

Qualifications of Elders

1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9

Overview of Qualifications (NKJV)

1 Timothy 3:1-7	Titus 1:6-9
Desire:	
desires the office	
Blameless:	Blameless:
must be blameless	must be blameless as a steward of God
husband of one wife	husband of one wife
temperate	not self-willed not quick-tempered self-controlled
sober-minded	sober-minded
of good behavior	lover of what is good
hospitable	hospitable
able to teach	holding fast the faithful word
not given to wine	not give to wine
not violent	not violent
not greedy for money	not greedy for money
gentle	
not quarrelsome	
not covetous	
	just
	holy
Track record as a good spiritual leader:	Track record as a good spiritual leader:
rules his own house well	
children in submission with all reverence	faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination
Experienced, not susceptible to pride:	
not a novice	
Moreover, a good reputation among unbelievers:	
have a good testimony among those who are outside	

Details of Qualifications

Below is an overview of an elder's qualifications. I have a note for each qualification show how the Greek is translate in four translations. Translation Key: NKJV¹, KJV², NASB³, NIV⁴.

Some of this information was taken from Mark Copeland's book titled, *Shepherds Of The Flock*, which is available on BibleStudyguide.org.

A. Desire (1 Tim. 3:1).

1. **Qualification:** *desires*^{1,2}, *aspires*³, *sets his heart*⁴.
2. This does not denote a person who is necessarily "anxious" to assume this very grave office, as if he were greedy for power. But, it denotes a man who would faithfully carry out the work, if he was appointed to the office.

B. Blameless (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6, 7).

1. **Qualification:** *blameless*^{1,2}, *above reproach*^{3,4}.
2. This is a man against whom an evil charge cannot be sustained (cf. 1 Tim. 5:19).
 - a. Elders make mistakes, and sin, just as the apostle Peter and Barnabas sinned in Antioch (Gal. 2:11-21). An elder, though, is a man with a track recording of godliness, who corrects his mistakes when he sins.

C. Husband of one wife (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6).

1. **Qualification:** *the husband of one wife*^{1,2,3,4}.
2. This is a man, lawfully married to a woman. A polygamist, or a man in an adulterous marriage, would not be qualified.
 - a. If an elder becomes unmarried for any reason (e.g., spouses death), he is no longer qualified to serve in the office.

D. Temperate - not self-willed, not quick-tempered, self-controlled (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7-8).

1. **Qualification:** *temperate*^{1,3,4}, *vigilant*².
 - a. "Sober, temperate, abstinent, especially in respect to wine; then sober-minded, watchful, circumspect" (Robertson).
2. **Qualification:** *not self-willed*^{1,2,3}, *not overbearing*⁴.
 - a. Not "self-pleasing, self-willed, arrogant" (Thayer).
3. **Qualification:** *not quick-tempered*^{1,3,4}, *not soon angry*².
 - a. Not "prone to anger, irascible" (Thayer).
4. **Qualification:** *self-controlled*^{1,3}, *temperate*², *disciplined*⁴.
 - a. "Originally, having power over; possessed of; hence, controlling, keeping in hand" (Vincent).

E. Sober-minded (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8).

1. **Qualification:** *sober-minded*¹, *sober*², *prudent*³, *self-controlled*⁴.
 - a. "Prudent or, according to the etymology of the word, from *sos*, sound, and *phren*, mind, a man of a sound mind; lit., a sound mind" (Clarke).

F. Good behavior - lover of good (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8).

1. **Qualification:** *good behavior*^{1,2}, *respectable*^{3,4}.
 - a. “Seemly, decent conduct” (Robertson’s Word Pictures).
2. **Qualification:** *lover of good*¹, *lover of good men*², *loving what is good*³, *loves what is good*⁴.
 - a. “Fond of good, that is, a promoter of virtue” (Strong).

G. Hospitable (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:8).

1. **Qualification:** *hospitable*^{1,3,4}, *given to hospitality*².
 - a. “Literally, a lover of strangers; one who is ready to receive into his house and relieve every necessitous stranger.” (Clarke).

H. Able to teach - holding fast the faithful word (1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:9).

1. **Qualification:** *able to teach*^{1,3,4}, *apt to teach*².
 - a. “One qualified to teach” (Robertson’s Word Pictures).
2. **Qualification:** *holding fast the faithful word*^{1,2,3}, *must hold firmly to the trustworthy message*⁴.
 - a. An elder is a good student and teacher, able to use God’s word to exhort Christians and convict those who contradict.

