

1 Timothy

Week 3 - Chapter 3

Pray for your time together in God's Word!

? What do you think makes someone a good leader?

Possible Answers: Good communication, charisma, knowledge, etc.

? Why is it important for the Church to have good leaders?

Possible Answers: Accountability. To protect the integrity of the Gospel and how it's communicated.

Read the passage out loud as a group. Optional: Give the group 3 minutes to look at the passage by themselves.

1 Timothy 3:1-7 (NIV)

¹Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. ²Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. ⁵(If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. ⁷He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

? Look at verses 3-7, which list the qualifications for eldership. Are there any attributes that stand out to you? Why?

? What is at stake if these qualifications are lacking?

Possible Answers: If elders do not have these qualities, they might misrepresent or slander the name of Christ through their actions. The care of the church and its members is at stake. Also, as verses 6-7 explain, the person is at risk of becoming conceited or falling into sin.

? In the first verse, Paul mentions desire in relation to becoming an overseer (elder). What are (or have been) your feelings about aspiring to leadership?

Possible Answers: Perhaps some people have felt that it's wrong or self-serving to want to be a leader. Maybe others have felt bad that they don't desire to be in a leadership role. Others may desire it for the wrong reasons. And of course, you can also have a healthy desire to serve in leadership, as Paul describes here.

? How can you grow in your leadership capabilities?

Possible Answers: Serving in various capacities at Hope and elsewhere. Growing in your knowledge of the Word. Observing and learning from strong leaders in your life.

1 Timothy 3:8-16 (NIV)

⁸ In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁹ They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. ¹¹ In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

¹² A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. ¹³ Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

¹⁴ Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, ¹⁵ if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. ¹⁶ Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great:

He appeared in the flesh,
was vindicated by the Spirit,
was seen by angels,
was preached among the nations,
was believed on in the world,
was taken up in glory.

? Looking at verses 8-13, what are some differences in the qualifications for deacons?

Possible Answers: Women are included in the description of deacons. It's Hope's stance that women can serve in the role of deacon in the church. (Romans 16:1 is another reference for women serving as deacons.) Also, there are more numerous guidelines for elders; for deacons there are some basic qualifications, and they must be approved with "nothing against them."

? Why do you think these differences are significant?

Possible Answers: It shows that God is interested in everyone's leadership potential. It also shows how much more carefully those in higher/different levels of authority should be evaluated and held accountable.

? Look at verse 13. How can a desire for "excellent standing" be either godly or sinful? Do you have any examples from personal experience?

Possible Answers: It isn't wrong to desire or enjoy an excellent standing in the eyes of others. As verse 13 says, it is what is gained (other translations say "the reward") for serving well. The focus of serving should be on other people, not on our own reputations. It can be a sinful motivation if we are seeking to

serve or lead only to make ourselves look better, “holier,” etc.

Optional Transition: Let’s take a look at some passages from Romans to better understand where true godliness comes from.

Romans 3:21-26 (NIV)

²¹ But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Romans 8:1-11 (NIV)

¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

⁵ Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. ¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.



How is Jesus the source of our godliness?

Possible Answers: Our godliness comes from God, the Holy Spirit working in our life and producing His fruit – all of these qualities that Paul describes. The reason we are able to receive God’s Spirit is because of God reconciling us through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. Through God’s reconciling us in Christ, we have been given His Spirit and now live according to the Spirit.

? What does it mean for you to “live in accordance with the Spirit”?

Possible Answers: To seek God’s guidance in your daily (often moment-by-moment) choices, to be in communication with Him, to kill sin in your life.

For Discussion & Accountability

? How can you grow in this area? How can we help you?

Possible Answers: Spending more intentional time in the Word and prayer, accountability from trusted others.

Leader’s Note: Is this an area for accountability through your small group? Please also note that we will devote more time to this topic in the next set of materials.

? What is our community application of this passage?