

# Qualifications of Elders

## 1. *I Timothy 3:2*: “Now the Overseer (Elder) must be **above reproach**...”

A. The Greek word for “**above reproach**” is, “*anepileptos*.” “literally, that which cannot be laid hold of, hence, not open to **censure, irreproachable**. Is used in *I Timothy 3:2; 5:7; 6:14*. See *Reproach, Unrebukeable*.”

1. “**censure**:” “a condemning as wrong; strong disapproval; condemning a person for misconduct.”

2. “**irreproachable**:” “blameless, faultless.”

3. “**unrebukeable**:” “cannot blame, or reprimand.”

## 2. *I Timothy 3:2*: “The husband of but one **wife**” or, literally: “**one woman man**”

A. “**Wife**” or “**Woman**” is the Greek word “*gune*.” “is used of a woman unmarried or married.”

B. This Scripture is the first time **polygamy** (more than one wife) is spoken against since the Old Testament; and polygamy was still a common practice during Jesus’ day, and the days of the early church when this was written.

1. The Old Testament said it was alright to have sex with one’s handmaiden (*Genesis 16*); as well as more than one wife (according to *I Kings 11:3*, Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines)

2. If one’s **relative died** and his wife had no children, the nearest relative would marry her, and have sex with her in order to give her a child to carry on the name of her dead first husband (*Matthew 22:23-28*).

C. **Prostitution** was also very common, and according to the New Testament (*I Corinthians 6:16*), “**one woman man**” could be referring to this common practice.

D. Does this qualification exclude an **unmarried man** from serving as an Elder?

1. **Paul was an Elder** according to *I Timothy 4:14* and *II Timothy 1:6*.

a. *I Timothy 4:14* tells us Timothy’s gift was given when the Elders laid hands on him.

b. *II Timothy 1:6* tells us Timothy’s gift was given to him by Paul, so Paul must have been one of the Elders present in *I Timothy 4:14*.

c. There is no record of Paul ever having a wife.

**2. Timothy was an Elder** according to *I Timothy 4:14* and *I Timothy 5:17*.

a. *I Timothy 4:14* tells us Timothy was ordained by the Elders.

b. *I Timothy 5:17* when read in full context with the rest of chapter 5, seems to imply that the preaching elder that deserves to be financially supported by the people he serves, could be in reference to Timothy, himself, because he is going to a place where there presently were no Elders (or preachers or teachers).

**3. Neither Paul nor Timothy was married**, and Paul strongly suggests that it is better not to marry!

a. *I Corinthians 7:1*: “*It is good for a man not to marry.*”

b. *I Corinthians 7:8*: “*Now to the unmarried and widows I say: it is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am.*”

c. *I Corinthians 7:26-38*: “*...are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife...an unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs — how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world — how he can please his wife — and his interests are divided...he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better!*”

**E. Can a man who has been Scripturally divorced, or has married again after his wife’s death, be an Elder?**

1. *Romans 7:2-3* tells us that after a person’s spouse dies, they are free from the bonds of marriage, and may remarry again if they wish.

2. *Matthew 19:9* and *5:32* tell us that it is alright in the eyes of the Lord for a man (or woman) to remarry if his or her spouse was unfaithful to them (had sex with someone else).

3. *I Corinthians 7:15,16* tells us that if we marry an unbeliever and he or she leaves us, we are free from the bonds of marriage, and again free to remarry.

4. **Paul wrote both the strong suggestions that a man not marry, and the qualifications for Elders.** With this in mind, it would be illogical to say that Paul is telling us not to marry so that we will be “*concerned about the Lord’s affairs, and our interests won’t be divided;*” and then turn around and tell us that our spiritual leaders must marry, even though they will then “*have divided*

*interests, being concerned about the affairs of the world, and how he can please his wife.”*

**5.** For this reason, it would be safe to assume that Paul **does not mean that an Elder must be married; but instead, if he is married, he must have only one woman** (which would exclude the common practices of polygamy, affairs with mistresses, prostitution, handmaidens, etc.).

