

FROM THE WORD --

## DO WE QUALIFY?

There are two basic lists in the Bible for qualifying to be leaders in our-present day Churches -- both in the book of 1 Timothy, verses 1 to 7 and 8 to 13. The first list is for Bishops (or Pastors) and the second for Deacons (or Elders). Take the time to read it.

In calling a man for Pastor we must seriously consider the Apostle Paul's listing here and search out each item carefully in the life of the candidate.

In electing the Deacons for the Church, again we must be very careful and make sure it is not simply a popularity contest or voting for a personal friend or business associate.

Both of these are very serious decisions and must take high priority in our decision making.

Verse 1 says, *"This is a true saying, If a man desires the office of Bishop (Pastor), he desires a good work"* -- but he must also keep in mind the tremendous responsibility that goes with the position -- and his life must measure up to it.

Just as politicians when running for office must face all the dirt the opponent and his staff can dig up and be willing to face it head-on.

We'll not look at all of the qualifications but skip over a few. The very first in verse 2 says "blameless" -- WOW -- that hit's the ball right out of the field on the first pitch, and covers a wide field of items. The second, *"the husband of one wife"* covers two items -- first that he has no divorce in his past -- and second -- that he is a man, because only a man can have a wife. These two could very easily bring up a lot of thinking and arguing -- but the Word of God IS the Word of God and if you want to argue the point then be prepared to argue with the God of Creation.

Verse 3 hit's the points of drinking alcohol, fighting, and pornography. Verse 4 covers his home and children and, verse 5 explains exactly the reason for it. Verse 6 points to a young inexperienced person and the dangers of it. Verse 7 refers to the reputation of the candidate as noted by those outside the Church -- business people, casual acquaintances, neighbors, and so on.

The listing of qualifications for the office of Deacon are very similar and must be noted as just as serious. The Deacons of a Church should be able to make decisions for the congregation and be there to aid the Pastor -- this also means to make sure He is on the right track and not following lesser responsibilities.

In the choosing of Deacons for the early Church the Apostles chose men to relieve them of the lesser responsibilities, such as *"serving tables"* (Acts 6:2) so they could give themselves *"continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word"* (vs.4), and yet there is nothing recorded after this appointment of any of them doing such menial work -- rather -- Stephen and Philip were both recorded as stalwarts for spreading the Gospel in a great way (Acts 7 and 8) so the responsibility is spelled out very clearly.

Now, getting to the personal application of this article for us today relating to the man in the Pulpit of your Church, and those holding the position of Deacon or Elder -- how do they qualify according to the requirements laid out in these verses?

The Bible is so very simple and easy to understand -- even a child can understand much of it -- and yet -- so often we attempt to twist it to suite our own thoughts, interpretations and wants.

It is very important that the leadership of the local Church stand strong on the Word of God, and that the congregation hold them to these high standards of the Word of God.

But, how is it with you personally? Would YOU qualify? Is YOUR life up to the standards found in the Word of God?

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