

QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS (1Timothy 3:8-12)

I. Grave.

- A. This word is defined as “venerable, honest, worthy of respect or honor, noble, dignified, serious, pertaining to appropriate, befitting behavior.”
- B. We would best think of it in terms of carrying oneself in a way that causes others to respect you.
 - 1. Carrying oneself this way is not an attitude of self-importance.
 - 2. It is caused, according to the etymology of the word, by being a citizen of the kingdom of God.
- C. The Christian who is grave, is one who understands that he/she is a Christian and should act as a Christian.
- D. Other versions translate it as, “worthy of respect, serious, men of dignity, respected by others, good character, men of high principle.”
- E. This is also a quality a man’s wife must possess for him to be qualified to be a deacon.
- F. These terms don’t mean that a deacon can’t have fun or has to be serious at all times.
 - 1. The Christian life is a joyful life.
 - 2. The Proverbs writer said a merry heart is good medicine (17:22).
- G. A man must show that he knows when things are to be considered serious and important.
 - 1. When he goes to a widow’s home to aid her in some way, he needs to know how to behave around her.
 - 2. Deacons deal with all classes, ages and types of people, thus they need to know how to conduct themselves.
 - 3. The people with whom he deals have to know that he is trustworthy and that their problems will not be treated lightly.
- H. Simply put, a man of this quality will not be flippant with his faith or the responsibilities given him by the elders.

II. Not doubletongued.

- A. Literally this word means “not telling a different story.”
- B. This is the only time this word is used in the New Testament.
- C. We would probably use the phrase “not two-faced.”
 - 1. He doesn’t say one thing to one person and another thing to someone else.
 - 2. He doesn’t talk out of both sides of his mouth.
- D. Other translations render it “sincere, not be two-faced, have integrity, not saying things they don’t mean, not be liars, not indulging in double-talk, not hypocritical.”
- E. One who is being considered to be a deacon is to be a man of his word.
- F. Br. Bales, in his work “The Deacon And His Work,” wrote, “The double-tongued are insincere. They do not represent things according to their convictions; or according to the information they have.”
 - 1. Could you imagine a deacon saying things in one home he visits,

- and something completely different in another?
- 2. What about if he meant with some needy person promising to do all he could, then talking that person down to the elders?
- G. It has to be understood before one accepts the role of deacon that not everyone can be pleased and that truth reigns.
- H. When men speak with a double tongue in a congregation, that congregation is bound for trouble.
- I. Prospective deacons need to be known as men of their word.

III. **Not given to much wine.**

- A. This wording of this quality has caused much trouble.
 - 1. There are those that say deacons can drink a little based on this verse.
 - 2. For instance, one version says, “not given to excessive drinking,” another says, “not be heavy drinkers.”
- B. Elders are to be “not given to wine.”
- C. I don’t believe it means deacons can drink a little and elders can’t drink at all.
- D. It is even difficult to tell in the original language because the word for “wine” is used for non-alcoholic wine as well as alcoholic.
 - 1. It is used to refer to blood of the grape (Deuteronomy 32:14).
 - 2. It also is used to refer to intoxicating wine.
- E. The problem we face is that the wine in that time was nowhere near as strong as the wine of our times, with ours containing three to ten times more alcohol than the intoxicating wine then.
 - 1. Table wine was used at all meals and only intoxicating in great amounts, a great deal more than would be used in the course of a regular meal.
 - 2. Whereas, the alcoholic content of wine today intoxicates a person much more quickly, even one drink dulling the senses to a certain degree.
- F. Wine is used in a negative sense in scripture:
 - 1. Causing drunkenness leading to violence (Proverbs 4:17).
 - 2. Causing woes of all kinds (Proverbs 23:29-30).
 - 3. Causing profaning of religion (Habakkuk 2:5).
 - 4. Compared to poison (Proverbs 23:31-32).
- G. Wine is used in positive sense as well:
 - 1. It was offered at God’s altar (Numbers 18:12).
 - 2. It had sustaining power (Genesis 27:28).
 - 3. Used as an emblem of spiritual blessings and of the blood of Jesus shed on the cross (Matthew 26:26-28).
- H. Now compare these two wines:
 - 1. One caused intoxication leading to violence and woe; the other brought comfort and peace.
 - 2. One caused irreligion and self-destruction; the other offered at God’s altar.
 - 3. One is the symbol of divine wrath; the other of divine blessings and

eternal salvation.

I. Which wine do you believe a deacon can have?

IV. Not greedy of filthy lucre.

- A. Literally means “greedy of base gain.”
 - 1. Carries the idea of “fondness for dishonest gain.”
 - 2. The love of money leads to all types of evil.
- B. The man considered for being a deacon has shown himself to not want to use any position as a means of getting money.
 - 1. One commentator wrote: “a man who joins himself to a good cause for the sake of material advantage.”
 - 2. He wrote this man wants gain and doesn’t care how he gets it.
- C. There are many ways a deacon could use his position to do such.
 - 1. He could go to the elders with a plea to help a person but use the money for himself.
 - 2. He could make deals with those in need that they get some and he gets some.
- D. He has shown himself to be a person who uses money well and does not let money use him.
- E. He has shown himself to be a person who doesn’t chase after “get rich quick schemes.”