

# Qualifications for Elders

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Detailed Outline

Part 5 of 9

## II. Defining Biblical Eldership (cont.)

In our last message, we saw that the general, overall concept of eldership, the biblical concept, is shepherding; it's pastoral. Elders shepherd the flock of God. We're not talking about board elders.

### 2. New Testament Qualifications for Elders

You cannot define biblical eldership without looking at the qualifications. They tell us a lot about who the elders are and what they do.

We begin with A in our outline:

#### A. Spirit-Given Desire

*Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for [shepherd] the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. Acts 20:28*

The only elders we want are elders who are Holy Spirit-led. Their desire is generated by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives them the motivation to do this work. The Holy Spirit gives the strength, the love, the desire, and the energy. It wasn't Paul who picked the elders, and it wasn't the church who picked the elders. Paul says (and he's using this as motivation for them), it was the Holy Spirit. He placed you in the church as overseers.

*The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. 1 Timothy 3:1*

We are talking about the starting point. How do you become an elder? Well, it starts with Spirit-given desire, and if you have that desire (Paul is saying and the early Christians are saying), this is a good thing. They're encouraging the desire but remember, it's generated by the Holy Spirit. And so, we want people who have a Spirit-given desire, a passion, an urging, an unction from the Holy Spirit to do this job.

#### B. Objective Biblical Qualifications

Well, desire is the starting point, but you can have wrong desire. It could be for selfish reasons. Some people want to dominate other people. Some people are totally deceived about themselves: they think they're a leader, and they are not a leader. They think they're a teacher or some intellectual, and they are not.

So, desire now must be matched by objective qualifications.

When we look at this subject of eldership or church leadership, the one point that God is most clear about is the qualifications for those who lead the Lord's people. God has laid out a catalog of qualifications, and we must take them seriously because God takes the qualifications for eldership very seriously. May I remind you that the qualifications are there to protect the church from undesirable, unworthy, unfit people.

Let's take the qualifications and break them into two general categories. One will be the moral and spiritual qualifications and the other will be abilities.

### C. Moral and Spiritual Qualifications

We begin with the overarching qualification:

#### 1) A Good Reputation

Most Bibles say "above reproach" (1 Tim. 3:2). The first overarching qualification is "above reproach," and then "respectable" and "well thought of by outsiders" (1 Tim. 3:2, 7).

Notice, it matters what the world thinks about your leaders.

What we are talking about is character leadership. In the Lord's work character is everything.

#### 2) Family Life

##### a) Marital and Sexual Life

First, "the husband of one wife." In other words, marriage and your sexual life come first in being above reproach.

We have a plague that has hit the Church of Jesus Christ in the last 50 years: pastors being involved in inappropriate sexual relationships. We live in a pornographic world. We can press a button and bring the most pornographic pictures into the privacy of our home.

##### b) Children

*He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? 1 Timothy 3:4*

*His children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. Titus 1:6*

What Paul is referring to here is family leadership, a father who's involved with his children, involved with his family. He's a responsible father. He deals with problems. You have children, you have problems! But you deal with them; you're involved with the children's problems. You lead them, you guide them. And, so he's talking here about a responsible, respectable father.

I want you to note that in the church, family leadership is the great testing ground for church leadership. You want to know what your leaders are going to be like? Look at their homes.

### 3) Personal Self-Control

There are a number of the qualifications that come under the virtue of self-control.

Let me remind you that one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is self-control (Gal. 5:23). A self-controlled person is a Spirit-controlled person. And the kind of church leaders we want for our churches are Spirit-controlled, self-controlled leaders/elders.