

**Sermon or Lesson: 1 Timothy 3:3-5** (NIV based)  
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: A Ministry Overseer Must Possess Proven Good Management Skills

INTRO:

- - God has specific intentions and instructions for the qualification of persons as overseers of a church or ministry.
- - From His lists of requirements, God has set a high standard for personal character qualities of anyone wanting to be an overseer of a ministry.

READ: 1 Timothy 3:3-5, with vv.1-2 and vv.6-7 for context

- - In addition to all of the positive personal character qualities an overseer must have, as listed in verse 2, now let's study in verse 3 a list of negative qualities that the overseer must not have.
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v.3 - READ

[Lesson Question: How do each of these forbidden negative character behaviors correlate to overseeing a ministry?]

SECTION POINT: To be qualified as an overseer, a person must have demonstrated that he does not have negative behaviors that are contrary to and counterproductive to what is needed to be an appropriate and effective overseer.

**"not given to drunkenness"**

- - To be qualified as an overseer, the person must not be "given to drunkenness", which in the Greek means not to be a drinker of any alcohol, which is regardless of whether or not he drinks in moderation or excess. (Strong's #3943)
- - The overseer is to be psychologically healthy, thereby having no need to drink alcohol and no desire to drink alcohol.
- - Also, a prudent overseer recognizes that drinking alcohol poses a major dangerous threat to ministry work, and therefore totally abstains from drinking alcohol not only as a precaution but also as a behavior choice to be emulated by those he oversees. (cf. v.3 in 1 Peter 5:1-3)
- - Properly, this requirement from God for total abstinence of alcohol by overseers also applies to other mind-affecting drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, and etcetera.
- - As is evident from the exposition of this verse phrase, God holds the overseer to a much higher standard than He does other believers, in this particular case so that the overseer is observably "being an example to the flock". (1 Peter 5:3)

**"not violent but gentle"**

- - To be qualified as an overseer, the person must not be "violent", meaning not "combative in nature, belligerent, quarrelsome, aggressive, litigious, or militant". (AHD - 'pugnacious', from Strong's #4131)

- - The overseer is not to be verbally or physically aggressive, or assaultive, or accusatory.
- - Instead, the overseer is to have a "gentle, appropriate, and mild disposition". (Strong's #1933)
- - He does not get angry nor verbally or physically attack people who oppose him but rather he uses gentle persuasion in conjunction with proper teaching from God's Word. (2 Timothy 2:25-26)

**"not quarrelsome"**

- - To be qualified as an overseer, the person must not be "quarrelsome", meaning he does not quarrel, argue, antagonize, or incite controversy. (AHD - 'quarrelsome')
- - By extension, he does not escalate disagreements into quarrels nor does he continue to participate in discussions any further when they start to become agitated or heated.
- - The overseer is always in control of his speaking and resorts to peacefulness rather than quarreling.
- - Therefore, winning an argument is not a priority for him.
- - However, he does confront the teaching of false doctrines as appropriate, but even then he actively avoids arguments and instead focuses on calmly presenting and promoting sound doctrine and God's work. (vv.1:3,4b; cf. Titus 1:9)

**"not a lover of money"**

- - To be qualified as an overseer, the person must not be "a lover of money", meaning he does not strive to gain wealth nor to acquire materialistic possessions. (AHD - 'avaricious', from Strong's #0866)
- - He is not greedy, nor does he engage in get-rich-quick schemes or shady business deals. (cf. Titus 1:7)
- - In other words, he is content with what he has, and his efforts are exerted on building God's Kingdom rather than building his own mansion and wealth. (cf. 1 Timothy 6:6-8)
- - This does not mean, however, that he is a wild or careless spender.
- - He manages his finances well and is frugal and careful to subsist on what God has supplied and he successfully continues with those provisions until God supplies more.
- - And he serves God from altruism and not from a desire or plan to attain financial affluence. (1 Peter 5:2)

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**v.4 - READ**

[Lesson Question: How does managing one's family and children correlate to managing a church or ministry?]

**SECTION POINT: To be qualified as an overseer, a person must have demonstrated that he has managed his own family well.**

**"He must manage his own family well"**

- - To be qualified as an overseer, the person must be demonstrating that he "manages his own family well".

- - In effect, he is overseeing his family, authoritatively watching over and establishing the direction his family is going in life. (from Strong's #4291 - 'manage')
- - He is decisive to set values, priorities, conduct boundaries, the atmosphere in the home, condition of relationships, spiritual pursuits, and etc., which he then is diligent to monitor and appropriately implement.

