympias ministered from about 390 till 404 A.D.

<sup>19</sup> Many scholars go so far as to say this passage is a later interpolation, since it breaks the flow of thought and has many un-pauline words. I believe this goes too far, it is simply a tangent in the letter

- a. There is no possessive "their" indicating only the deacon's wives
- b. It appears in the section talking about elders and deacons
- c. The text does not call these women, "ministers," "administrators," "mercy-givers," etc., but simply, *gunaikos* "women/wives"
  - 1) If this were a specific or general task, you would expect a descriptive word as in the case of overseer or deacon
  - 2) The word is simply, "women/wives." What ministry is inherent to simply being a woman? It would be a wife and mother
- d. Elder's wives need to be qualified as well as deacon's wives

#### E. Qualifications of women/wives

1. They must be dignified
  - a. ASV-"grave", NRSV - "dignified", NIV-"worthy of respect", NKJV-"reverent", RSV-"serious", NEB-"women of high principle", Phillips-"women of discretion"
  - b. *σεμνός* *semnos* - worthy of respect or honor, noble, dignified, serious
  - c. These women are to be respectable
2. They must not be malicious gossips
  - a. NKJV,NRSV-"slanderers", NIV-"malicious talkers"
  - b. *διάβολος* *diabolos* - adj: slanderous; subst: slanderer, the devil
  - c. This is contrary to Christian character
    - 1) (Col 3:8) It is part of the old nature
    - 2) (Rom 1:30) It is characteristic of unbelievers who deny God
    - 3) (Mt 5:9) Children of God are peacemakers who are blessed
    - 4) (James 3:18) Heavenly wisdom dictates pursuing peace
  - d. This is especially important in those who minister to various people face to face. Confidences must be kept to preserve peace and dignity
3. They must be temperate
  - a. KJV/TEV/NEB-"Sober", "Phillips-women of ... self-control"
  - b. *νηφάλιος*, *nēphaios* - Temperate (in the use of alcoholic beverages), sober, clear-headed, self controlled
  - c. Used for emotional and mental sobriety, being clear headed, non-debilitated and stable
4. They must be faithful in all things
  - a. NIV-"trustworthy in everything", Phillips-"Can be thoroughly trusted", TEV-"honest in everything", JB-"quite reliable"
  - b. *πιστὰς ἐν πᾶσιν* *pistas en pasin* - faithful/trustworthy/reliable/sure/true in all things
  - c. Other passages
    - 1) (1 Tim 1:12) Paul was considered faithful, and therefore was put into service
    - 2) (Lk 16:10) Being faithful in little is being faithful in much
  - d. Text does not just say she is to be faithful to her family, but in all things
    - 1) Faithful as a Christian
    - 2) Faithful as a wife and mother
    - 3) Faithful in all her activities

4) She is not fickle and does not break commitments

F. Function of women

1. Like the others mentioned in this chapter, there is no job description
2. Unlike "overseer" or "servant," the word, "women" is not as clear an indicator as to the nature of this ministry (or is it?)
  - a. Perhaps ministry inherent to females, serving other women
  - b. For wives, it could involve working and assisting husbands in ministry
  - c. The qualifications indicate theirs is not a teaching role
  - d. Theirs is not an authority role in the manner of the overseers

G. General Principles:

1. Church officers need to have faithful supportive wives
  - a. If this is "wives" in general, then they need to have the qualities listed
  - b. There are examples in scripture of husband and wife teams, such as Aquilla and Priscilla, in Acts 18, Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19
  - c. During the examination phase:
    - 1) Not just the man, but his wife ought to be examined as well.
    - 2) They could also be appointed as a married couple
      - a) (Gen 2:18f) Wives are to be a "helper"
      - b) If a wife is not supportive, that could ruin a church officer's suitability for ministry
2. If this is more generic, referring to women who serve in some way
  - a. It is not the same ministry as the deacons of verse 8
  - b. In the first three centuries, the church had women set apart to minister to other women for the sake of propriety.
  - c. This indicates that there needs to be some sort of examination process even for women who minister in some way
  - d. Whether this passage is referring to women in general, or specifically to church officers wives, even wisdom dictates there needs to be some sort of examination process even for women who serve in some way.