I. Not given to wine (1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7).

1. **Qualification:** *not given to wine*^{1,2}, *not addicted to wine*³, *not given to drunkenness*⁴.
 - a. “This word not only signifies one who is inordinately attached to wine, a winebibber or tippler, but also one who is imperious, abusive, insolent, whether through wine or otherwise” (Clarke).
 - b. The ASV translates the Greek, ‘brawler.’ An elder is not to be given to wine, or any of the behaviors associated with one who has given themselves over to wine.

J. Not violent (1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7).

1. **Qualification:** *not violent*^{1,4}, *no striker*², *not . . . pugnacious*³.
 - a. Not a “bruiser, ready for a blow; a pugnacious, contentious, quarrelsome person” (Thayer).

K. Not greedy for money (1 Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7).

1. **Qualification:** *not greedy for money*¹, *not greed for filthy lucre*² *not fond of sordid gain*³, *not pursuing dishonest gain*⁴.
 - a. Not “eager for base gain, greedy for money” (Thayer).
 - b. Note: this phrase does not appear in the NASB, NIV, and NRSV in 1 Tim. 3:3.

L. Gentle (1 Tim. 3:3).

1. **Qualification:** *gentle*^{1,3,4}, *patient*².
 - a. “Equitable, fair, mild, gentle” (Thayer).

M. Not quarrelsome (1 Tim. 3:3).

1. **Qualification:** *not quarrelsome*^{1,4}, *not a brawler*², *uncontentious*³.
 - a. “Not contentious; abstaining from fighting” (Thayer).

N. Not covetous (1 Tim. 3:3).

1. **Qualification:** *not covetous*^{1,2}, *free from the love of money*³, *not a lover of money*⁴.
 - a. “Not loving money, not avaricious” (Thayer)..

O. Just (Tit. 1:8).

1. **Qualification:** *just*^{1,2,3}, *upright*⁴.
 - a. “In a wide sense, upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God; in a narrower sense, rendering to each his due and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in words or shown by the manner of dealing with them” (Thayer).

P. Holy (Tit. 1:8).

1. **Qualification:** *holy*^{1,2,4}, *devout*³.
 - a. “Undefined by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure, holy, pious” (Thayer).

Q. Track record as a spiritual leader (1 Tim. 3:4-5; Tit. 1:6).

1. **Qualification:** *rules his own house well*^{1,2}, *manages his own household well*³, *manage his own family well*⁴ (1 Tim. 3:4).
 - a. This is a man ruling his house, with the result noted in the following qualifications. His children are in control with all dignity, believe, and aren’t accused of dissipation or rebellion.
 - b. This qualification shows that the man has experience to rule the house of God (1 Tim. 3:5).
2. **Qualification:** *children in submission with all reverence*^{1,2}, *keeping his own children in control with all dignity*³, *see that his children obey him with proper respect*⁴.
 - a. A qualified elder has his children under control (1 Tim. 3:4). They are obedient to him, and have proper respect toward him.
3. **Qualification:** *faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination*¹, *faithful children not accused of riot or unruly*², *having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion*³, *whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient*⁴.
 - a. Children who are in control:
 1. They believe (they are Christians).
 2. They are not accused of dissipation (an abandoned, dissolute life; profligacy, prodigality; indulgence in sensual pleasure). Only used here and Eph. 5:18; 1 Pet. 4:4.
 - a. **Eph. 5:18** “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,”
 - b. **1 Pet. 4:4** “In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign you;”
 3. They are not accused of rebellion (disobedient, unruly, cannot be

brought under control).

- b. An elder's children are not sinless. They go through all the growing pains all children encounter. But when they make a mistake and sin, they repent and correct their lives, as taught and counseled by their father.
 1. The long suffering an elder has toward his children to bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord, with provoking them to wrath, demonstrates his ability to patiently shepherd the flock without driving them away from God.
4. **Number of children:** Must an elder have two or more children who are faithful Christians to be qualified?
 - a. Discussed in more detail in afternoon Bible classes.
 - b. Last time we studied this subject, we concluded that a man should have at least two children who were faithful children to be qualified.
 1. The apostle Paul uses "children" in a specific context, not a general context where the number of children under consideration was uncertain.
 - a. Note: Elders are referred to in the singular tense (e.g., a man, bishop, etc.) and his children are referred to in the plural. Hence, we conclude that a man (singular) must have a plurality of faithful children to be qualified to become an elder.

R. Experienced, not susceptible to pride (1 Tim. 3:6).

1. **Qualification:** *not a novice*^{1,2}, *not a new convert*³, *must not be a recent convert*⁴.
 - a. Not "newly planted; a new convert, neophyte (one who has recently become a Christian)" (Thayer).

S. Moreover, a good reputation among unbelievers (1 Tim. 3:7).

1. **Qualification:** *a good reputation*^{1,3,4}, *a good report*².
 - a. A man who has a good "record, report, testimony, witness" (Strong).

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