

# **Calvary Baptist Church of Santa Barbara**

## **Qualifications for the Office of Elder and Deacon**

### **Introduction**

The concern about choosing qualified church leaders is not a new one. Even early church father Jerome, in a letter to Nepotian, admonished churches for their greater concern for how their buildings looked than in the selection of their ministers. The overriding emphasis of the New Testament in relation to church leadership is for the right kind of men to serve as church leaders. The offices of God's Church are not honorary positions bestowed on individuals who have attended church faithfully or who are senior in years. Nor are they board positions to be filled by good friends, rich donors, or charismatic personalities. The church offices, both Elder and Deacon, are open to those who meet the apostolic, biblical requirements.

What follows is a discussion of the biblical qualifications for the offices of Elder<sup>1</sup> and Deacon. While the qualities found in I Timothy 3, Titus 1, and Acts 6 are not exhaustive, they do provide a framework for evaluating candidates for the offices of Elder and Deacon here at Calvary Baptist Church (CBC).

Two important points must be highlighted about these qualifications. First, when a man reads through the biblical qualifications for the offices of Elder and Deacon he may immediately get the sense that he does not "measure up" to the standards. This is appropriate. Reading through these qualifications ought to humble a man and challenge him in regard to his maturity in Christ. In addition, CBC does not want or need men who presumptuously and cavalierly think, without deep consideration and prayer, that they meet these qualifications. No man will meet these qualifications perfectly. And the right men will be deeply humbled when considering these qualifications. What is important is that the men who are qualified for these offices display mature Christian character with evidence of fruit in these areas. They will have areas of strength and areas of weakness in their character. They are not perfect men. But, their lives will display a consistent trajectory of growth and maturity in Christ.

Secondly, what the biblical authors are doing in these passages is essentially drawing a composite portrait for the church of what a spiritually mature person looks like. There is really nothing extraordinary about these qualifications. These qualities are the standard and goal of all Christian conduct for all Christians. The texts are essentially saying that the leaders of the church ought to be good examples of Christian character and maturity.

Thank you for prayerfully considering serving the body of Christ. We pray that God will lead you and that He will lead CBC through godly men like you, by His grace and for His glory.

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<sup>1</sup> "Elder" is also referred to in Scripture as "Overseer." (Acts 20:28, Philippians 1:1, I Timothy 3:1-2, and Titus 1:7).

## **Qualifications for the Office of Elder**

### **Headings and Scriptural References**

<u>Gender</u>	I Timothy 3:1, 2; Titus 1:6
<u>Desire</u>	I Timothy 3:1; I Peter 5:2
<u>Above Reproach</u>	I Timothy 3:2
<u>The Husband of One Wife</u>	I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6
<u>Temperate and Self-Controlled</u>	I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8
<u>Sensible, Prudent, Reasonable</u>	I Timothy 3:2
<u>Respectable, Honorable</u>	I Timothy 3:2
<u>Hospitable</u>	I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8
<u>Skilled in Teaching</u>	I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9; Acts 20:28-31
<u>Not Addicted to Wine</u>	I Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7
<u>Not Pugnacious or Belligerent</u>	I Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7
<u>Gentle</u>	I Timothy 3:3
<u>Peaceable</u>	I Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7
<u>Not a Lover of Money</u>	I Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7; II Cor. 9:6-7; I Peter 5:2
<u>Leader of a Well-Ordered Household</u>	I Timothy 3:4-5
<u>Children Who Believe</u>	Titus 1:6
<u>A Mature Believer, Not a New Convert</u>	I Timothy 3:6
<u>A Good Reputation With Non-Believers</u>	I Timothy 3:7
<u>Blameless</u>	Titus 1:7
<u>Humility</u>	Titus 1:7; I Peter 5:3
<u>Lover of Goodness</u>	Titus 1:8
<u>Just or Upright</u>	Titus 1:8
<u>Devout, Holy</u>	Titus 1:8

