



**Character Qualifications (continued)**

- Hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience (9)
  - Know the faith
  - Live consistently with the faith
- Tested and proven blameless (10)
  - Tested
  - Proven blameless
- The wives of deacons (11)
  - Dignified
    - Not a slanderer
    - Sober-minded
    - Faithful

*Debate: Wives of deacons or female deacons?*

- Two possible meanings
  - Substantial, biblical arguments on both sides of the issue
  - This is not a battle between conservative/liberal (not necessarily)
- Principles to fight for
  - We prioritize what the Word says (Prov 30:6)
  - We guard the biblical dignity of women
  - We guard the service of women (1 Cor 12:7)

- What keeps us from women pastors/elders/etc?
  - We fight for humility and charity
- Does the office of deacon possess an authority that Paul has prohibited for women in the church? (1 Timothy 2:12)
  - Not only teaching is prohibited, also exercising authority (very general)
  - The diaconate does indeed seem to possess authority

### Takeaways from this Debate

### Next Steps

1. What does it mean to “hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience” (3:9)? How might one expect too much of this qualification? How might one expect too little?
2. How does the congregation participate in the testing of candidates? Have you been engaged in this process?
3. What principles seem particularly important to guard in the debate regarding female deacons?