**"and see that his children obey him with proper respect"**

- - The person also must be demonstrating success in his presiding over the raising of his children.
- - He consistently holds his children accountable, ensuring that they are always properly respectful and subordinate to authority. (Strong's #3956 - 'all' (omitted in the NIV); #5292 - 'obey')
- - This includes the condition of their character, that his children genuinely possess "complete and confirmed integrity, uprightness, moral excellence, goodness, decency, and morality". (AHD - 'probity', from Strong's #4587 - 'proper respect')
- - And he ensures his children always exhibit "appreciation, considerateness, favorable regard, high opinion, and honor" of others, including those people in authority over them. (AHD - 'respect')
- - In Titus 1:6 is added the requirement that his "children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient".
- - The implication here is that the person's own family members see how genuine his faith is, and thereupon they each embrace it as their own, personally responding agreeably to how he lives out his faith and what he has been teaching them about the faith.

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**v.5 - READ**

[Lesson Question: What is the implied principle here, along with its corresponding ramifications?]

**SECTION POINT: A person who has not managed his own family well likely will not be a good manager of God's church.**

- - With the inclusion of this question in verse 5, extra emphasis is being placed on the necessity that the person must have a proven history or track record of proficient managing of his own family well - demonstrated skills, demonstrated priority, demonstrated people management skills, demonstrated interpersonal skills, demonstrated organizational management skills, demonstrated financial management, demonstrated leadership, and demonstrated oversight.
- - To be appropriately successful at managing his own family thereupon requires that the person has a personality disposition which properly ensures that the conduct of the people under his oversight stays within certain limits or boundaries.
- - In other words, he has balanced intestinal fortitude, which is not wishy-washy or lax, nor is it extreme or harsh.
- - The person has demonstrated that he knows how to manage his family well, therefore he possesses the basic skills to manage and "take care of [the people in] God's church" well.

- - And the converse is likewise true, that if he has not demonstrated ability and success at managing his own family well, then he lacks the basic skills to successfully manage God's church, and therefore he is unqualified for becoming a ministry overseer.
  - - The implied principle is that the person will "direct the affairs of the church" in the same way and will achieve essentially the same results that he does from directing the affairs of his family. (v.5:17)
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**BIG IDEA:** To be qualified as an overseer, a person must have good management skills, as being demonstrated by how he has been managing his family.

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#### IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS:

- - From the overseer qualification verses here in 1 Timothy 3:2-13 along with Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-4, an obvious reality is that God wants the life and the character of a candidate to be examined very closely and very comprehensively.
- - As stated regarding the content of previous verse 2, pastor search committees, elder nominating committees, and ministry leader searches should be using the contents of these overseer qualification Bible verses, going through them word by word in their deliberations and interviews to establish the qualification of each candidate they are seriously considering.
- - From these verses 3-5, these search committees should additionally investigate and examine how each candidate has been managing his own family.
  
- - For those of you here who are ministry leaders, are you "blameless" in all of these areas we have studied so far for overseers? (Titus 1:6)
- - If there is any area of deficiency for you, then carve out some time in your busy schedule to make self-improvements so that your character qualities, behaviors, and management skills conform to the level that God requires of a ministry overseer.
  
- - The overseer is to successfully model the character qualities and behaviors that the rest of us believers are to develop.
- - The character qualities, virtues, and guiding principles listed here represent goals that all believers should aspire to, whether or not you are or will ever be an overseer.
- - Therefore, each of us believers here should be endeavoring not to be given to drunkenness, not be violent but gentle, not be quarrelsome, and not be a lover of money.
- - And those of you who are parenting should be striving to manage your family well and seeing that your children obey you with all proper respect.
  
- - For those of you here who are not believers, do you see from this study that God is not easygoing, all-permissive, indifferent, and carefree?
- - If God in His holiness is this detailed about the holiness His believers should be aspiring to as modeled by qualified overseers, then conversely, can you imagine how

detailed God will be on Judgment Day with you unbelievers about every single sinfulness you have?

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[Additional Lesson Question to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - In ascertaining the management abilities of an overseer candidate, should a nominating committee rely solely on how the candidate has been managing his own family? Or should other evidence be taken into consideration such as how he has conducted the management of his business and/or of his subordinates in the workplace? And should the committee extend its investigation by interviewing the candidate's co-workers and subordinates?

- - Should a head pastor or an executive pastor be required to have advanced academic Bible college training in such areas as church administration, conflict management, organizational development, and leading change? If so, how much training and at what level of study?]

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