## **Gender**

The first qualification for Elder is that of gender. The Elder must be male (I Timothy 3:1-2). God has created man and woman equal but complimentary. This complimentarian view point, however, emphasizes that the role of leadership is given to the man both in the home and in the church. This is biblically established in both I Corinthians 11 and Ephesians 5 where Paul explains that the husband is the head of his wife and the wife is to be in submission to her husband. Paul explains that this is based on the creation sequence of God, whereby woman was taken from the man and not the other way around. This argues against the current debate that the idea of submission in Scripture was a historical cultural phenomenon that is not applicable to the church today. Peter repeats this exhortation in I Peter 3 showing that the wife is to be in subjection to her husband. Paul's explanation of the leadership structure of the church in I Timothy 3 follows in the context of Paul exhorting women not to exercise any public display of authority over a man. Paul references the event in the Garden of Eden as the basis for this. "For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor" (I Tim. 2:13-14). Therefore, the offices of leadership within the Church (Elder and Deacon) are biblically reserved for men.

## **Desire, aspiration**

The second qualification for the office of the Elder is desire for the office of Elder. Paul begins his list of qualifications for the office in I Timothy 3 with the statement that "if anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task" (I Tim. 3:1). This aspiration or desire should not be minimized, for it is a supremely important qualification. Peter states that the Elder is to do his work with gladness and not under compulsion of external forces (I Peter 5:1-3). The importance of this qualification is elaborated in the teaching of the Lord Himself. In John 10 John records Jesus' teaching concerning the "good shepherd". Jesus speaks of the "hired help" who does not own the sheep. This helper deserts the sheep at the first sight of the wolf and leaves the sheep to fend for themselves. Jesus, as the good shepherd, does not leave His sheep, nor must the undershepherd who serves in Jesus absence until He should come again. The man who has this kind of desire does not have it on his own. It will be placed within him by the Spirit and it will be of such intensity that he can think of doing nothing else except to care for the people for whom Christ shed his precious blood. No matter how talented a man is in his ability to manage and lead people, no matter how visionary he is in his ability to develop programs, no matter how great an orator a man is, if he does not have this kind of passion for the work of the ministry, he is not qualified for the office. That is what is meant by Paul when he says that if a man *desires* the office. Inherent in this desire is a visible proven track record of participation in ministry at Calvary Baptist Church. Just as the Deacon in I Timothy 3:10 is to have demonstrated his prior commitment to service before he is given the office, so should the candidate for the office of Elder.

## **Above reproach (*anepilempton*)**

The Greek word for "above reproach" in I Timothy 3 is *anepilempton*. Because this comes at the head of the list it is contextually an overarching qualification for the office of Elder under which all other qualifications of the Elder are included. It carries the idea to be free from any offensive

or disgraceful blight of character or conduct. It is the general term for living in such a way as to give no cause for others to think badly of the church, the Faith, or the Lord. It puts tremendous emphasis on a person's reputation. When an Elder is irreproachable, critics cannot discredit his Christian profession of faith or prove him unfit to lead others. The focus here is not a person's relationship to the Lord but how others see him. This is of utmost importance since all Christians are to live holy and blameless lives, and the world is watching the Christian community with a critical eye. In Titus 1 Paul uses the Greek word *anengkletos*. This word is a synonym for *anepilemptos*. It means not accused; one whose character or conduct is free from damaging moral or spiritual accusations. This does not mean the Elder is free from every fault, but that he should be a man of unblemished reputation.