**6.** It would also be logical to assume that if the Lord says that it is O.K. to remarry (“free from the bonds”) under certain conditions; that it would be **O.K. to become an Elder if a man was remarried and cleared by the Lord to do so.”**

**7.** Does what you do before you became a Christian black-ball you after you become a Christian? **Not according to Acts 2:38, 22:16; II Corinthians 5:16-19; and Philippians 3:12-15!**

**a.** What about those who had sex with a woman when they were younger in high school or college? They weren’t legally married — so that doesn’t disqualify them from Elder now that they are officially married?

**I Corinthians 6:16** says you become *one* with whomever you had sex with! Remember, the qualification here says you must be a **“one woman man.”**

**b.** Or, perhaps, you qualify for Elder as long as you don’t get caught! **Matthew 5:27** tells you the Lord holds you accountable even if you’re just thinking about it!

**3. I Timothy 3:2** also says the Elder must be **“temperate”**

**A.** The Greek word for **“temperate”** is **“nephaios,”** which translates: *“Temperate, or sober. Denotes of sound mind; hence, self-controlled, sober-minded...moderated in indulging the appetites; moderate in one’s actions, speech, etc.; self-restrained.”*

**4. I Timothy 3:2** also says the Elder must be **“self controlled.”**

**A.** The Greek word for **“self controlled”** is **“sophron,”** which translates: *“sober-minded. Temperate. Showing mental and emotional balance; self controlled; not extreme or extravagant; characterized by reason.”*

**5. I Timothy 3:2** also says the Elder must be **“respectable.”**

**A.** The Greek word for **“respectable,”** is **“kosmios,”** which translates: *“an adjective signifying decent, modest, orderly (of good behavior). Well-arranged, decent. The well-ordering is not of dress and demeanor only; but of the inner life, uttering indeed and expressing itself in the outward conversation.”*

6. *I Timothy 3:2* also says the Elder must be “**hospitable.**”

A. The Greek word for “**hospitable,**” is “**philoxenos,**” which translates: “*Hospitable, love of strangers.*”

7. *I Timothy 3:2* also says the Elder must be “**able to teach.**”

A. “**Able to teach**” is one Greek word, “**didaktikos,**” which translates: “*skilled in teaching. Akin to didasko: is absolutely, to give instructions.*”

8. *I Timothy 3:3* says the Elder must “**not be given to much wine.**”

A. “**Not be given to much wine,**” is one Greek word, “**paroinos,**” which is translated: *an adjective, literally, tarrying at wine (para, at, oinos, wine), given to wine, I Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7, probably has the secondary sense, of the effects of wine-bibbing, abusive brawling.*”

B. Remember Paul’s command in *Romans 14:21*: “*It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.*” Yet he told Timothy in *I Timothy 5:23* that it was alright to “*use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.*”

C. The word for “**wine**” here is “**oinos**” not “**gleukos.**”

1. “**Oinos**” is translated: “*general word for wine; either fermented or unfermented as contrasted in Matthew 9:17: “Neither do men pour new (neos) wine (oinos) into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine (oinos) will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new (neos) wine (oinos) into new (kainos) wineskins, and both are preserved.*”

a. “**Neos**” is translated: “*signifies new in respect of time, that which is recent.*”

b. “**Kainos**” is translated: “*denotes new, of that which is unaccustomed or unused, not new in time, recent, but new as to form or quality.*”

c. The **wine (oinos)** that was put into the wineskins was recently pressed from the grapes (as the word **new or neos** denotes). When it was carried in the old wineskin (which would no longer stretch), the heat and air would cause it to begin to ferment (expand), which would burst the old wineskin, allowing fermented **wine (oinos)** to run out. A **new (kainos)** wineskin would stretch, allowing this natural fermenting to take place without destroying the wineskin.

2. Because it was near impossible to keep grape juice from fermenting (no refrigeration or preservatives), as Jesus pointed out in **Matthew 9:17**, it would be impossible to say that all grape juice drunk by the people of Jesus' day (especially out of grape season) had no degree of fermentation. Thus, the word *oinos* can be translated either *fermented or unfermented*.

