

August 6, 2017

“Deacons are to be Worthy of Respect”

Focal Passage: 1 Timothy 3:8-13 (NASB)

Cross References: Deuteronomy 6:1-7; Matthew 5:19-30; Acts 6:1-7; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:1-10; Ephesians 5:25-33; 6:4; 1 Timothy 1:8-10, 18-20; 1 John 1:8-10

Lesson Idea: The church needs servants who love the Lord and His people.

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

July 30 Isaiah 9-12	July 31 Isaiah 13-17
Aug 1 Isaiah 18-22	Aug 2 Isaiah 23-27
Aug 3 Isaiah 28-30	Aug 4 Isaiah 31-35
Aug 5 Isaiah 36-41	Aug 6 Isaiah 42-44

Background: from David Guzik, *1 Timothy 3: Deacons, the practical servants of the church.*

Likewise deacons must be . . .

Likewise deacons: An example of the appointment of deacons is in Acts 6:1-6, where the apostles saw the need for those to distribute the daily assistance to the widows among the church, yet did not have the time to distribute the aid themselves. They chose men to act essentially as deacons in that church.

Deacons must be: Their qualifications are much the same as those for “bishops”; practical service (especially when recognized by an office) is leadership also. It is a mistake to see one office as more prestigious than the other, though bishops have more responsibility before God. Each is more a matter of calling than status.

1 Timothy 3:8-13

8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, 9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. 11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Deacons must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. 13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for

themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

DISCUSSION:

- v 8. What does the title “deacon” mean? Why should deacons “likewise” be men of dignity—why are they held to the same type of character as overseers or elders?
- What does it mean to not be “double-tongued?”
- Why should deacons not be given to excess in anything (such as wine and sordid gain)? What other things today do men need to guard against addiction or dependency to?
- v 9. How does one hold to the “mystery of the faith?” (see 1 Timothy 1:8-10, 18-20) Why is a clear conscience important for any of us, but especially for a deacon? How do we keep a clear conscience? (see 1 John 1:8-10)
- v 10. How should these men be “tested?” (see 1 Timothy 5:22) How do deacons “serve” the church? Why must they be “beyond reproach?”
- Read Acts 6:1-7. How were deacons selected by the early church?
- v 11. The word here for “women” can also be translated as “wives.” Traditionally, this verse has been regarded as referring to the wives of the deacons. Why do the wives of deacons need to be *dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate and faithful in all things*?
- Why should these descriptions also be true of all the women in the church? How can gossip destroy a church and ministry?
- v 12. What should be true of the households of deacons? Why is a good marriage important to a deacon’s ministry? (see Ephesians 5:25-33) What does it mean to be a “good manager” of one’s children? (see Ephesians 6:4; Deuteronomy 6:1-7)
- v 13. What is promised to deacons who serve well? What does it mean to have a “high standing?” How does serving well bring “great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus?” (see Matthew 5:19-30; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Galatians 6:1-10)

APPLICATION:

- ✓ Which of the qualifications of the church's servants do you need to work on?
- ✓ Our church will be looking to add some new deacons this year. As you pray about it, ask the Lord to help reveal which men in our church seem to match these qualifications.
- ✓ How can you support and pray for our current deacons?

Lesson by Bro Stan

- If he is speaking mainly of a male deacon's wife, it is appropriate because a man's leadership in the home can be evaluated, in part, by his wife's conduct. Is she reverent, not [one of the] slanderers, temperate, and faithful in all things?
- Not slanderers: "Literally, not devils. This may be properly enough translated slanderers, backbiters, tale-bearers, for all these are of their father, the devil, and his lusts they will do." (Clarke)

NOTE: Here are David Guzik's comments on the qualifications of deacons as found in v 8-12:

(8b-12) Qualifications for deacons.

Reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

- Reverent: Showing proper respect towards both God and man.
- Not double-tongued: A man who speaks the truth the first time, with no intent to deceive.
- Holding the mystery of the faith: Those who can adhere to proper doctrine, out of sincere conviction.
- First be proved: A man demonstrates his fitness for office in the church by his conduct. Deacons and bishops are more recognized than appointed.
- Likewise their wives: It is difficult to know if Paul here referred here to female deacons (such as Phoebe, in Romans 16:1), or the wives of male deacons. The original wording will permit either possibility.