### **Husband of one wife (*mias gunaikos andra*)**

The first specific area of life where an overseer is to be found above reproach is in his relationship with women. This is consistent with the importance that Scripture places on sexual purity. Second only to idolatry, sexual purity is admonished most in the Old Testament. It is the lead sin in many of Paul's lists of sins utilized in his epistles. It should not be surprising, therefore, that a man's conduct among women is one of the first qualifications to be considered. The actual phrase "the husband of one wife" is literally translated "one woman man". There are four possibilities as to the interpretation of this statement: 1) elders are to be married, 2) elders must not be polygamists, 3) elders may marry only once, or 4) elders must be maritally and sexually above reproach. Paul could not have meant that the Elder had to be married; if so, he would have contradicted his own teaching concerning the benefit of singleness for the service of God (I Cor. 7:32-35; 9:5). If Paul meant to guard against polygamy, the wording that he uses concerning the "wife of one man" in I Tim. 5:9 would not make sense. Polyandry<sup>2</sup> was abhorred by all at that time. Paul could not have meant that an Elder could not be remarried for any reason, for that would have contradicted his own teaching concerning the freedom to marry after the death of a spouse. In 1 Tim. 5:14 the younger widows were encouraged to remarry and it is unlikely that, having said this, Paul would then later exclude them from the widows' order because they had followed his advice. Moreover the phrase in I Timothy 5:9 surely did not mean that the widow was excluded from the order if she had remarried when her first husband died. Based on Paul's use of the similar wording in I Timothy 5:9, some have interpreted this to mean that a man cannot be divorced and remarried. The subject of divorce and remarriage has been a controversial topic in the evangelical community for a number of years. It is not the purpose here to develop the biblical theology of divorce and remarriage; however, it is important that there is a clear understanding of the position of Calvary Baptist Church on this issue concerning the qualifications for the office of Elder. First, it must be clearly understood that remarriage after divorce is not an unpardonable sin, and that a man who has been remarried after a divorce will have ample opportunity to participate in the ministries of the church at CBC (even involved in positions of leadership within ministries at CBC). Second, the candidate for the office of Elder may not have been divorced and remarried. Just as in the Old Testament the priests were not allowed to serve in the tabernacle if they had a handicap (Lev. 21:16-24). This would seem

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<sup>2</sup> Polyandry is the condition of having more than one husband at one time.

unfair if the primary perspective was that of the individual's rights. However, Calvary Baptist Church's aim in restricting the elders and deacons to those who have not been remarried after divorce is to protect the office and the church. The idea that elders be "above reproach" does not only indicate that they are presently free from any reputation of willful or persistent sin, but also that their marriage and home life be symbolic standards for what God wills. It must be remembered however, that the qualification of the "husband of one wife" which is best interpreted "a one woman man" as stated above, should not be merely limited to a discussion of a man's marital status, for it is much broader than that. No matter the circumstances of life for the Elder, a man is to be observably faithful to his wife or fiancée. By adhering to these qualifications a candidate for the office of Elder could not espouse homosexuality, keeping a mistress, polygamy or any questionable sexual relationship. By this we do not mean that an Elder must be married, but that he must be above reproach with all his dealings with women. Also, if he is not married, the candidate should realize that other areas of his life would necessarily be evaluated more stringently since the biblical qualifications frequently look to his management of his home (wife and children) and he could not be evaluated in that area.

### **Temperate (*nephalion*) and self-controlled (*engkrate*)**

While we normally think of temperance in regard to wine, see verse 3, the admonition may be more general; that his temperance extends over other things besides wine. The standard here is one of self-control and mastery of his appetites or desires. When referring to wine, it can simply mean sobriety. It also refers to mental sobriety. This denotes self-control, balanced judgment, and freedom from debilitating excesses or rash behavior. So a temperate man would be someone who is "stable, circumspect, self-restrained, and clear headed". Spiritual leaders are to be moderate and balanced in every area of life. Along this line, Paul states in Titus that the Elder is not to be quick-tempered. Elders need to be emotionally and mentally stable.

The focus of "self-controlled" is especially on sexual self-control. He should not be in the grip of lust. He should not toy with pornography. He should be utterly faithful to his wife. He should be disciplined in all aspects of his life.

### **Sensible, prudent, reasonable**

The next qualification is prudence. This word is similar to temperate and has been proposed to be a result of temperance. The Greek word is *sophron*. This word emphasizes self-control as it relates to exercising good judgment. Similar ideas would include discretion and common sense. Practically this is the ability to keep an objective perspective in the face of problems and disagreements. It is related to *sophroneo* which means to be of a sound mind —like the demoniac after he was healed (Mk. 5:15). This same word is translated as "sensible" in Paul's letter to Titus describing the qualifications of an Elder.

