

**Thursday, November 17, 2022 • Read 1 Timothy 3:8–9**

*Questions from the Scripture text: What is the first thing deacons must be (v8)? What is the first thing he must not be? What is the second? What is the third? What must he be doing (v9)?*

**What are the primary qualifications of a deacon?** 1 Timothy 3:8–9 looks forward to the second reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these two verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **deacons must be dignified men who live consistently with their sound doctrine.**

The qualifications of deacons are introduced here (v8–9), a brief procedure for recognizing and installing them stated (v10), including the character of the women who serve under them (v11), followed by further description of how their character is shown in testing (v12–13). The implication is that the women in v11 are first/originally their wives in the home (v12) and then the women who are officially engaged in the diaconal service of the church. More on that in subsequent passages, but for our purposes this week, we're just noting the place of v8–9.

**Qualifications appropriate to position.** By saying "likewise," the apostle refers us back to the more extensive set of qualifications he has just finished delineating for elders. Just as those qualifications were suited to the "good work" that the office of overseer engaged a man in, now the good work of overseeing material service as a deacon requires qualifications appropriate to the work.

The implication is that while these qualifications in v8–9 are necessary, they are not the only ones. We know this already because of our study in Ac 6:1–7.

**A deacon must be reverent.** The word here is related to the "dignity" and "nobility" word from 2:2 and 3:5. Beyond propriety, seriousness, and majesty of manner, this cognate word refers to worthiness of respect. If there is a shade of difference in meaning, it is that not only is his behavior is respectable, but the dignity and nobility of his behavior is what best summarizes him as a person: both inwardly by the Spirit and outwardly in serious, worthy living.

**A deacon must not be double-tongued.** There is a word that is more literally "double-tongued," but this one is more literally "double-worded." He doesn't say one thing to one man and a different thing to another. Neither inconsistency nor partiality change the way that he responds. Deacons are going to have to deal with tricky situations and will often have to be deciding between competing interests and worthy causes. Consistency of conduct and impartiality is vitally necessary for a deacon.

**A deacon must not be given to much wine.** Note, of course, the word "much." It is not that a deacon does not drink wine at all, but that he is always ready to exercise good judgment. Not only does he need to do this for the real-time decisions that may be involved in the exercise of his office, but it will also help him make wise denials of financial assistance where that would be harmful.

There have always been those who need material help because they squander their resources on drink. To give them more material help would only harm them by facilitating their obtaining more drink. A man who himself is addicted to fleshly desires weakens his ability to say no to another such man.

**A deacon must not be greedy for money.** This is that same "shameful gain" word that we came across in v3. It refers to a man who has few compunctions about gaining in any way (not just financially) that he can get away with. The man who is always looking for an angle, always looking to advance himself, must not be given the opportunities to do so at the expense of the church and of the members who are most needy.

**A deacon must hold to the mystery of the faith.** The New Testament word "mystery" doesn't refer to something still hidden, but to something that has been revealed and that we wouldn't know apart from special revelation. The doctrine referred to in v9 is summarized as "the mystery of godliness" in v16. The core doctrines of the faith are the very ones that produce godliness in believers. Christ divinity and incarnation, His death and resurrection, His appearance to messengers, His saving through preaching, and His current ascension and reign.

A man who doesn't believe these things is not a Christian, let alone qualified to be a deacon. But the second half of v9 explains the connection between the character in v8 and the doctrine to which the man holds. The diaconate is not just for "decent" men but for "doctrinal" men, whose decency organically and obviously flows from theology. The good works of the church are to adorn the gospel; the men who oversee these good works should be models of how those two things go together in one's life.

These are not the only qualifications of a deacon, but they are all necessary. A man who lacks one of these is not qualified or called to the office. The Lord bless His church by gracing men in such a way as to fit them for this office!

What characteristics in these two verses do you find most rare in the churches today?

*Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for Your blessed gospel! Forgive us for how we often fail to hold to the good doctrine in Your Word, and we often fail to work it out with a pure conscience. So, we live silly and superficial lives. And we are inconsistent and impartial in our speech. And we let our fleshly desires control us. And we are always looking to gain for ourselves. O forgive us! Give us deacons whom You have much sanctified from such sin, and sanctify us from that sin as well, we ask through Jesus Christ, AMEN!*

ARP128 "How Blessed Are All Who Fear the Lord" or TPH128B "Blest the Man Who Feels Jehovah"

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First Timothy 3 verses 8 and 9. These are God's words. Likewise Deacons must be reverent. Not double tongued. Not given too much wine. Not greedy for money. Holding the mystery of the faith. With a pure conscience.

So, for the reading of God's inspired and generant word.

So in the opening portion of this chapter, we Red and turd thought about learned. Qualifications of elders. Which of course, are Spiritual traits that are not only. Necessary for their office. But, Then large part are things that We are looking to the Holy Spirit to produce from Christ and all Christians.

One of the main things about an elder, Is that he is an example to the flock. And those who speak the words to us. Hebrews, 13 tells us. We're to consider the outcome. Of their faith. And Follow in it and we follow their example, imitate them. There's a likewise here.

That indicates that. Now he's going to give Qualifications, for those who are in. The Office of Deacon, overseeing The service of the church and material things. But there's also, An implication that many of the characteristics of an elder. Are expected to be in the deacon. While there are some Characteristics that are unique.

To. The diaconate. And that are emphasized, not the elders. Don't have them but there are important. For the diagonal work. In particular. Now, some of these Not given to much wine and reverent. Not greedy for money. I think all of those are Actually. Repetitions the word for reverent is a little bit different.

Than a similar word in verse 2. And, In verse 5. Of the elder and of his children. But it's it's pretty close. And then double tongued is added here as well. Now. It is necessary that a deacon be. Reverent that you have that. Dignity. And Nobility. That he conduct himself in a proper and serious manner.

Especially in. Areas where money is going to be involved. Money is something that. People have. A general weakness. Four. Is going to mention it again, not greedy for money. At the end of the verse. But it's treated with so much. Value and honor. By. By the world by the flesh.

That. Is a necessary and important counter. That a D can be a man who Values eternal things. And values truth. Right. Values Christ and His people. That when When someone who is needy. Stands before him. That he views. Especially a believer who's needy. And not only in the dignity of being made in the image of God.

But in the dignity of being someone who's united to Christ, Someone who has a clear view of the Lord Jesus and of eternal things. Is going to live. A more serious life, not a more sad life. But their joys will be. More profound and unshakable and more stable and steady.

Deep. Then the silly. Fluctuating. Emotional highs and lows. Of the worldland. Whose? Whose pleasure who's happiness is not in. Stable and unshakable and unusable things. So, the deacon must be a reverent, man. He ought to be. A man with a firm grip on eternity and a clear view. Of the value of souls.

So that, as he helps in material things, he's always helping in material things. With a view to, The mercy. Of God to a man, which is much more. It includes feeding. And Food and drink and clothing, and those things. But especially that the man. Would know God and grow in Christ.

And, Now the, the particular route here is a little bit different, It includes all those things that We're in the root behind the word, and Verse 2 and verse 5. But it also has a shade of meaning. That describes worthiness. Of respect. So not only does Does he behave in a respectable manner?

But he himself is. Is respected. For this behavior. And rightly. So not Not just that, people respect him, but that He? Properly do or worthy of that respect. In other words. You needs to be a man in whom the Lord is consistently working. Inside and out. It's interestingly assume of course because he had the knot on novice or not a Neo fight.

Requirement when it came to the elder in verses 1 through 7. That they are tested with the deacon we're going to Hear about, especially, In the upcoming verses. Next week. Must be tested. And this is one of the reasons that you must be tested because he doesn't just have the impression.

Of respectability. There must be. Genuine integrity. Inside and out. And that is related to you or that idea. Aspect of his character, rather. Is related to the next one. That he not be double tuned. That's actually not the word for tongue here. It's the word for word. We would say, if we were just translating super literally or wouldn't leave, That he wouldn't be double worded.

