


Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

Qualifications for Overseers

¹ Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task.

Acts 20:28

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Philippians 1:1

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:


Titus 1:7-9

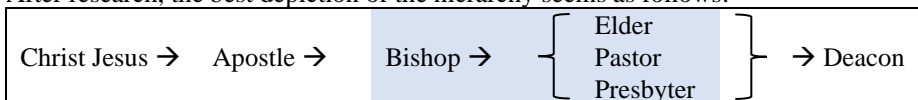
⁷ Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless -- not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁸ Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. ⁹ He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.


Q1. How should we explain the phrase “If anyone sets his heart on”? (Seeks?)

Q2. How would you define the role of “overseer” or “elder”?


Q3. What is meant by “noble task” in the context of this verse 1?

 Per commentaries, the position of Overseer encompasses the roles of Bishop, Elder, Pastor, and Presbyter. Generally speaking, the roles of Elder, Pastor, and Presbyter are equivalent; however, the constitutions of some church-bodies may assign hierarchical responsibilities, whereby one role oversees the other (e.g., Elder Board oversees the Pastor/Minister). After research, the best depiction of the hierarchy seems as follows:




 Presbyter defined: (1) (in the early Christian church) an office bearer who exercised teaching, priestly, and administrative functions. (2) (in hierarchical churches) a priest. [© 2003-2023 Farlex, Inc. <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/presbyter>]

Day 2

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.


² Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.


Q4. What does “above reproach” mean to you?

 Definition of Reproach: as in ‘above/beyond reproach’: So good as to preclude any possibility of criticism. [© 2003-2023 Farlex, Inc. <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/reproach>]

Q5. What does it mean to be the “husband of one wife”?

Q6. Various Biblical versions translate Paul’s Greek wording to ‘temperate’ (NIV), or ‘sober-minded’ (ESV), or ‘cool and collected’ (MSG). What does “temperate” mean to you?

 Definition of Temperate (or temperance): moderation in thought, word, or action. Those who practice temperance are self-controlled and show restraint in their passions and behaviors. . . The biblical standard for Christians is that we allow nothing but the Holy Spirit to control us (Galatians 5:25). Whether it be alcohol, food, lust, or greed, any fleshly desire that is not restrained becomes our functional god. Temperance or self-control is one of the fruits the Holy Spirit brings when He indwells believers (Galatians 5:22). It is impossible to live godly lives and please the Lord without self-control because our flesh wants only to please itself (Romans 7:21–25). Romans 13:14 warns us to “make no provision for the flesh and its lusts.” However, some people mistakenly believe that temperance means we can dabble in sin as long as we are not overcome by it. That’s not what this verse says. It implies that along with temperance we exercise caution and wisdom. When we desire to please the Lord, we will stay far away from anything that has the appearance of evil. Living temperate lives does not mean we can commit sin as long as it is only a little bit. Paul describes biblical temperance in 1 Corinthians 9:27: “I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” Even Paul knew the power of the flesh to topple his ministry, so he refused his flesh what it craved in order to develop strength of character. Today’s news headlines often remind us of the folly of attempting Christian ministry without temperance. When a Christian leader falls, it is almost always due to a lack of self-control and personal discipline. [©2002-2023 Got Questions Ministries. All rights reserved. <https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-temperance.html>]

 Definition of sober-minded: literally means “free from intoxicating influences.” We speak of a person who is not drunk with alcohol or high on drugs as being “sober.” His or her mind is not under the control of a dangerous outside force. More broadly, being sober-minded means that we do not allow ourselves to be captivated by any type of influence that would lead us away from sound judgment. The sober-minded individual is not “intoxicated,” figuratively speaking, and is therefore calm under pressure, self-controlled in all areas, and rational. [©2002-2023 Got Questions Ministries. All rights reserved. <https://www.gotquestions.org/sober-minded.html>]

Q7. Can you provide an example of “self-control”?

Q8. How do you describe someone who is “respectable”?

Q9. According to the Bible, is “hospitality” a good quality?

Romans 12:13

Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Hebrews 13:2

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.

1 Peter 4:9

Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Q10. Why might it be important to an overseer that he can teach?

Q11. Is there Biblical standing for women serving as overseers/elders?

Elders? Yes? Why?
No?

Colossians 2:8

See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

Titus 1:7-9

⁷ Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless -- not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁸ Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. ⁹ He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

Romans 16:1-2 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS)]

¹⁻² I want this letter to introduce to you Phoebe, our sister, a deaconess of the Church at Cenchrea. Please give her a Christian welcome, and any assistance with her work that she may need. She has herself been of great assistance to many, not excluding myself.