### **Respectable, honorable (*kosmios*)**

It is related to the word "prudent" that precedes it in Paul's letter. This word conveys the idea of self-control, proper behavior and orderliness. Paul uses this word to describe proper demeanor

and dress in I Timothy 2:9. Here it more appropriately means orderly or well behaved. The idea seems to be one of not offending against propriety, someone who handles himself in situations so as not to step on toes unnecessarily. This is a man who is respected in both the community and within the church body. Elders must not have a chaotic lifestyle, because their work involves administration, oversight, scheduling, and establishing priorities

### **Hospitable (*philoxenon*)**

The word translated “hospitality” is a composite of two Greek words *xenos* meaning “stranger” and *phileo* meaning “to love or show affection”. Literally, it means to love strangers. The Elder is given to being kind to newcomers and makes them feel at home. He is a person whose home is open for ministry and who does not shrink back from having guests. He cannot be a secretive person. Hospitality is a hallmark expression of true Christian love and family relationship. The care that a shepherd gives to his flock is expressed by his willingness to open and share his home with his people. Paul repeats this qualification in his letter to Titus.

### **Skilled in teaching (*didaktikon*)**

The ability to teach is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Elder. This qualification and the one that says “he must not be a novice” are the only qualifications that are different from the qualifications that Paul requires of the Deacon. This word is used only twice in the New Testament (I Tim 3:4 and II Tim 2:24). The major part of shepherding the flock is feeding it, and the local church feeds on the Word of God. Elders must be able to teach to do their job. This need not mean that the person is so at ease or so effective in front of a group that he can preach publicly from the pulpit. Not all Elders devote all their time to formal teaching or preaching (1 Tim. 5:17); however, the candidate for the office of Elder should have a history of involvement in personal discipleship, small group leadership or Sunday school teaching. His commitment is to see the Truth of God’s Word transform the lives of others. Paul elaborates a little more in his epistle to Titus by saying they are to hold fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he (the Elder) may be able both to exhort sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it (Titus 1:9). In Acts 20:28-31, Paul says something similar to the elders of the church at Ephesus as he exhorts them to protect their flock against those who would lead the sheep astray with false teachings. In other words he must know Biblical doctrine well and be able to explain it to people. He must be theologically sound so he can spot serious error and show a person why it is wrong and harmful.

### **Not addicted to wine (*me paroinon*)**

Not addicted to wine is another qualification laid out by Paul in I Timothy 3. Drunkenness is a sin, and therefore, the man in position of spiritual authority cannot have a drinking problem. Likewise, he cannot have an addiction to any medication whether illicit or prescription. In other words, he must demonstrate self-control. He is not to be addicted to anything harmful, debilitating or worldly. He must be an example to the local body, especially to those who are experiencing or have experienced an addiction to drugs or alcohol. This attribute also means the Elder is clear minded in counseling and making decisions.

## **Not pugnacious or belligerent (*me plekten*)**

The Elder is not to be pugnacious. Literally, this word means “giver of blows”. The most prominent meaning, therefore, is that of being a fighter or brawler. His temper should always be under control. He must not be given to quarreling or fighting. He should have a conciliatory bent. He should not carry resentments or be hyper-critical. The Elder is often in the middle of emotionally tense situations that require a cool head to appropriately assess the situation and provide guidance. If the man is “pugnacious” he is at risk for harming the sheep.

## **Gentle (*epieke*)**

This stands in stark contrast to the pugnacious man. This is the opposite of pugnacious or belligerent. He should not be harsh or mean-spirited. He should be inclined to tenderness and resort to toughness only when the circumstances commend this form of love. His words should not be divisive but helpful and encouraging. The word translated “gentle” carries a breadth of meaning. The word can mean: forbearing, kind, gentle, magnanimous, equitable, gracious, or willing to yield. Gentleness is a characteristic of Jesus (II Cor. 10:1) the chief shepherd. His under-shepherds should be as well. This is of utmost importance when the shepherd is dealing with erring and stubborn sheep.

## **Peaceable (*amachon*)**

This seems almost identical with "not pugnacious or belligerent." In fact the last three characteristics seem to go together as a unit that stresses peacemaking rather than troublemaking. This would have great implications about the way he uses his tongue and how he treats others. The New Testament discusses the issue of peace and peacemaking at great lengths, so it is not surprising that the Elder is to demonstrate this in his life. Divisiveness is very harmful to ministry. The Elder must be able to recognize a lack of peace and be able to correct it. This can only be accomplished if he demonstrates peacemaking in his daily life. The entire personality of the church can be transformed by the peacemaking Elder.

