

# Qualifications for Elders 1

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*Detailed Outline*

*Part 5 of 9*

## II. Defining Pastoral Oversight by a Plurality of Qualified Elders (cont.)

### B. New Testament Qualifications for Elders

You cannot define Biblical Eldership without looking at the qualifications. The qualifications tell us a lot about who elders are and what Biblical Eldership is.

We have an entire message series on this topic and you can read about them in *Biblical Eldership*, so I will simply summarize these for now.

#### 1. Spirit-given Desire

*“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God.” (Acts 20:28)*

- a) We only want elders who are Holy Spirit-led. Their desire, strength and motivation to be an elder come from the Spirit.
- b) How do you become an elder? It is similar to how a person becomes a missionary. It starts with a desire generated by the Holy Spirit. Then this desire will manifest itself in their actions.

*“The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.” (1 Tim. 3:1)*

#### 2. Objective Biblical Qualifications

- a) The one subject the Bible is most clear about regarding eldership is the qualifications for elders. This is a matter of grave importance to God.
- b) A person may have the desire, but not qualify biblically. The qualifications are to protect the local church from unfit men.

#### 3. Moral and Spiritual Qualities

##### a) A Good Reputation

*“Above reproach” (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6)*

*“Respectable” (1 Tim. 3:2)*

*“Well thought of by outsiders” (1 Tim. 3:7)*

- 1) It matters what the world thinks about your church’s leaders. Some churches write to an elder candidate’s employer. An elder must be a man of character.

- 2) Illustration: The Great Wall of China. It is a great engineering feat. However, it was breached 3 times. How? The enemy bribed the guards. You see, the government invested lots of money into the rock and stone to build the wall, but they didn't invest in their people.
  - 3) God wants us to invest in our leaders, and he wants to invest in our leaders so that they are men of character. In the Lord's work, character is everything.
- b) Family Life
- 1) Marital and Sexual Life
 

*"The husband of one wife" (1 Tim. 3:2, Titus 1:6)*

    - (a) Marriage and your sexual life come first in being above reproach. The apostle Paul is talking about a faithful, monogamous marriage.
    - (b) We have a plague in the church of Jesus Christ of pastors being involved in inappropriate sexual relationships. We see pastor after pastor being dismissed for moral problems. We live in a highly sexualized society. We can press a button in the privacy of our home and bring in the most pornographic pictures. And they are highly addictive. Will we find anyone that will qualify for eldership in the years ahead if lives are so ruined by this sexualized society?
    - (c) Every church needs sexual policies for its elders. Elders need to pray regularly for their sexual purity and hold one another accountable. Address this issue with your leaders. Don't sit by idly.
  - 2) Children
 

*"Must manage his own household well" (1 Tim. 3:4)*  
*"His children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination" (Titus 1:6)*

    - (a) All your children are sinners. These words "debauchery" and "insubordination" are not talking about normal, youthful rascal behavior. What Paul means is an elder must be a responsible and involved father. He must deal with issues within his family.
    - (b) I want you to note that family leadership is the great testing ground within the church. Leading a church is a lot more like leading your children than leading a large company or army. The church is a family.
  - c) Personal Self-Control
 

*"Sober-Minded" (1 Tim. 3:2)*  
*"Self-Controlled" (Titus 1:8)*  
*"Not greedy for gain" (Titus 1:7)*  
*"Not quick tempered" (Titus 1:7)*  
*"Not quarrelsome" (1 Tim. 3:3)*

*“Not a drunkard” (1 Tim. 3:3)*

*“Disciplined” (Titus 1:8)*

- 1) Notice how many of these revolve around a person having self-control and discipline. “Sober-minded” is an overarching quality. It speaks of a person who is mentally stable, who is balanced and doesn’t go to extremes.
- 2) One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is self-control. An elder must be self-controlled so that he is Spirit-controlled in the various areas of life. The uncontrolled and undisciplined person is victim of every emotion and temptation that comes by. You must have a sense of self-mastery so you can do what you say you are going to do and make sound decisions.
- 3) We live in an addicted society. We need elders who are examples to the flock of being self-disciplined in every area of life.