



Morningside Church

Sermon Discussion Guide

Title: The Biblical Qualifications of a Pastor

Date: June 14, 2026

Scripture Text: 1 Timothy 3:1-7

Notes:

As Christians, we are all part of Christ's church and should be connected to the local body. God uniquely equips us to contribute to the building up of one another. But there are those who God equips to shepherd His flock, the church. They are called pastors (aka overseers, bishops, or elders). They are given great responsibility and will be held accountable how well they took care of Christ's sheep (us). As a result, God gave specific qualifications for the pastors to meet. They are high expectations for a high calling. These qualifications are listed in [1 Timothy 3:1-7](#).

I. **Biological (1 Tim. 3:1)**

The first qualification of a pastor is that he is to be a man. This is called out specifically in [v. 2](#) with the statement "*husband* of one wife". This does not mean that women are any less important, or God loves them any less. This is a hierarchy God established back in Genesis 3. It is applied both in the home ([Eph. 5:22-33](#)), and in the church.

- Why is there push back at times about the biblical qualification that a pastor is to be a man?
- What are other ways cultural norms are contrary to God's word?
- How have these crept into the church?
- How can we protect ourselves from the cultural distractions that contradict biblical truths?

II. **Private Life (1 Tim. 3:2-3)**

The private life reflects how he would minister to those in the church. One who desires to serve as pastor must:

- Be above reproach; not perfect, but not a stumbling block to others
- Be a husband of one wife; a "one-woman man"
- Be temperate; stable, able to stay focused in all situations
- Be prudent; serious attitude towards the work of the ministry
- Be respectable; his life is orderly, not in confusion
- Be hospitable; have a love for others
- Be able to teach; a special giftedness and responsibility (James 3:1)
- Not be addicted to wine; not a drunkard, under the influence of the Spirit, not alcohol
- Not be pugnacious; not a bully or quick to lose temper. Responds in a cool & collected manner.
- Be peaceable; promotes unity in the church. He is a peacemaker.
- Not be a lover of money; not distracted or swayed by money or possessions.



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- Go down the list and give an example of how each can be used by a pastor?
- Why is it important for a congregation to take these characteristics seriously when considering a pastor?

III. Home Life (1 Tim. 3:4-5)

“Any man unable to govern his children graciously and gravely by maintaining good discipline, is no man for government in the church.” (Guthrie)

- How can children’s behavior be reflective of a man’s ability to be an effective pastor?
- Describe what it looks like for a man to manage his own household well.

IV. Spiritual Life (1 Tim. 3:6)

A man who wants to be a pastor must be spiritually mature, not a new convert. As noble as the motive may be for a new convert to serve as a pastor, the spiritually immature can be more susceptible to pride and even temptations of their old life before Christ.

- Why is it important for a pastor to be spiritually mature?
- How can his maturity affect his personal walk with God?
- How can his maturity affect his impact on his congregation?

V. Public Life (1 Tim. 3:7)

“Paul’s concern with the opinions of unbelievers was not for the sake of popularity. His overriding passion was the evangelistic mandate to tell others of the saving grace of God. We damage this message when our lives do not exhibit the qualities of godliness. Paul did not want unnecessary hindrances and distractions placed in the way of others coming to Christ. A suspect reputation among church leaders gives the gospel message a bad reputation among unbelievers. If the church is to be offensive to society, then it must be for the sake of the cross—not our hypocrisy, misuse of liberty, or bad behavior. Paul’s emphasis was not on trying to meld with society but on living pure, good lives against which no one can find fault.” (Larson)

- Describe what a Christian’s good reputation outside the church would look like.
- How can having a good reputation/relationship with those outside the church help spread the gospel?

When it comes to accepting and applying the biblical qualifications of a pastor, it boils down to accepting God’s word as authoritative and universal (not influenced or changed by the culture). This should apply to ALL of His word.