**Comparison of qualifications of overseers, deacons, and women**

Overseers	Deacons	Wives/Women
1) Above reproach	1) Men of <i>dignity</i>	1) Women of <i>dignity</i>
2) Husband of one wife	2) Not double tongued	2) Not malicious gossips
3) Temperate	3) <i>Not addicted to much wine</i>	3) <i>Temperate</i>
4) Prudent	4) Not fond of sordid gain	4) Faithful in all things
5) Respectable	5) Hold mystery of the faith with a clear conscience	
6) Hospitable	6) Serve if <i>beyond reproach</i>	
7) Able to teach	7) <i>Husband of one wife</i>	
8) <i>Not addicted to wine</i>	8) <i>Good managers of their children and households</i>	
9) <i>Manage own household well, keeping children under control with dignity</i>		
10) Not a new convert		
11) A good reputation outside		

3. Reflection Questions:

- a. How much attention is given to instructions about women compared to overseers? What are some possible reasons?
- b. What do the qualifications suggest about the role of these women?
- c. Should all volunteers for ministry be "tested" in some way? Why?

## IX. Conduct in God's Household (3:14-15)

- A. Paul intended to provide direction for conduct in God's household
1. If he were delayed, he writes this epistle to Timothy so that Timothy could order conduct in the household of God
    - a. Paul's letter would give apostolic backing for Timothy
    - b. The contents of the epistle seem to indicate that it was at least semi-public in nature
  2. This shows that conducting church is not left to Christians to figure out and manufacture.
    - a. The text has given instruction to contribute to church health
      - 1) The text gives instruction concerning speculation vs. sound Christian instruction
      - 2) The text gives instruction concerning proper behavior for men and women
      - 3) The text gives instruction concerning leadership in the church
    - b. The text will go on to give more instructions
      - 1) The text gives instruction concerning false teachers, teaching, and practice in the church
      - 2) The text gives instruction concerning personal and ministerial health and maintenance
      - 3) The text gives instruction about behavior toward older and younger people in the church, especially widows and elders in the church
      - 4) The text gives instructions concerning sound doctrine, godliness, and greed
- B. Paul refers to the church as God's Household
1. οἶκος *oikos* - House, dwelling, home, household, family, family/descendants
    - a. Can refer to a household and all the things in it
    - b. Can refer to the family, servants, and other people in a household
    - c. Can refer to the extended family and ancestors - "the house of David"
  2. This domestic family image/theme appears several times in 1 Timothy
    - a. (1:2, 18) Timothy is Paul's "child" in the faith
    - b. (2:15) Women are saved/preserved through childbearing
    - c. (3:2,4,5) Overseers and how they are fathers to their families are tests of their suitability for being leaders in the church
    - d. (4:6) Other Christians are "brethren"
    - e. (5:1-2) Church relationships are family relationships
    - f. (5:3f) The church is to honor those who are truly widows by taking care of them as family
    - g. (6:2) In the church, slave and masters are brethren
  3. Other passages using the image of a household for God's people
    - a. (Mk 3:31-35) Brethren are those who do the will of God
    - b. (Gal 6:10) The household of faith
      - a) We are to do good to all
      - b) Preference is to be given to brethren
    - c. (Eph 1:5) We are adopted into God's family through Christ
      - a) (Eph 1:7) It is through the blood of Christ

- b) (Eph 1:11) As God's children, we have an inheritance
  - c. (Eph 2:19) God's household
    - a) Previously, we were excluded from God
    - b) We have been brought near by Christ's blood
    - c) Now, we Gentiles are of God's household
  - d. The early church was associated with houses
    - 1) (Rom 16:15; 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15) Churches met in homes
    - 2) Due to meeting in homes, the center of Christian life was not in a church building, but in homes of brethren
    - 3) This obviously strengthened the image of church as family
  - 4. What this teaching about the nature of the church
    - a. Familial relationships are redefined as spiritual, not physical
    - b. The church is not like a civic or other organization
    - c. There is a level of intimacy and familial ties unmatched by other ties
    - d. Members of the church related to each other as family
    - e. Implies being deeply invested in the lives of other Christians
- C. Paul refers to the Church as the church of the living God
1. ἐκκλησία *ekklēsia* - church, assembly, congregation, gathering
    - a. The pre-Christian use of this word referred to a public gathering of either political or unofficial groups
    - b. The Apostles and New Testament writers' use of this word indicates at least two things about the church
      - 1) The church is not a building, but a people
      - 2) The people are devoted to "assembling" together
  2. The church of the living God implies a contrast
    - a. Remember there were various gods in the ancient world
    - b. The true God is the living God, not a mute idol
    - c. Other passages in 1 Timothy make a similar contrast
      - 1) (1:17) The only God
      - 2) (2:5) There is one God and one mediator
      - 3) (4:10) We have fixed our hope on the living God
    - d. Contrast of the living God to false gods is used in the Old Testament
      - 1) (Jer 10:1-10) Yahweh is the living God
        - a) He is not an idol, the creation of man's hands
        - b) We are the creation of God's hands
      - 2) (Heb 2:18-20) Contrast between mute idols and Yahweh
        - a) The idol cannot speak, so man speaks
        - b) Yahweh does speak, all creation must be silent and listen to him
  3. Implications about the nature of the church
    - a. The church of the living God does not accept just any religion or god
    - b. The church serves and worships the true and living God
- D. Paul refers to the church as the pillar and support of the truth
1. Translation
    - a. στῦλος *stulos* - column, pillar
    - b. ἑδραῖωμα *hedraiōma* - support, foundation
      - 1) Other translations: KJV,ASV -"ground", NIV-"foundation", RSV,NEB-"bulwark", TEV-"support"
      - 2) Support or bulwark is the preferred translation in this case