Q12. Does this gender-restriction (overseer/elder must be male) apply to the early church? And does this restriction apply to today’s church, too? If you wrote “early church, only”, then how should we determine which Bible verses apply to only the early church versus those extended to today’s church?

Early church? Yes / No

Today’s church? Yes / No

Early church, only: how?

Day 3

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

⁴ He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. ⁵ (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)

1 Timothy 3:4 [The Message (MSG)]

He must handle his own affairs well, attentive to his own children and having their respect.

Q13. How should we interpret, “He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect”? Does this apply to Believers, today?

Our interpretation?

Today? Yes Why?
 No

Q14. Is family management a cooperative adventure with a united husband and wife (in partnership)?

Q15. How might a father “manage” his children?

Genesis 18:19 [The Message (MSG)]

[God said of Abraham,] “Yes, I’ve settled on him as the one to train his children and future family to observe God’s way of life, live kindly and generously and fairly, so that God can complete in Abraham what he promised him.”

Proverbs 22:6 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Ephesians 6:4

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Q16. How does today’s world influence a father’s ability “that his children obey him with proper respect”?

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Q17. Satan actively seeks to destroy and/or to turn a person away from God, from Jesus. Are overseers’ children (e.g., ‘preacher’s kids’ or PKs) an especially critical target for Satan? How should we protect our children and the children of our church overseers?

A target? Yes Why?
No

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Protection?
.....
.....

Mark 11:17^a

And as he [Jesus] taught them, he said, "Is it not written: " 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? [Isaiah 56:7] . . .”

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

¹⁶ Be joyful always; ¹⁷ pray continually; ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:26-27

²⁶ In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. ²⁷ And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints [Believers] in accordance with God's will.


Job 1:8-10 [Pray for a “hedge of protection”]

⁸ God said to Satan, “Have you noticed my friend Job? There’s no one quite like him — honest and true to his word, totally devoted to God and hating evil.” [The Message (MSG)]

⁹ Satan retorted, “So do you think Job does all that out of the sheer goodness of his heart? Why, no one ever had it so good! [The Message (MSG)] ¹⁰ “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household

and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. . .”

Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

^{6a} He must not be a recent convert, or ^{6b} he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.


Q18. How might a “recent convert . . . become conceited (or deluded)”?

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Q19. Does Satan consider himself equal to (or greater) than God? How might a novice, who begins a ministry by doing God’s will, “fall under the same judgment as the devil”? (Motive?)
Satan?

Novice?

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.....

 Referencing verse 6b: “It marks the pride or vanity engendered by the [person] finding himself in a position of authority for which no previous training and experience had fitted him. Such a ‘novice’ would be in imminent danger of falling into the judgment passed by God upon the devil, whose fall was owing to the same blinding effect of pride.” [© about 1880, Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers, edited by Charles J Ellicott. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/1_timothy/3-6.htm]

Luke 10:18-20 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS)]

“Yes,” returned Jesus, “I was watching and saw Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning! It is true that I have given you [His disciples] the power to tread on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the enemy’s power — there is nothing at all that can do you any harm. Yet it is not your power over evil spirits which should give such joy, but the fact that your names are written in Heaven.”

Revelation 20:7-10 [The End Times]

⁷ When the thousand years are over, Satan [or devil] will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth -- Gog and Magog [unknown reference; e.g., see Ezekiel 38:2-3; 38:16; 38:18; 39:1; 39:2; 39:11] -- to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. ⁹ They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

¹⁰ And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

⁷ He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

1 Timothy 3:7 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS)]

He should, in addition to the above qualifications, have a good reputation with the outside world, in case his good name is attacked and he is caught by the devil that way.

Q20. "He must be well thought of by outsiders." Why should the church care how unbelievers view an overseer?

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Q21. Is the role of the overseer to represent the will of the members of the congregation (as in Congress) or to represent the will of God to the congregation?
Will of the congregation?

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Will of God?

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Q22. How does the overseer effectively know God's will?

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Q23. In verse 2 Paul writes that an overseer should be "able to teach". What other communication methods might the overseer use?

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Q24. Please read the following verses (↓) from 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 to answer this question: what role would the overseer have in this judgment/punishment?

