

## Elder Qualifications

*Titus 1:5-9* - This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you— <sup>6</sup> if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. <sup>7</sup> For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, <sup>8</sup> but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. <sup>9</sup> He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

*1 Timothy 3:1-7* - The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. <sup>2</sup> Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, <sup>3</sup> not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. <sup>4</sup> He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, <sup>5</sup> for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? <sup>6</sup> He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. <sup>7</sup> Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

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*Note: Every Christian should desire that each of these qualifications be true of them as they pursue Christlikeness. But for the sake of the local church's safety and encouragement, its leaders must be exemplary, having an observable track record in these aspects of spiritual maturity.*

**Above Reproach:** A personal life that is beyond legitimate accusation and public scandal. Could you be followed in every area of your life, private and public, and be found to have integrity? (*Tit. 1:7, 1 Tim. 3:2, Phil. 2:14-16*)

**The husband of one wife:** A husband who is consistently, both inwardly and outwardly, devoted, and faithful to his wife. If he has been divorced as a believer, it has been for Biblical grounds (*adultery or abandonment*) and after a substantial period of time. Are you internally and externally sexually pure? (*Matt. 19:9, 1 Tim. 3:2, Heb. 13:4, Prov. 6:32-33, 1 Cor. 6:19-20, 7:15*)

**Children are faithful & not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination:** An elder must demonstrate the character and skill of intentional spiritual discipleship in the home as a husband and a father. (*1 Tim. 3:4-5*)

**Steward:** One who manages someone else's properties for the well-being of those his master cares for. One who manages spiritual truths as well as material resources in a way that shows he is wholly submitted and happily accountable to Him. (*Heb. 13:17*)

**Not arrogant:** Not self-satisfied, fixed in self-pleasure, or self-interested. (*Phil. 2:3-11*)

**Not quick-tempered:** not prone to anger or harboring resentment or bitterness. (*James 1:19-20, Prov. 15:1-2*)

**Not a drunkard:** Applies to drinking any alcoholic beverage in a way that alters and dulls the mind or subdues the inhibitions. By implication, it also indicates any other substance that could cloud the mind. (*Eph. 5:18, Prov. 23:20-21, 30-35*)

**Not violent:** He must not be a contentious, quarrelsome person, not a person who is ready for a battle or prone to fighting. (*Prov. 3:29-32, James 1:19-20*)

**Not greedy for gain:** Elders must not enter their roles solely for financial provision or in order to gain influence and wealth. (*Tit. 1:11, 1 Pt. 5:2, 1 Tim. 3:8*)

**Hospitable:** A sincere lover of strangers and neighbors. (*1 Tim. 3:2, 1 Pt. 4:9*)

**A lover of good:** One who loves what God calls good. (*1 John 2:15, Phil. 4:8-9*)

**Self-controlled:** One whose everyday life is submitted to the leadership of God, whose desires and impulses are controlled by the Holy Spirit. (*Gal. 5:22-23, Acts 6:3*)

**Upright:** He is righteous in his dealings with others, rendering to each his due, whether expressed in words or shown in the manner of dealing with them. (*Micah 6:8*)

**Holy:** This word is different than the typical word for holiness and refers to the *standard* of holiness and piety by which others are to measure themselves. (*Heb. 7:26*)

**Disciplined:** One who keeps their behavior in check and in line with Scripture by the power of the Spirit in order to live his life in such a way that he might receive the prize. (*1 Cor. 9:24-27*)

**Hold firm to the trustworthy Word that was taught:** Sound Biblical doctrine should not only be taught accurately but adhered to with deep conviction. (*1 Tim. 5:17, 2 Tim. 2:15*)

**Able to give instruction in sound doctrine and rebuke those who contradict it:** The faithful teaching and defending of Scripture that encourages godliness and confronts sin and error. (*Tit. 1:10-16, Acts 20:29-30, 1 Tim. 3:2*)

**Able to Teach:** The only qualification related to the elder's giftedness and spiritual ability, the only one that distinguishes elders from deacons. The preaching and teaching of God's word is the pastor/elder's primary duty. (*1 Tim. 4:6,11,13, 5:17, 2 Tim. 2:15,24, Titus 2:1*)

**Gentle:** Considerate, genial, gracious, quick to pardon failure, and one who does not hold a grudge. (*Gal. 5:22-23*)

**Must not be a recent convert:** Putting a new convert in a leadership role would tempt him to be proud. Elders, therefore, are to be drawn from spiritually mature men who have a track record of humble service, typically from among the congregation. (*1 Tim 5:22*)

**Well thought of by outsiders:** A leader in the church must have an unimpeachable reputation with unbelievers, even if the people disagree with his moral and theological stands. How can he make a spiritual impact on those who don't respect him? (*Phil 2:15, Matt 5:16*)