## **Not a lover of money (*aphilarguron*)**

The Elder should not be so money-oriented that ministry decisions revolve around this issue. When it comes to finances, he must not love money or be greedy. He should be putting the kingdom first in all he does. His lifestyle should not reflect a love of luxury. Rather, his life should reflect good stewardship of the resources that God has given to him. His household finances should reflect this quality. He should be a generous giver. His life should show a pattern of cheerfully financially supporting the work of the ministry of his local church (II Cor. 9:6-7). He should not be anxious about his financial future. Paul says it a little differently to Titus where he states that the Elder “cannot be fond of sordid gain”. The basic understanding of this qualification prevents a man from pursuing the office of Elder simply to have a job to make money. Peter reiterates this warning as well in I Peter 5:2. Peter states that the Elder is to shepherd the flock of God not for shameful or sordid gain. Many of the itinerant “preachers” of

Paul's time were simply in it for the prestige and the potential lucrative life that could be attained. The Elder is not to have this attitude. Paul warns everyone concerning the love of money later in the epistle to Timothy (I Tim. 6:10). However, in its broader sense it should be recognized that money can be as addicting as any drug and many spiritual leaders have wrongly focused on the materialistic aspects of the ministry more than their spiritual responsibilities. Elders cannot be focused on their salaries and perquisites compared to other men in the ministry. Likewise, elders must not make ministry decisions based on how the biggest "givers" will respond, nor should they cater to them. If the Elder is controlled by money, he is not controlled by the Holy Spirit.

### **Manage his own household well (*kalos proistamenon*); Having children who believe (*tecknon pistos*)**

A prospective Elder must also manage his own house well. Otherwise, as Paul questions, how can he manage the household of God? Managing his own house means that he provides for his family: spiritually, financially, and emotionally. The home is a proving ground for ministry. A man's leadership in the home should not be one of domineering, spirit crushing authoritarianism, but one of strong character epitomized by grace and mercy. He should have submissive children. This does not mean that his children must be perfect, but it does mean well-disciplined, so that they do not blatantly and regularly disregard the instructions of their parents. The children should regard their father with a great deal of dignity (*meta pases semnotetos*). He should be a loving and responsible spiritual leader in the home. His wife should be respected and tenderly loved. Their relationship should be openly admirable. Paul states in Titus 1:6 that the Elder must have children who are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or open rebellion. The idea of "children who believe" has been a point of contention among a number of church leaders. There are two predominant positions concerning what it means to have "children who believe".

One view point interprets "believing children" as "professing Christians". In Titus 1:4, Paul had just referred to Titus, a grown man, as his "true child in the faith". His immediate following reference to dissipation (*asotia*) or rebellion (*anupotaktos*) in vs. 6 strongly suggests Paul had in mind grown or nearly grown children. In the context of this verse, Paul is identifying grown children who have rejected Jesus Christ and therefore are not faithful to the gospel message. Unbelievers are never referred to as faithful in Scripture. In an Elder's home, a child who is old enough to be saved, but is not, can hardly be described as faithful. Therefore, Paul had in mind children who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ. If a man's children are too young to understand and trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior, then the standard of 1 Tim. 3:4-5 applies. As children grow older and the issue is no longer "keeping his children under control", the more demanding standard of Titus 1 is to be used.

The second view point that "believing children" refer to "respectful, submissive and obedient children within the home" is also the position of Calvary Baptist Church. The word "believing" is in other places in Scripture is translated "faithful or dutiful" (II Timothy 2:2). This would then be a discussion concerning the children's behavior and not their eternal state. An "unbelieving or unfaithful child" would be one whose conduct would be described as "wild and rebellious". This

would necessarily reflect on the father's inability to manage his home as well as potentially bring reproach upon the church.