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1 Corinthians 5:9-13 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS)]

In my previous letter I said, "Don't mix with the immoral." I didn't mean, of course, that you were to have no contact at all with the immoral of this world, nor with any cheats or thieves or idolaters — for that would mean going out of the world altogether! But in this letter, I tell you not to associate with any professing Christian who is known to be an impure man or a swindler, an idolater, a man with a foul tongue, a drunkard, or a thief. My instruction is: "Don't even eat with such a man." Those outside the church it is not my business to judge. But surely it is your business to judge those who are inside the church — God alone can judge those who are outside. It is your plain duty to 'put away from yourselves that wicked person'.

Day 5




 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.


Qualifications for Deacons

⁸ Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.

Q25. What characteristics define person who is “worthy of respect,” or a dignified person?

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-  Definition of dignified: “Having or expressing dignity. . . characterized by dignity of manner or appearance; stately.” [http://www.thefreedictionary.com/dignified]
-  Definition of dignity: “(1) The quality or state of being worthy of esteem or respect. (2) Inherent nobility and worth: the dignity of honest labor. (3a) Poise and self-respect. (3b) Stateliness and formality in manner and appearance. (4) The respect and honor associated with an important position. . . [https://www.thefreedictionary.com/dignity]
-  Dignified: Thayer’s Greek Lexicon identifies the following synonyms: “august, venerable, reverend; to be venerated for character, honorable” [http://biblehub.com/greek/4586.htm]

 While our standard Biblical text is the New International Version (NIV-1984); perhaps, another version will help us to better understand these verses:

1 Timothy 3:8-10 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

⁸ Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued [or devious in speech], not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless [i.e., probation].


⁹ They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.

Q26. What is the “deep truths of the faith”?

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Q27. A deacon “must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.” Why is a “clear conscience” important?

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 “clear conscience”: “with a conscience sprinkled by the blood of Christ; with a conscience void of offence both towards God and man; with a suitable life and conversation; a conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ, and by which it is

adorned: and this part of their character is necessary, that such may be able to instruct and establish those who are weak in the faith, and oppose and refute the erroneous, and also recommend the Gospel by their own example; otherwise should their principles or practices be bad, their influence on others might be very pernicious and fatal.” [©about 1760, *Exposition of the Entire Bible* by John Gill. Text Courtesy of Internet Sacred Texts Archive. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/1_timothy/3-9.htm]


¹⁰ They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.


Q28. The Phillips translation states this as a “period of probation”. If you were to pass judgment on his qualifications and elect a person to a Deacon position, when would the probationary period end? And how would you know if the person was “blameless”?
End?

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Blameless?
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¹¹ In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

Q29. Why does Paul want Believers to judge the character of the prospective deacon’s wife?

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 Biblical translations of verse-11 vacillate between “wives” (specifically) and “women” (generally). One of the clearest explanations was written several centuries ago and is quoted below (↓). It is slightly edited to improve readability.

 “The apostle [Paul], however, may be understood here, as not only speaking of the wives of the deacons and bishops, but of the believing women in general, and particularly of those who were invested with any office in the church. So, the Vulgate [a Latin translation of the Bible completed in the late 4th-century] interprets [Paul’s wording] ‘mulieres similiter pudicas’ [to] the women in like manner must be modest. [John] Chrysostom [(c. AD 347–407) was an Eastern church father and archbishop of Constantinople] . . . and the Greek commentators, with most of the Latin fathers, were of [the] opinion that the apostle, in this passage, is speaking both of those women who, in the first [century], were employed in ministering to the afflicted, and of those who were appointed to teach [girls and young women] the principles of religion. As the manners of the Greeks did not permit men to have much [interaction] with women of character, unless they were [related], and as [Asian peoples] were under still greater [cultural] restraints, it was proper that an order of female teachers should be instituted in the church for instructing [girls and young women]. [©about 1800, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments* by Joseph Benson (1748-1821). Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/1_timothy/3-11.htm]


¹² A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. ¹³ Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Q30. Is there Biblical standing for women serving as deacons (deaconesses)?

Deacons? Yes? Why?
No?

Q31. Generally speaking, in the American church today, do you think that we elect/select the most qualified people from a Godly perspective into the role of overseer/elder or deacon? Or is it a popularity contest?

Day 6

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

The Mystery of Godliness

¹⁴ Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, ¹⁵ if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

Q32. Why did Paul provide such insight and instruction to Timothy about the governance of a church?

Q33. When the Holy Spirit through Paul declares the church as a "pillar and foundation of the truth," what does this mean to you?

¹⁶ Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, 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.

Q34. Who is Paul discussing?

Q35. Would you go line-by-line and describe how each line is fulfilled by Jesus' life?

Body?

Vindicated?

Seen?

Preached?

Believed?

Ascended?

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