In other words, he doesn't say one thing to one man. And another thing to another There is. Not only an impartiality of mind. But there's an evenness of response. To people there's a consistency. Which is important. You remember the The way that the diaconate had begun was Those whose Among the Hellenistic background.

Of the Jews in the Jerusalem Church. Thought that their widows. Were being treated differently. Than those who are of a more Jewish. Israelite, background cultural background among the Jews in the Jerusalem Church. And I think I don't have act 6 in front of me, I think it's not just that they thought that it sound I think from For max 6.

Whose implied that it wasn't just a complaint. But that there was some material to the complaint. But a deacon needs to be someone. Who. Whose words are, Measured. And thought out. And careful. Intentional. Wives. So that he will speak the same way. To everyone. He's not a double worded.

Person. Not saying. Whatever. He thinks the person front of him wants to hear, Like Absalom outside. The palace. But the deacon is not a double worded, man. Deacons have to deal with tricky situations. And they often in a particular situation have to deal with. Decide between competing interests. Of of causes.

The two causes might. Both be worthy in themselves. And yet a decision. Must be made. And so consistent consistency of conduct consistency. Of impartiality consistency of speech. These are. Very important aspects of a man's character. If he's going to be a deacon, He must not be given to much wine.

This is. Use a man. Who.

Always has his judgment. About him Note that it doesn't say. He has the drinks. No wine. What he is not given. To much wine. Not only does he always need to be. Able to exercise. Good judgment. For real-time decisions that are involved. In the exercise of his office. But he needs to never be.

In a situation where he is. Susceptible to Make promises or miscarry. The. Conductive as office. And then one special thing for a deacon. Many of the people who need financial assistance, need financial assistance because they've spent too much money on wine. Or they have an addiction. Of some sort and so, A deacon needs.

To have his own character or conduct in order. So that he doesn't. So that he doesn't feel like there's a conflict of interest. Where he himself has. Spent a great deal on. What he is addicted to. And feels like he can't say no to the guy in front of him.

Because who is he? To say no to someone else who's struggles with the same thing? This is important that a deacon be a sober, man.

And then, of course, not greedy. For money, it's the same word that we saw earlier. Shameful gain. A man who, The only thing that he's restrained by is being able to get away with things. And so he doesn't have shame, he doesn't have A strong conscience. Was very pragmatic, sort of, man.

Doing things not because they're right and wrong but because he can get Get away. With them. This is the type of man who's always looking for an angle or a way to advance himself. The gain is not just necessarily financial gain. Someone who is going to be. Collecting money and redistributing it to others.

There's a lot of potential. For mishandling of things to ingratiate others to himself to Increase his position with them. Or influence upon them or opportunity to gain by them. He's? He may be one, who knows. More than others do about, who has More money by how much they are giving.

There are. Many things in the job of a deacon. That make it extremely important that he not be. Sort of man who has always trying, To advance himself. Or looking for his opportunity. To take advantage of a situation. Or of a person. And finally, there is in Verse 9.

The foundation, for All of these things, he holds the mystery of the faith. With a pure conscience. One of the things that we've been seeing throughout first Timothy, and we're going to see Really throughout first and second Timothy, Is that? One of the problems that necessitated, This. New work that Timothy is doing of ordaining.

New elders and ordaining, new deacons. Is that not only was there theological error that had crept into the church in Ephesus, but it was theological error that had That had been permissive of ungodly living among believers. So, there was There was the the church office and church structure problem.

And there was the theological

There were tolerance of Of a variety of teaching problem. And then there was the morality problem in the last two. Of well actually all three because the wrong teachers lead to wrong theology. All three are interrelated. And the deacons job. Is related as part of the structure of the Church, of course, but good character is produced by the application of good doctrine in the life.

It's not like someone can have wrong ideas. About Jesus. And yet. Develop from the inside out. The sort of character that a deacon is supposed to have. No godliness is produced from Christ by the Spirit in a man. And, It not from an idea of Christ. But from the true and living resurrected redeemer, the God man.