While not lowering the standard for Elder spiritual leadership, it's important to recognize the historical and cultural setting in which Paul described these character qualities. In the New Testament world, extended families lived in the same compound. If an adult child continued to reject the parent's faith and lived a sinful lifestyle, this would bring reproach on the father's life and church leadership opportunities. In our Western mobile culture, when a child leaves the home and chooses to live an ungodly life, it doesn't necessarily reflect on the father's reputation. However, each Elder candidate must be evaluated to see if his family dynamics might hurt the cause of Christ and be a stumbling block for believers or nonbelievers. When a number of children in a man's family rebel against Christ, it still raises the same question Paul did in 1 Tim. 3:5; "If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?"

### **A mature believer, not a new convert (*me neophuton*)**

An Elder may not be a new believer. The reason for this restriction according to Paul is that a new convert may become enticed with the honor and authority of his position which may easily swell into pride. The implication is growing as a Christian is a humbling process and a protection against pride. We should see evidences in his life that humility is a fixed virtue and not easily overturned. Likewise, the candidate for the office of Elder should have demonstrated a pattern of service within the local church body. This cannot be said of a new convert.

### **A good reputation with non-believers (*marturian kalen*)**

The candidate for the office of Elder is to have a good reputation among those outside of the church. This is primarily with unbelievers. This doesn't mean the world sets the standards, since Jesus himself was rejected by some. What it means is a Christian leader should at least meet the standards of the world for decency and respectability. A good reputation is part and parcel of a good testimony to the unbelieving community in which the Elder lives. If an Elder has a poor reputation among the unbelieving community, Satan will use that to trap him. The unbelievers may accurately accuse the Elder harshly about his hypocrisy, thus bringing shame to the Elder as well as to the church. The church's testimony may be significantly damaged should an Elder have a poor testimony in the community.

### **Blameless (*anegkletos*)**

This is virtually the same as "irreproachable." The idea is that no ongoing blame attaches to a man. If he does wrong he makes it right. The Elder is to be just or holy. An Elder can be counted on to be a principled man and to make fair, just, and righteous decisions for the church.

## **Humility (*me authade*)**

He should be lowly in his demeanor, not speaking much of himself or his achievements. He should count others better than himself and be quick to serve. He should sincerely give God the credit and honor for any accomplishments. Paul expands the qualifications in his letter to Titus with the additions that the Elder cannot be arrogant. Another meaning of the term is that he is not to be a “self-willed” person, i.e., one who insists on having his own way. This is another of the characteristics that are the antithesis of “gentle”. An Elder cannot be stubborn and inconsiderate of others desires and opinions. Peter warns the Elder not to lead by domineering over the flock, but by being examples for them (I Peter 5:3).

## **Lover of goodness (*philagathon*)**

Closely associated with hospitality is “loving what is good”. The Greek word is *philagathos*. This word is defined as “one who willingly and with self-denial does good, or is kind”. An Elder, therefore, should go about looking for ways to be helpful and to do kind things for people. He should love to see good done and love to be involved in doing good for others.

## **Just or upright (*dikaios*)**

The Elder is to live in accordance with God’s righteous standards. An Elder who is righteous can be relied upon to make fair, just and principled decisions for the church. The Apostle John writes that “the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous.” (1 John 3:7)

## **Devout, holy (*hosion*)**

He should be a person of devotion to Christ with a life of prayer and meditation. He should love worship and have a deep personal relationship with the Lord. The Elder should be firmly committed to God and His Word.

## Qualifications for the Office of Deacon

### Headings and Scriptural References

<u>Dignified/serious</u>	1 Timothy 3:8
<u>Not double-tongued</u>	1 Timothy 3:8
<u>Not addicted to much wine</u>	1 Timothy 3:8
<u>Not greedy for gain</u>	1 Timothy 3:8
<u>Holding the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience</u>	1 Timothy 3:9
<u>Let them also be tested first</u>	1 Timothy 3:10
<u>Blameless</u>	1 Timothy 3:10
<u>The husband of one wife</u>	1 Timothy 3:12
<u>Managing their children and their own households well</u>	1 Timothy 3:12
<u>Of good repute</u>	Acts 6:3
<u>Full of the Spirit and of wisdom</u>	Acts 6:3

#### **Dignified, serious, earnest, honorable (*semnous*)**

The word *semnous* means venerable, honorable, reputable, grave, serious and stately. Therefore, a Deacon should possess a character that would be described as respectable or dignified.