3. The Greeks and Jews did know how to purposely ferment grape juice (adding yeast and sugar, etc. under particular conditions and time); and they had a word for such a wine as we know it today. They called what we call "**wine**" today, "**gleukos**," which is translated: "*Denotes sweet wine, or must, Acts 2:13, where the accusation shows that it was intoxicant and must have been undergoing fermentation some time.*"

a. It must be noted that **fermented oinos wine** is natural, and that **fermented gleukos wine** (like the wine we have today), has to be made with sugar, yeast, and other additives in a cool controlled environment. Otherwise, you would end up with vinegar.

**D. "Not given to much wine"** is simply a warning against over-indulgence (see temperate), or getting hooked or dependant on "**oinos**" wine. Remember "**self-controlled**" and **I Corinthians 6:12**! Since, as Jesus pointed out in his story in **Matthew 9:17**, that **oinos wine** could easily become fermented; it always had the risk of intoxicating someone who may (because of habit) drank it to excess. Thus, the word **paroinos** is used here in **I Timothy 3:3**.

1. **I Corinthians 6:12**: "*Everything is permissible to me — but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible to me, but I will not be mastered by anything.*"

#### **E. Remember the Bible's warnings about drinking intoxicating beverages:**

1. **I Corinthians 5:11** warns us not to associate with a so-called "brother" who is a drunkard.

2. **I Corinthians 6:10** warns us that a drunkard will not go to Heaven.

3. **Romans 14:21** warns us not to "*drink wine, or to do anything that will cause your brother to fall.*" **And Jesus added to this warning in Luke 17:1,2**: "*It is inevitable that stumbling blocks should come, but woe to him through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, that he should cause one of these little ones (children) to stumble.*"

a. Maybe you never get drunk, and you're not hooked; but you might, by your example, be telling a fellow Christian or child that they can!

**4. I Peter 4:3-5:** “For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do — living in **debauchery**, lust, **drunkenness**, **orgies**, **carousing**, and detestable idolatry. They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to Him (Jesus) who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”

**a. “debauchery”** is the Greek word “**aselgeia**,” which translates: “excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness.”

**b. “drunkenness”** is the Greek word “**oinophlugia**,” which translates: “drunkenness, debauchery (oinos, wine, phluo, to bubble up, overflow), is rendered excess of wine.”

**c. “orgies”** is the Greek word “**komos**,” which translates: “a revel (wild party), carousal, the circumstance and consequence of drunkenness.”

**d. “carousing”** is the Greek word “**potos**,” which translates: *literally, a drinking, signifies not simply a banquet but a drinking bout, a carousal (a noisy, merry drinking party).*”

**9. I Timothy 3:3** says the Elder must be “**not violent**.”

**A. “Violent”** is the Greek word “**plektes**,” translated: “a striker, a brawler (akin to **plesso**, to strike, smite).”

**10. I Timothy 3:3** also says the Elder must be “**gentle**.”

**A. “Gentle”** is the Greek word “**epieikes**,” translated: “seemly, fitting, hence equitable, fair, moderate, forbearing, not insisting on the letter of the law; it expresses that considerateness that looks humanely and reasonably at the facts of a case; patient; moderate; sweet reasonableness.”

**11. I Timothy 3:3** also says the Elder must “**not be quarrelsome**.”

**A. “Quarrelsome”** is the Greek word “**amachos**,” which translates: “Literally, not fighting (from mache, a fight, combat, quarrel), primarily signifying invincible, not contentious (always ready to argue).”

**12. I Timothy 3:3** also says the Elder must “**not be a lover of money**.”

**A. “Lover of money”** is the Greek word “**aphilarguros**,” which translates: “Without covetousness (lust, greed, to have more). In Hebrews 13:5, free from the love of money.

