

LESSON TWO

PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO TIMOTHY (Continued)

A. CHURCH OFFICERS:

Scriptural Reference:

"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (I Timothy 3:1).

Apart from the five-fold ministry named in Ephesians 4:11 (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers), there are four other titles used for church offices: elders, bishops, presbyters and deacons. The word translated "bishop" means "overseer" and is the same as "elder" and "presbyter."

It is indicated in Philippians 1:1 that there are two offices in the church separate from the rest of the congregation: bishops and deacons. The same leaders are called elders and bishops in Titus 1:5 and Acts 20:17, 28. We may conclude that the spiritual leaders in the church may be called elders, bishops or presbyters. The teaching that a bishop is the head of a diocese is based on a man made system rather than the Bible.

The word "deacon" means "one who ministers." The work of the deacon is to minister to the physical needs of the church.

Paul did not condemn those who were desirous to be used by God in the role of leadership. Paul referred to a saying of that time: *"There is a popular saying: To aspire to leadership is an honourable ambition" (I Timothy 3:1 - The New English Bible).*

He did not refute this popular saying but emphasized this "good work" by giving the high qualifications of both bishops and deacons.

B. QUALIFICATIONS OF A BISHOP: (I Timothy 3:2-7).

When we study the qualifications of a bishop, it can readily be understood how it can be called a "good work." Anyone who would desire such an office has a noble ambition.

In general a bishop had to be a man possessed of high moral qualities, a teacher, one in control of his own family and spiritually mature.

It will be profitable to study the qualifications as given by the Apostle Paul:

1. Blameless - above reproach.
2. Husband of one wife - faithful to one (living) wife.
3. Vigilant - hard working.
4. Sober - thoughtful and orderly.
5. Good behavior - courteous.
6. Given to hospitality - hospitable.

7. Apt to teach - a good teacher.
8. Not given to wine - does not drink intoxicating beverages.
9. No striker - no brawler.
10. Not greedy of filthy lucre - not a lover of money.
11. Patient - forbearing disposition.
12. Not a brawler - not quarrelsome.
13. Not covetous - not greedy of wealth.
14. Ruleth well his own house.
15. Not a novice - not a young convert.

There are some comments that may be made regarding these qualifications. The statement "husband of one wife" definitely refutes the celibacy of Rome's priesthood. It is also implied here that he who has a wife and godly family is to be preferred to a bachelor. However, this does not make marriage mandatory to being a bishop, for there is record of some of the apostles and some of Paul's companions being single.

Paul placed emphasis upon the bishop maintaining a well disciplined and hospitable home. He must have his children under control and obedient. Otherwise how could he have the oversight of the church?

The admonition against being a novice warns against the danger of pride, which would cause him to fall into the same condemnation with the devil.

C. **QUALIFICATIONS OF A DEACON: (I Timothy 3:8-13).**

It is significant that the qualifications for a deacon are similar to those of a bishop. We shall comment on those, which are added to those of the bishop.

1. Not double-minded - not indulging in double-talk.
2. *"They must be men who combine a clear conscience with a firm hold on the deep truths of our faith" (verse 9 - The New English Bible).*
3. First be proved - undergo a scrutiny.

Special attention is given to the character of the wife of a deacon. She must be sober, faithful and not slanderous. It would seem that if the wife was worldly, she could disqualify her husband from the office of a deacon.

The student should note carefully verse 13. To clearly understand this we are quoting again from a modern version: *"For those who have filled the deacon's office will gain for themselves an honourable standing, and acquire great boldness of speech in their faith in Christ Jesus" (Weymouth).*

Examples of this would be Stephen, the first martyr and Philip.

D. **PAUL'S REASON FOR WRITING THESE INSTRUCTIONS:**

Scriptural Reference:

"These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou ought to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:14, 15).

Although Paul hoped to see Timothy, he wrote these instructions. Something might delay him and it was essential that the church would be properly ordered. Therefore it was vital to the welfare of the church that the church leaders meet the proper qualifications.

E. GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH:

Scriptural Reference:

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (I Timothy 3:16).

Here Paul burst into a hymn of praise with a poetic statement of truth declaring the deity of Jesus.

It is clear that the apostle is referring to Jesus, emphasizing the incarnation in harmony with the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. It should be noted that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh. By the presence of the Spirit, Christ's ministry was vindicated and proved true in all His claims. The final vindication of Christ was His resurrection and ascension.

This song of praise proves the deity of Jesus absolutely. He is very God and at the same time, perfect man.

F. WARNING AGAINST HERETICAL TEACHING: (I Timothy 4:1-5).

Paul gave a warning against the apostasy of the last times, which has been clearly spoken of by the Holy Spirit. There will be those who will turn their back upon truth and listen to deceitful spirits and devil inspired doctrines. These false teachers will speak lies so often that their consciences will no longer trouble them. Paul likened their consciences to scarred skin resulting from the hot branding iron.

Paul named two of these devil-inspired lies: they were not to marry and not to eat meat. Asceticism was taught as a virtue. The apostle declared that every creature was created by God and was to be received with thanksgiving.

In verse 5 we are instructed to eat with thanksgiving and prayer sanctifies our food. We should never eat without thanking the Lord and praying that God would sanctify the food.

G. EXHORTATION TO BE A GOOD MINISTER: (I Timothy 4:6-8).

Timothy was told that he would be a worthy pastor if he would give these instructions to the church. Timothy was also instructed not to waste time arguing about foolish ideas and silly myths. He was to spend his time in the exercise of keeping spiritually fit. Physical exercise has some value but spiritual exercise is much more important. Spiritual exercise would cause him to be a better Christian and has the promise of eternal life.

H. EXHORTATION FOR TIMOTHY'S PERSONAL LIFE: (I Timothy 4:9-16).

Paul gave Timothy some excellent advice for his personal Christian life. Even a young person can be a profitable worker for the Lord; Timothy was not to allow others to think less of him because of his youth. In every phrase of his life, he was to be an example for the believers.

He was to be an example to the believers in the following:

1. Word - speech.
2. Conversation - manner of life.
3. Charity - love.
4. Faith - faithfulness.
5. Purity - chastity.

Timothy was then told not to neglect but to use the spiritual endowments, which were imparted to him by prophetic utterance when the elders laid their hands upon him at his ordination.

Meditation is almost a lost art in these days, but Timothy was exhorted to meditate upon the instructions Paul gave him. Not only was he to thoughtfully remember them, but he was to throw himself into these things so that his progress would be evident to all. He was to watch carefully his teaching and to persevere in them himself. If he did this both, he and those to whom he ministered would be saved.

LESSON TWO

SELF HELP TEST

- A. Under the qualifications of a bishop, what is the meaning of each of the following expressions:
1. "Husband of one wife" -
 2. "No striker" -
 3. Not greedy of filthy lucre" -
 4. Not a novice" -
- B. Describe the home of a bishop.
- C. Describe the character of a deacon's wife.
- D. What were two lies which would be taught during the apostasy of the last times?
- 1.
 - 2.
- E. Name the FIVE ways in which Timothy was to be an example.
1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
- F. What should the Christian's attitude be towards physical exercise?