

I. The Call to Church Office (3:1; Acts 20:28)

- A. Internal Calling (3:1; James 3:1)
- B. External Calling: Informal and Formal (1:18; 4:14; 5:22; 1 Tim 1:6; Acts 6:6)

II. The Qualifications for Church Office: Gifts & Graces, Competency & Character

- A. The Required Gifts Differ (3:2, 4-5, 9; Titus 1:9)
- B. The Required Graces Are Essentially the Same
 - 1. The Graces Are the Fruit of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:3; Gal 5:22-23; John 15:5)
 - 2. The Graces Require Striving and Work (Phil 2:12-13; 1 Cor 15:10; Col 1:28-29)

III. What Does It Mean to Be “Above Reproach”?

- A. Definition: Unimpeachable, Blameless, Without Charge (3:2, 7, 10; Titus 1:6-7)
- B. Not Perfection or Sinlessness (1:15; Rom 3:9, 23)
- C. Not Merely Nice People but New Men (2 Cor 5:17; Rom 6:4; Titus 2:11-14;)
- D. Not Merely Regenerate but Tested and Mature (Col 3:9-10)
- E. Able to Say: "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ." (1 Cor 11:1; 1Tim 4:12; 1 Pet 5:3)

“For the purpose of restraining such rashness in desiring the office of a bishop, Paul states, first, that this is not an indolent rank, but a *work*; and next, that it is not any kind of work, but *excellent*, and therefore toilsome and full of difficulty, as it actually is. It is no light matter to be a representative of the Son of God, in discharging an office of such magnitude, the object of which is to erect and extend the kingdom of God, to procure the salvation of souls which the Lord himself hath purchased with his own blood, and to govern the Church, which is God’s inheritance.” —Calvin

“The office and work being spiritual, it is necessary that elders should be spiritual men. It is not necessary that they be men of great gifts or worldly position, of wealth or high education; but it is indispensably necessary that they be men of God, at peace with him, new creatures in Christ Jesus.” —David Dickson, *The Elder and His Work*

“[Above reproach] has in mind mainly aspects of behavior (inward and outward) that have observable results, and as a measurement it signifies that no grounds for reproach or blame have been found. Its placement within the opening phrase and its wide scope suggest that this is the essential requirement for candidacy.” —Philip Towner

Reflection Questions (for personal reflection and family conversation):

1. Do you know the process for calling elders and deacons in our church? What should you do if you desire to serve?
2. Are the qualifications for elders and deacons optional? Do they differ from what is required of all Christians?
3. What does it mean to be above reproach? How does it differ from sinlessness? Who do you know who embodies this qualification?