**13. I Timothy 3:4,5** says the Elder must “*manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect, for if anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s Church?*”

**A.** The word for “*family*” is the Greek word “*oikos*,” which translates: “*a house, a dwelling; by metonymy (suggested by word association), of the members of a household or family.*”

**1.** This qualification does not say that an Elder **must** have a *family* or children (neither Jesus nor Paul had one — remember **Qualification #2**); it simply says he must manage his “*house*” or “*dwelling*” well. This would, of course, not apply to the man with no family or children, in the same way *wine* (**Qualification #8**) would only apply to those who drank wine; and being a *one woman man*, or married (**Qualification #2**) would only apply to those who had a woman or wife. If the man does not have children (**and most elderly men no longer have their children with them in their house**), he can still manage his house well.

**2.** Remember, if we listen to this same Apostle Paul in *I Corinthians 7:26-38*, we wouldn’t even get married and have children so we could devote our full attention to the Lord and His Church!

**B.** When Paul wrote *Titus 1:6* he explained this qualification more fully: “*An Elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.*”

**1.** An Elder’s child **must be Christians** and cannot be charged with being “*wild and disobedient*”(especially in the Church).

**14. I Timothy 3:6** says the Elder must “*not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the Devil.*”

**A.** “*Recent convert*” is the Greek word “*neophutos*,” which translates: “*Literally, newly-planted (from neos, new, and phuo, to bring forth, produce), denotes a new convert, neophyte (a newly baptized member of the early Christian Church), novice (beginner), on who by inexperience is unfitted to act as a Bishop or Overseer (Elder) in a Church.*”

**B.** “*Conceited*” is the Greek word “*tuphoo*,” which translates: “*to wrap in smoke; puffed up (lifted up with pride); proud; high-minded.*”

**15. I Timothy 3:7** says the Elder must “*have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the Devil’s trap.*”

**A.** “*Reputation*” is the Greek word “*marturia*,” which translates: “*rendered report; testimony; witness; evidence; reputation.*”

1. Notice it does not say that he must have a good reputation with the church membership. He must have a good reputation with those who are not members of the Church where he is to be serve as an Elder (maybe not even Christians).

B. **“Disgrace”** is the Greek word **“oneidismos,”** which translates: *“a reproach (to accuse of and blame for a fault so as to make feel ashamed; to bring disgrace upon; be a cause of discredit to), defamation.”*

16. **Titus 1:6** says the Elder must **“be blameless.”**

A. **“Blameless”** is the Greek word **“anenketos,”** which translates: *“Signifies that which cannot be called to account, with nothing laid to one’s charge (as the result of public investigation); unprovable; blameless. It implies not merely acquittal, but the absence of even a charge or accusation against a person.”*

17. **Titus 1:7** says the Elder must **“not be over-bearing.”**

A. **“Overbearing”** is the Greek word **“authades,”** which translates: *“Self-pleasing (autos, self, hedomai, to please), denotes one who, dominated by self-interest, and inconsiderate of others, arrogantly asserts his own will, self-willed. One so far overvaluing any determination at which he has himself once arrived that he will not be removed from it.”*

18. **Titus 1:7** also says the Elder must **“not be quick-tempered.”**

A. **“Quick-tempered”** is the Greek word **“orgilos,”** which translates: *“Angry, prone to anger, irascible (quick-tempered), is rendered soon angry.”*

19. **Titus 1:8** says the Elder must be **“one who loves what is good.”**

A. **“Loves what is good”** is one Greek word, **“philagathos,”** which translates: *“Loving that which is good, a lover of good.”*

20. **Titus 1:8** also says the Elder must be **“upright.”**

A. **“Upright”** is the Greek word **“dikaios,”** which translates: *“Just, without prejudice or partiality; righteous.”*

21. **Titus 1:8** also says the Elder must be **“holy.”**

A. **“Holy”** is the Greek word **“hosios,”** which translates: *“Pure from evil conduct, and observant of God’s will.”*



22. *Titus 1:8* also says the Elder must be “*disciplined.*”

A. “*Disciplined*” is the Greek word “*enkrates,*” translated: “*exercising self-control.*”

## Qualifications of Deacons

1. *I Timothy 3:8* says the Deacon must be “*men.*”

