

## **Growing Strong in Faith | Part 5**

Lesson 2

1 Timothy 3:1-16

June 18, 2023

### **Character in Christian Leaders**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Father's Day is an appropriate occasion to review Paul's guidance for aspiring church overseers; his God-inspired counsel may also motivate earthly fathers to be devoted and responsible parents.

Paul uses the term "overseer" in letters to both the Philippians (1:1) and Timothy (1 Timothy 3:2). The word is currently defined as "supervisor" or "superintendent," which is not descriptive of a mentor to Gospel enthusiasts! In various present-day churches, supervisor types manage the practical operation of a church and its property, while the position of spiritual leader belongs to the pastor. The latter title, superintendent, is the one in which pastors should always be regarded.

Because of such regard, Paul shares with Timothy the qualifications that are essential for church leadership. A man is not pulled out of a crowd randomly and installed as pastor. Paul would never allow it. To honor God at the highest level possible, Paul strives to be certain that his leaders are "above reproach." (1 Timothy 3:1)

***Memory Verse: "Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great: He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory."—1 Timothy 3:16***

Pray, and read 1 Timothy 3:1-16. What questions or observations do you have about this passage?

## **OBSERVATION: What do the passages say?**

1. Name ten qualifications for overseers (pastors), which Paul believes necessary. (1 Timothy 3:2-3)
2. What considerations does Paul mention in 1 Timothy 3:4-5a that apply both to pastors and human fathers?
3. Explain the difference between qualifications required of overseers (pastors) and those required of deacons. (1 Timothy 3:2-10, 12-13)
4. How are women, deacons or not, advised to conduct themselves? (Romans 16:1; 1 Timothy 3:11-15)
5. What is the “mystery from which true godliness springs” in 1 Timothy 3:16?



3. In speaking of an overseer, why does Paul say in 1 Timothy 3:6, “He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil”? (Psalm 119:9-12; Proverbs 11:2, 16:18, 26:12; Isaiah 14:14)
  
4. Deacons “must first be tested” to determine if “there is nothing against them”. (1 Timothy 3:8-10) Because the Greek verb for “test” (*dokimazo*) is used in the present tense and suggests that the test is ongoing, how might the deacons be tested in their role as servers? (Proverbs 14:29, 15:4, 20:1, 21:28, 22:9; Titus 2:12)

**APPLICATION: How do the passages apply to your life?**

1. Paul’s lengthy list of qualifications required in an overseer (1 Timothy 3:3-5) are those which, ideally, we should expect in our elected officials and other employees who govern the people. How ready are we to express this to our representatives?