- a) 1 Cor 3:11 - Only foundation is Christ
- b) The church is not the foundation of truth
  - 1] (Jn 14:6) Jesus is the truth
    - a] The church is not the foundation of Christ
    - b] The church did not create Christ
    - c] Jesus built the church
  - 2] (Jn 17:17) God's word is truth
    - a] The church is not the foundation of God's word
    - b] The church did not create God's word
    - c] The church receives God's word and upholds it
  - 3] The truth existed before the church did
  - c) The church upholds and supports the truth
- 2. This idea is found in other passages in 1 Timothy
  - a. (1:3-4, 10) Contrast between strange doctrines and sound teaching
  - b. (3:2) Overseers must be able to teach
  - c. (4:1) Some will fall away from the faith due to false teaching
  - d. (4:6) Timothy, the preacher, is to be nourished on sound teaching
  - e. (4:7) Avoid worldly fables
  - f. (6:3-5) Those who advocate a different teaching are twisted and deprived of the truth
- 3. The idea is found in other passages to Timothy and Titus
  - a. (2 Tim 1:13) Retain the standard of sound words
  - b. (2 Tim 4:1-5) People will not endure sound doctrine, preach the word
  - c. (Tit 1:9) Elders are to hold fast the faithful word
  - d. (Tit 2:1) Speak the things fitting for sound doctrine
- 4. The idea is found throughout the New Testament
  - a. (Mt 7:15-23) Beware of false prophets
  - b. (Acts 20:28f) Be on guard for the flock against false teaching
  - b. (2 Cor 11:13-15) Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light
  - c. (Gal 1:6-9) Those who bring a different gospel are accursed
  - d. (Gal 2:4) There are false brethren
  - e. (Phil 3:2) Beware of false teachers
  - f. (1 Jn 4:1f) Test the spirits, many false prophets have gone out
- 5. The reality is that there is false teaching
  - a. It began in the very beginning with the deception of Satan in Gen. 3
  - b. There are many false gospels in the world
    - 1) This is not limited to the false doctrine of false theistic religions
    - 2) This includes naturalistic humanism, the tenants of which Christians sometimes unwittingly buy into
  - c. The family of God is to guard against these dangers which can make a shipwreck of the faith of Christians
  - d. Being nourished on sound teaching is the best way to insulate oneself from the allure of false teaching
    - 1) (Mt 4:1f) Jesus responded with scripture to Satan
    - 2) (2 Tim 3:16-17) All scripture is God-breathed
    - 3) (Heb 5:11-14) Avoid becoming dull of hearing by growing in the word and putting it to practice
    - 4) (Eph 4:15-16) Grow by speaking the truth in love and contributing to the growth of the body

## X. The mystery of godliness (3:16)

### A. Common confession

1. NASB-"By common confession", KJV,ASV-"without controversy", NIV,NEB-"beyond all question", JB-"Without any doubt"
2. ὁμολογουμένως *homologoumenos* - Adverb difficult to translate, "confessedly"
  - a. Verb form, ὁμολογέω *homologeō* - to promise, agree, or confess
  - b. Meaning in this verse is "by common consent"<sup>20</sup>
  - c. Idea is that what follows is a truth all Christians undeniably hold

### B. Great

1. μέγας *meγas* - Great, large, important, sublime
2. Idea is that this is significant and central to the Christian faith
3. After describing the church as the pillar and support of truth, Paul gives these central Christian truths commonly held

### C. Mystery

1. μυστήριον *mustērion* - mystery, secret
2. Examples of the way Paul uses this word
  - a. (1 Cor 2:6-10) The mystery of God's is wisdom revealed to us
  - b. (Eph 3:1-10) The mystery of Christ is now revealed to the church
  - c. (Col 1:25-27) Mystery of God is now manifested to the saints
  - d. (Col 4:3) Ministry was to speak the mystery of Christ
3. Idea is that God's mystery/hidden plan is now made known to his people
4. To outsiders who do not listen, in a sense it remains a mystery  
(Mt 13:10-17) To those with ears to hear, they have been granted to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven

### D. Godliness

1. εὐσέβεια *eusebeia* - Godly life, religious devotion, devoutness, piety
2. The idea is that of religious devotion
3. What follows indicates that religious devotion and piety is grounded not merely in religious practice or feelings, but in a body of sound doctrine related to Christ
  - a. The foundation of the Christian religion is the person, work, and teaching of Christ
  - b. The items in this "great" and "common confession" are central truths, non-negotiable for the Christian faith.