Who is sitting on the throne of heaven. And so we're going to hear at the end of the chapter about the quote unquote mystery of godliness. God was manifested in the flesh. Justified in the spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles believed on in the world received up in glory.

That it is. Jesus is God, the son who became a man? And that he was vindicated. By his. Perfect righteous living and by his Perfectly true words and by the signs that he showed and then especially after he had. Dined. The turning death for us by his resurrection from the dead.

It's all of those things are as being justified in the spiritant. So on While it's necessary. That a deacon's character. Be the outworking of his knowledge of Christ. Which is not merely a practical personal knowing Not merely a theological knowing. But it's both of those things. That. That it be theologically sound.

And personally, experienced And powerfully applied. Than in his life by the Holy Spirit. And so, he holds the mystery of the faith. With a pure conscience but that's important not just for the deacons character but also for the purpose of the office. Remember the purpose of the Office of the deactivate?

One of the great purposes? Of the service of the church in earthly things and material things. Is to show forth the character and glory of Christ among his people. That the gospel be adorned and that Christ be praised and honored. And if a deacon does not have A clear sound theology.

Of the Triune God. And of the full divinity and humanity of Christ. And, Of the The doctrine of a man being. Saved only by what Jesus has done and not by what the man does at all. All the doctrines of grace and so forth. Then much will be lost in.

The honor that ought to come to the Lord Jesus from our diagonal service in the church. And so it's necessary that EB a man of sound doctrine. As he leads others. In in the church. He needs to be able to connect to Jesus is and what Jesus has done.

To who the believer is and what the believer ought to do. Yes. He's overseeing a ministry of material things, but don't we do. All of our ministry and material things for important theological reasons. So, the deacon is not a teacher and the in the church necessarily he's not preaching and teaching in the public assemblies, the way the elder is But he is a discipler of sorts.

And an overseer of sorts. When it comes to material. Ministry in the church earthly ministry. In the church. Which is one of the reasons we're Or going to hear again? In verse 12. That a deacon must be a man and I say again because we have been through act six not to Not too long ago and There's just no room.

In the scriptural description. Of who had deacon is what you ought to be. The nature of his leadership in the church. Over the ministry of service, etc. There's no room. For trying to flex in against the actual wording of this passage and the actual wording. Of. Back, six, that a woman could be a deacon.

But a deacon must hold to the mystery of the faith. With a pure conscience. Someone who doesn't believe the things in verse 16. Isn't a Christian, let alone not a deacon. But, In order for a man to be qualified to be a deacon The character that we see. In verse 8 and the work that he does.

Needs to be an outworking of that. Good theology. Has it needs to be. The fruit of his holding the mystery of the faith. With a pure conscience. I forgot to say something about that word mystery. It's not mystery. Like Sherlock, Holmes mystery, Mystery in the New Testament, means something.

That the Lord has already revealed. That man would not have known. Without special revelation. And so, it's something that was subject to being explained. By God by his word. Therefore, The trinity of God, the Divinity of Christ, the incarnation. Those things that can't. Can't be studied from. The creation, There are many things about.

God, that can be. But especially his plan of redemption. Is referred to, as Mystery in the New Testament. Not because it's Mysterious, or In question. But because God has revealed it to us. Then, let's pray.

Father, we thank you. For when you give us to come to you and to your word in, More than the usual weakness that we may. Exercise, that faith that we all always to be exercising. Knowing that. It is. You, you are he who? Does the work through it and you are glorified, not only As.

The. One who's word, we study and the one about whom we learn, But as the one who, Apply it to us and Make it effectual. In us for us. And so, we commit that portion of the worship to you. And ask for your spirits on going use of it in our hearts.

And in our lives. We pray. Lord that you would be. Glorified in this household. The congregation of which we are apart. And all of your churches, that there would be a Reformation. And recovery. Of the biblical office. Of deacon. And in each of our individual lives, That you would give us to know you.

O God and Jesus Christ him. You have sent for this as eternal life. And that everything that you do in us, By your spirit from your Son. Would therefore be into the praise. Of your glorious grace. For we ask in Jesus name, amen.