

QUALIFICATIONS OF WORSHIP LEADERS

God's Word:

I Timothy 3:1-13

Key Verse:

"BUT HOLDING TO THE MYSTERY OF THE FAITH WITH A CLEAR
CONSCIENCE."

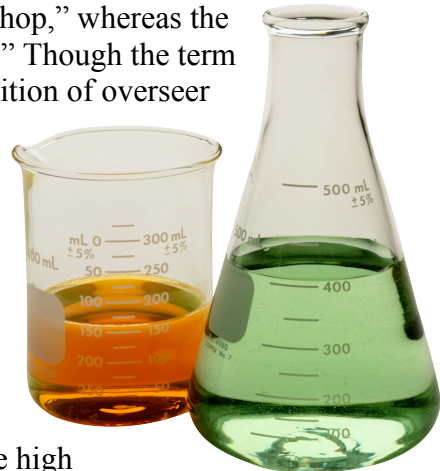
I TIMOTHY 3:9

Breaking It Down:

I Timothy 3:1-13 lists the qualifications for church leaders. It's helpful to know that different versions of the Bible use different terms for the first of the positions discussed here. In the King James, verse 1 refers to a "bishop," whereas the New American Standard and NIV use the term "overseer." Though the term pastor is not used in this passage, most people see the position of overseer or bishop to be the role of pastor, the person who is the spiritual head of the church. That is supported by the fact that of the two positions listed in this week's passage – overseer and deacon – the overseer has the responsibility for teaching the word of God. Deacons, by contrast, are defined as those who serve, dealing with other functions within the church.

The Bible says that desiring these positions is a good thing, honorable to God. That makes sense given the high standard for holding both positions. To serve as overseer or deacon, the person must be "above reproach," meaning the person is of exceptional character. This character must be seen not just within the church but also within the person's home and in the community at large. In addition, people in both positions need to be mature Christians to avoid the risk of falling prey to temptations such as pride.

Overseers must be temperate, prudent, gentle, respectable, hospitable, free of the love of money, not addicted to wine, not apt to get into fights, and the husband of one wife, I Timothy 3:1-7 tells us.



Deacons, verses 8-13 tell us, must not be “double-tongued,” and, like the overseers, must not be addicted to wine, not greedy of money, the husband of one wife, and able to run their households well.

The overarching message is that church leaders must be mature believers who have proven themselves in all aspects of their lives so that, as verse 9 states, they can serve the Lord with a “clear conscience” as they share the mystery of God’s message, which was revealed in the life of Christ.

Living It:

Serving the Lord has nothing to do with your age. Timothy, the person the apostle Paul is writing to in this letter, was a young man who was left in charge of the church at Ephesus. In fact, Paul tells him not to let people make his youth into a problem. As this lesson shows, what’s critical to leadership is our Christian character. Every Christian needs to recognize that he or she leads by example every day because, as II Cor.5:20 tells us, we are “ambassadors” for Christ. We represent him everywhere we go. To have the kind of life that qualifies you for one of the church’s leadership roles, you need to start

now. Our character and our reputation are built over time by our attitude and actions. Desiring to be a leader or to minister in some way is a wonderful desire. The church needs leaders of all ages. You can become a leader today by how you live your life at home, at school and in church. You don’t need a title. You do need to live a life that seeks to please and honor God in every area so that you can live with a clear conscience.



If you think you might be called to become a preacher or deacon one day, begin exploring that now. Ask to talk to someone in that position or in another position or ministry that has attracted your attention. Paul mentored Timothy. Another person in the faith can mentor you in whatever area you think God is leading you to serve. The important thing to remember is the message we had as our theme for the 2010 conference: We are servants together in God’s ministry. We all have a role to play so find a place where you can begin serving today.

David started as a shepherd boy and went on to become a king. Don’t let anyone discourage you from serving and exploring the role God created you to fulfill.

Understanding It:

1. List the qualifications given in this week's passage for a bishop or overseer.
2. List the qualifications given here for a deacon.
3. A caution is given for both positions. What is the caution for each? What is stated as the danger if this caution is not observed for the overseer?
4. Verses 2 and 10 tell us that overseers and deacons must be above reproach. What does that mean? Why do you think that's important for church leaders?

Doing It!



This week, pray and ask God to reveal to you how you have been called or gifted to minister and whether He may have called you into one of these leadership positions. Make an appointment with your pastor to discuss this and ask if you can begin serving in some way that could help you explore where you're best suited to serve. Then, start doing it!