#### **Not double-tongued or genuine, authentic (*me dilogous*)**

Double-tongued implies saying one thing to be true here and another thing to be true there; according to what people would think. So it implies a lack of love for truth and a fear of human disapproval. A Deacon, therefore, should demonstrate integrity of speech with sincerity and truthfulness avoiding any kind of insincere or manipulative speech.

#### **Not addicted to much wine or temperate (*me oino pollo prosechontas*)**

*Prosechontas* implies to concern oneself with or to give attention to or to turn one's mind toward. So there should be a freedom from being controlled by drink, and presumably from all substances that would be harmful if taken too freely. The picture is of a person under control, not

carried along 1) by the opinions of others (genuine, authentic) or 2) by his appetites (temperate) or 3) by levity (serious, honorable).

## **Not greedy for dishonest gain/money (*me aischrokerdeis*)**

This word is used in Titus 1:7 of Elders and in adverb form of Elders in 1 Peter 5:2. It corresponds to *aphilargon* (not a lover of money) in 1 Timothy 3:3. He should have freedom from the pull of money. Other motives should drive him. There should be contentment in God and a heavenly mindset. The Deacon should not be so money oriented that ministry decisions revolve around this issue. When it comes to finances, he must not love money or be greedy. He should be putting the kingdom first in all he does. His lifestyle should not reflect a love of luxury. Rather, his life should reflect good stewardship of the resources that God has given to him. His household finances should reflect this quality. He should be a generous giver. His life should show a pattern of cheerfully, financially, supporting the work of the ministry of his local church (II Corinthians 9:6-7). He should not be anxious about his financial future.

## **Holding the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience (*katharai syneidesei*)**

The issue here is two fold. It is the sincerity of the faith and it is the foundation of the faith. Does the candidate for Deacon really have faith rooted in his heart or does he have sneaking doubts? Is his conscience clear when he makes a public profession of his faith? Also, the Deacon must have a detailed knowledge of the Biblical Doctrine that would be considered the fundamentals of the faith; and not only know them, but also properly employ them in daily life.

## **Tested (*dokimazesthosan*)**

The test is not specified, but it is to precede the work as deacons. The test would be twofold: the life they have lived and the assessment of it by those who know them and by some appropriate body of the church. Either way, the candidate for the office of Deacon has already demonstrated his character and ability to serve in this capacity prior to his official appointment.

## **Blameless or above reproach (*anenkletoi*)**

It carries the idea to be free from any offensive or disgraceful blight of character or conduct. It is the general term for living in such a way as to give no cause for others to think badly of the church, the Faith, or the Lord. It puts tremendous emphasis on a person's reputation. When a Deacon is irreproachable, critics cannot discredit his Christian profession of faith or prove him unfit to lead others. The focus here is not a person's relationship to the Lord but how others see him. This is of utmost importance since all Christians are to live holy and blameless lives, and the world is watching the Christian community with a critical eye. In Titus 1 Paul uses the Greek word *anengkletos* as a qualification for Elders. This word is a synonym for *anepilemptos*. It means not accused; one whose character or conduct is free from damaging moral or spiritual

accusations. This does not mean the Deacon is free from every fault, but that he should be a man of unblemished reputation.