A. The Greek word used for Deacon is “*diakonous,*” which is in the **masculine** accusative case (plural).

2. *I Timothy 3:8* also says the Deacon must be “*worthy of respect.*”

A. “*Respect*” is the Greek word “*semnos,*” which translates: “*worthy of respect, serious, dignified and solemn or sedate in manner; honorable; honest. The word points to seriousness of purpose and to self-respect in conduct.*”

3. *I Timothy 3:8* also says the Deacon must be “*sincere.*”

A. The Greek word is “*dilogos,*” which translates: “*not saying the same thing twice, or given to repetition (dis, twice, logos, a word, or speech); hence, saying a thing to one person and giving a different view of it to another, double-tongued.*”

4. *I Timothy 3:8* also says the Deacon must “*not indulge in much wine.*”

A. “*Indulge*” is the Greek word “*prosecho,*” which translates: “*to turn one’s mind to, attend to, is used of giving oneself up to (in this case wine).*”

### 1. See Elder’s qualifications #8

5. *I Timothy 3:8* also says the Deacon must not “*pursue dishonest gain.*”

A. “*Dishonest gain*” is the Greek word “*aischrokerdes,*” which is translated: “*greedy of base gains (implies putting one’s own interests ahead of one’s obligations, because of greed or cowardice). From aischros, filthy, and kerdos, gain.*”

6. *I Timothy 3:9* says Deacons must “*keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.*”

A. “*Clear*” is the Greek word “*katharos,*” which is translated: “*free from corrupt desire, from guilt; blameless, innocent.*”

**B. “Conscience”** is the Greek word “*suneidesis*,” which is translated: “*Literally, a knowing with (sun, with, oida, to know); a co-knowledge with oneself, the witness borne to one’s conduct by conscience, that faculty by which we apprehend the will of God, as that which is designed to govern our lives; that process of thought which distinguishes what it considers morally good or bad, commending the good, condemning the bad, and so prompting to do the former, and avoid the latter.*”

**C. Practice what you preach! Read Matthew 7:21-27, Romans 2, and James 1:22-25.**

**7. I Timothy 3:10** says Deacons must “*first be tested; and then, if there is nothing against them, let them serve as Deacons.*”

**A. “Tested”** is the Greek word “*dokimazo*,” which is translated: “*to test, prove, approve.*”

**B. “Nothing against them”** is the Greek word “*anenkletos*,” which is translated: “*that which cannot be called to account, with nothing laid to one’s charge (as the result of a public investigation); unprovable; blameless. It implies not merely acquittal, but the absence of even a charge or accusation against a person.*”

1. Notice this does **not** say that they are to be given jobs first as a Deacon, and then examined while they serve as a Deacon; but they are to be examined thoroughly **before** they are allowed to become a Deacon.

2. A Deacon is not on-the-job training to become an Elder!

**8. I Timothy 3:11** says the Deacon’s “*wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trust worthy in everything.*”

**A. “Wives”** is the Greek word “*gune*,” which is translated: “*denotes (1) a woman, married or unmarried; (2) a wife; in I Timothy 3:11, women, the reference may be to the wives of deacons.*”

1. See “**Deacons/Deaconess**”

**B. “Respect”** is the Greek word “*semnos*,” which is the same word used in **Qualifications of Deacons #2.**

**C. “Malicious talkers”** is the Greek word “*diabolos*,” which is translated: “*slandering, accusing falsely; the reference is to those who are given to finding fault with the demeanor and conduct of others, and spreading their innuendos and criticisms in the Church.*”

**D. “Temperate”** is the Greek word “*nephalios*,” which is the same word used in **Qualifications of Elders #3.**

E. ***“Trust worthy”*** is the Greek word ***“pistos,”*** which is translated: ***“faithful, to be trusted, reliable.”***

**9. I Timothy 3:12** says the Deacon ***“must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.”***

A. ***“Husband of but one wife”*** is the same as **Qualifications of Elders #2.**

B. ***“Manage his children and household well”*** is the same as **Qualifications of Elders #13**