

## 1 Timothy Pastor Lou DeVizia

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Introduction. Having spoken concerning the women of the church in the latter portion of Chapter 2, now this letter turns back to the men. The women have been instructed to "be in silence" (2:12) with regards to teaching of, and authority over, men. Now, Paul addresses those very roles - teaching and leadership - in an address made concerning men.

The two *offices* listed here are the only two presented as ordained specifically for *church oversight*. Those offices are called here "bishop" and "deacon". The Greek word *episkopes*, translated "bishop" in the NKJV, means "office of overseer" or "overseership". While it is most common in the modern Western evangelical church to use the title "pastor" (which was also used by Paul in a letter to the Ephesian church in Ephesians 4:11), it is the same office that is being described. "Deacons," which comes from the Greek *diakonous*, can also be used simply in a more generic sense to describe any "servant," although here clearly a church leader is described.

What should be noted is that these two lists of qualifications are especially heavy on character. It is possible that some of the problems the church at Ephesus (1:3) resulted from low-character individuals being allowed into leadership positions; perhaps Hymenaeus and Alexander (1:20) were of this sort. When a man desires to assume one of these roles, his character must be carefully scrutinized, along with several other factors (aptitudes, family, experience in the faith, etc.).

### 1. Verses 1-7 - Bishops.

- v.1 - **a man...** Consistent with what was just written to women (2:11-15), the **position of a bishop** is reserved for men. Bishops/pastors teach and lead congregations of men and women. **desires...** It is perfectly acceptable - in fact it is quite necessary - that a man being considered for this office very much *want* to do the **work**.

- vv.2-7 - 16 more qualifications are listed. Most are quite self-explanatory. A few are highlighted here: **husband of one wife**: more than just being married only once, this has to do with a man's *faithfulness* to his wife. **able to teach** and **rules his own house well**: these two qualities are *aptitude*-related and speak directly to the primary *tasks* of the pastor. He is expected to teach the word of God, and he is expected to rule the church effectively. In the case of the latter, how he leads his own home demonstrates his ability to lead a church. A church is like a family. **not a novice**: the pastor must be a man who is experienced in the faith and has been well-grounded and trained. This training can take several forms - the primary training ground in view in the New Testament is the church itself - but a man who desires the pastorate has gained training and continues to gain it through his life. Novices are more vulnerable to **fall into** pride. **good testimony**: evil living and evil deeds can lead to having a bad testimony in the community, and that can bring **reproach** and trap a pastor in an unending cycle of defending his actions; the **devil** can cause much harm this way. All of these qualities must be on display before and during a pastor's ministry. It is important that the man's character be thoroughly evaluated.

### 2. Verses 8-13 - Deacons.

- v.8a - **deacons...** This word can quite generally describe a servant in virtually any capacity. In view here, however, quite plainly, is a church leader, an officer of the church who assumes responsibilities at times similar to the pastor's. That this office is reserved for *men* and that this description so closely *resembles that of a pastor* indicates the special office. In many respects, it can be said these

men should be of the same character and general leadership aptitude as pastors. However, what is not included in the list of requirements is the *desire to pastor* and the *ability to teach*.

- NOTE: Acts 6 sheds some light on their position in relation to the pastors. The first deacons were called to serve widows' tables so the Apostles (who were functioning to large degree as pastors at that point) could concentrate on their call to pray and teach. Deacons share and/or assume the burden of things that keep the pastor free to concentrate on the spiritual oversight of the church and the pulpit ministry.

- vv.8b-12 - There are 11 requirements of deacons listed, 4 of which pertain specifically to their wives. Several are highlighted here: **reverent**: respectful in attitude and conduct; perhaps what is in mind is their relationship to leadership; they must not be usurpers of pastors' authority. **pure conscience**: that is, they are totally convinced concerning the doctrine of the gospel and Christianity; there is no doubt about what is being taught in their church. **tested... found blameless**: not a separate requirement per se, but an admonishment that the listed requirements must be examined and the prospective deacons must pass the test blamelessly. **their wives... ruling their children**: deacons' families must be in order.

- v.13 - Here is a special blessing attached to serving **well as deacons**. Their **standing** (their respect and position in the congregation) is well established, and they grow bold. Deacons have a very special place in the church. They are often non-vocational, but they exercise significant authority on the pastor's and church's behalf. There is great *responsibility*, and there is great *blessing*.