## **Husband of one wife (*mias gunaikos andra*)**

The first specific area of life where a Deacon is to be found above reproach is in his relationship with women. This is consistent with the importance that Scripture places on sexual purity. Second only to idolatry, sexual purity is admonished most in the Old Testament. It is the lead sin in many of Paul's lists of sins utilized in his epistles. It should not be surprising, therefore, that a man's conduct among women is a critical qualification to be considered. The actual phrase "the husband of one wife" is literally translated "one woman man". There are four possibilities as to the interpretation of this statement: 1) deacons are to be married, 2) deacons must not be polygamists, 3) deacons may marry only once, or 4) deacons must be maritally and sexually above reproach. Paul could not have meant that the Deacon had to be married; if so, he would have contradicted his own teaching concerning the benefit of singleness for the service of God (I Cor. 7:32-35; 9:5). If Paul meant to guard against polygamy, the wording that he uses concerning the "wife of one man" in I Timothy 5:9 would not make sense. Polyandry was abhorred by all at that time. Paul could not have meant that a Deacon could not be remarried for any reason, for that would have contradicted his own teaching concerning the freedom to marry after the death of a spouse. In 1 Timothy 5:14 the younger widows were encouraged to remarry and it is unlikely that, having said this, Paul would then later exclude them from the widows' order because they had followed his advice. Moreover the phrase in I Timothy 5:9 surely did not mean that the widow was excluded from the order if she had remarried when her first husband died. Based on Paul's use of the similar wording in I Timothy 5:9, some have interpreted this to mean that a man cannot be divorced and remarried. The subject of divorce and remarriage has been a hot topic in the evangelical community for a number of years. It is not the purpose here to develop the biblical theology of divorce and remarriage; however, it is important that there is a clear understanding of the position of Calvary Baptist Church on this issue concerning the qualifications for the office of Deacon. First, it must be clearly understood that remarriage after divorce is not an unpardonable sin, and that a man who has been remarried after a divorce will have ample opportunity to participate in the ministries of the church at CBC (even involved in positions of leadership within ministries at CBC). Second, the candidate for the office of Deacon may not have been divorced and remarried. Just as in the Old Testament the priests were not allowed to serve in the tabernacle if they had a handicap (Lev. 21:16-24). This would seem unfair if the primary perspective was that of the individual's rights. However, Calvary Baptist Church's aim in restricting the elders and deacons to those who have not been remarried after divorce is to protect the office and the church. The idea that deacons be "above reproach" does not only indicate that they are presently free from any reputation of willful or persistent sin, but also that their marriage and home life be symbolic standards for what God wills. It must be remembered however, that the qualification of the "husband of one wife" which is best interpreted "a one woman man" as stated above, should not be merely limited to a discussion of a man's marital status, for it is much broader than that. No matter the circumstances of life for the Deacon, a man is to be observably faithful to his wife or fiancée. By adhering to these qualifications a candidate for the office of Deacon could not espouse homosexuality, keeping a mistress, polygamy or any questionable sexual relationship. By this we do not mean that a

Deacon must be married, but that he must be above reproach with all his dealings with women. Also, if he is not married, the candidate should realize that other areas of his life would necessarily be evaluated more stringently since the biblical qualifications frequently look to his management of his home (wife and children) and he could not be evaluated in that area.

## **Managing their children and their own households well (*teknon kalos proistamenoī kai ton idion oikon*)**

A prospective Deacon must also manage his own house well. Managing his own house means that he provides for his family: spiritually, financially, and emotionally. The home is a proving ground for ministry. A man's leadership in the home should not be one of domineering, spirit crushing authoritarianism, but one of strong character epitomized by grace and mercy. He should have submissive children. This does not mean that his children must be perfect, but it does mean well-disciplined, so that they do not blatantly and regularly disregard the instructions of their parents. The children should regard their father with a great deal of dignity (*meta pases semnotetos*). He should be a loving and responsible spiritual leader in the home. His wife should be respected and tenderly loved. Their relationship should be openly admirable.

## **Good reputation (*martyroumenous*)**

Unlike the Office of Elder, the good reputation with those on the outside of the local church is not identified with qualities of a Deacon. This characteristic is like the "above reproach" qualification. The implication is the Deacon candidate should also have a "good reputation" with everyone including those outside the church.

## **Full of the Spirit and wisdom (*plareis Pneumatos Agiou kai sophias*)**

In contrast to the baptism with the Spirit, which is the one-time act by God at time of salvation (1 Corinthians 12:13), the filling of the Spirit is the repeated reality of Spirit controlled behavior that God commands believers to maintain. Paul states in Ephesians 5:18, that Christians are to be filled with the Spirit; that is to live continually under the influence of the Holy Spirit by letting God's Word dominate everything that is thought and done, pursuing pure lives, confessing all known sin, dying to self, and depending on His power in all things. Being filled with the Spirit will produce wisdom.

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