### E. Items in the mystery of godliness

1. Due to the lyrical quality of what follows, some believe this may have been an early Christian hymn
  - a. If this is the case, readers may have recognized it immediately
  - b. If this is a hymn, it obviously was written to strengthen central tenets of

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<sup>20</sup> Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol 14 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994) 100.

- the Christian faith
- c. Why would he not mention the crucifixion and resurrection specifically unless he were quoting a known hymn?
2. He was revealed or made manifest in the flesh
    - a. (Jn 1:1-3, 14-18) Jesus came in the flesh
    - b. (1 Jn 4:2) A test for false teaching involved confession that Jesus has come in the flesh
    - c. (2 Jn 7) Anti-Christ doctrine rejects this doctrine
    - d. (Heb 2:14-18) Jesus had to come in the flesh to die for us
    - e. (Acts 2:31-32) Jesus rose bodily from the grave
  3. He was vindicated or justified in the Spirit
    - a. (Rom 1:4) Declared the Son of God with power by resurrection according to the Spirit
      - 1) Jesus claim to be the Son of God was vindicated
      - 2) The resurrection showed Jesus to be true and innocent
      - 3) (1 Pet 3:18) Put to death in the flesh, made alive in the Spirit
    - b. (Acts 3:14) Jesus is called the holy and righteous one
    - c. (Heb 4:15) Jesus is without sin
  4. He was seen by angels
    - a. "Seen" ὁράω *horaō* has two meanings
      - 1) To see, observe, notice, witness
      - 2) To watch after something, to care for
    - b. Angels ἄγγελοι are messengers. Are these specifically God's angels, or angels/heavenly beings in general?
    - c. If "seen" by angels refers to being cared for by angels, it would refer to the type of thing that happened after his temptation
      - (Mt 4:11) Angels ministered to Jesus after his temptation
    - d. If "seen" by angels refers to taking notice of, these passages show in what sense this has happened
      - 1) (Jn 20:12) Two angels were with Jesus at his resurrection
      - 2) (Eph 1:20-21) After the resurrection, Jesus is seated in the heavenlies far above all rule, authority and power
      - 3) (Eph 3:10) Wisdom made knot to rulers and authorities in the heavenlies
      - 4) (Col 2:15) Disarmed rulers and authorities, made a spectacle out of them and triumphed over them
  5. He was proclaimed among the nations/gentiles
    - a. ἔθνος *ethnos* - nation, people, Gentiles, heathen, pagans, unbelievers  
This was the word Jews used to refer to gentiles
    - b. The proclamation of Christ was intended to go beyond Israel
      - 1) This was in fulfillment of prophecy
        - a) (Mt 4:15) Galilee of the *gentiles*
        - b) (Lk 2:32) A light of revelation to the *gentiles*
      - 2) Jesus' message to be taken to the *ethnoi* the gentiles/nations
        - a) (Mt 28:19) Make disciples of all the *nations*
        - b) (Mk 16:15) Go into all the world and preach the Gospel
        - c) (Lk 24:47) Repentance for forgiveness of sins would be

- proclaimed in His name to all the *nations*
- d) (Acts 1:8) Apostles to be his witness to the whole world
- e) (Acts 2:7-11f) Gospel preached to the nations
- f) (Acts 9:15) Saul/Paul was Jesus' chosen instrument to take his name before the *gentiles*

6. He was believed on in the world
  - a. The Gospel exploded across the world as people accepted it along with the lordship of Christ
  - b. (Jn 3:16-19) God gave his son so that the world might be saved
  - c. (Jn 8:12) Jesus is the light of the world (not just Israel)
  - d. (Jn 10:36) God sent Jesus into the world
7. He was taken up in glory
  - a. (Acts 1:9-11) The ascension of Christ
  - b. (1 Pet 3:22; Eph 1:20) Jesus ascended to God's right hand and rules
  - c. (Heb 10:12-13) At God's right hand, will defeat all enemies

## **XI. Reflection**

1. How does each of the descriptions and metaphors for the church affect your understanding of the nature of the ministry of elders, deacons, and women (wives)?
2. How does this paragraph add to your understanding of godliness, or religion?
3. It is possible that verse 16 was taken from a hymn. Discuss the possible benefits and power of sound theological or doctrinal hymns for the church.
4. Does this look anything like a "statement of faith," a "credo" or a "compendium" or "summary" of some sort? Discuss the possible benefits and pitfalls of such statements.