

The man who desires to become an elder or overseer, desires a “noble task.” A “noble task” requires a life that is worthy of it. In the same way a believer’s life should live up to the calling we have received (Eph 4:19). The lists of elder and deacon qualifications develop in more detail what a worthy life looks like. It is a lifestyle required of church leaders and set before all believers as a model to follow.

1. **Above reproach (3:2a; cf. Titus 1:6)**

Like Acts 6:3, an overarching statement covering all the items. Is there anything in the man’s life which could bring accusations against him?

2. **The husband of but one wife (3:2b; Titus 1:6)**

The elder as “a one-woman man” probably refers to his marital fidelity to his one wife since conversion. This reveals the quality of faithfulness in actions, words, and thoughts. It is a standard for all men (and women, cf. Titus 2:3–5).

3. **Temperate (3:2c)**

The figurative sense is most probable, i.e. restraint in conduct, taking care not to do and say inappropriate things. The picture of someone under the influence of alcohol gives the picture of unrestrained conduct. The word is applied to men in Titus 2:2.

4. **Self-controlled (3:2d; Titus 1:8)**

This is a related word, being in control of oneself. It is also used of older men and for the instructions of older women to younger women (Titus 2:2, 5). The man delivered from demons being “in his right mind” (Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35) and thinking of ourselves with “sober judgment” (Romans 12:3) illustrate the sense of restraint in actions and in self-evaluation. Cf. 1 Peter 4:7 for its importance in prayer.

5. **Respectable (3:2e)**

A quality which causes others to respect the person. In 1 Tim 2:9 it is used to describe “respectable apparel” for women which illustrates how one’s behavior should call for respect.

6. **Hospitable (3:2f; Titus 1:8)**

To be hospitable means receiving or treating guests warmly and generously. It need not be limited to strangers (1 Peter 4:9), but is particularly valuable to those who cannot repay (Luke 14:12–14). It is a trait of wisdom.

7. **Able to teach (3:2g)**

Cf. 2 Tim 2:24. This is specifically for elders, though deacons are to hold to the truth (3:9). Even among elders some work harder at this than others (5:17). Though to presume to be a teacher is dangerous (James 3:1), mature believers should eventually reach that point (Hebrews 5:11–14).

8. **Not given to drunkenness (3:3a; Titus 1:7)**

Although originally referring to wine, this applies to any substance abuse which clouds the thinking. Cf. Proverbs 20:1; 31:4–5. Drunkenness causes a loss of control and a loss of respect. It should not be excused but repented of as sinful behavior.

9. **Not violent but gentle (3:3b, Titus 1:7)**

These two seem best treated together. “Violent” included the idea of bullying. Rather than being gentle, a person uses force to get their way. You do not want a leader, or anyone around you, who uses force to get their way.

10. **Not quarrelsome (3:3c)**

The sense is illustrated in 2 Tim 2:24 where “not quarreling” includes corrective teaching but in kindness, gentleness, and without resentment. It is helped by humility and requires the right motivation and manner. A contentious person, who always find a point of contention, will not and should not be wanted in leadership.

11. **Not a lover of money (3:3d)**

To love material wealth is extremely dangerous as 1 Tim 6:9–11 illustrates. It is dangerous not only for leaders (cf 1 Peter 5:2), but for every believer. In our materialistic culture it is a constant danger against which to guard.

12. **A good family manager (3:4–5; cf Titus 1:6)**

Though challenging in a number of points to interpret, these verses nonetheless establish the importance of the home life in determining if a man is fit for leadership in the church. If he is not faithful in leading well in his home, do not give him the greater task of spiritual leadership in the church.

13. **Not a recent convert (3:6)**

All believers need to mature in their faith and only the mature should be put into church leadership. Otherwise, they may think more of themselves than they should and become spiritually endangered.

14. **A good reputation with outsiders (3:7)**

Do not discount the observations of the world, who may see what a person does not show to other believers. The world’s sense of how a Christian should behave makes it important that a leader, who represents the church, behaves in a manner that the world recognizes as Christian.

It is important for church elders to be godly men for their leadership of the church and for the example which they set. Their qualities are requirements for them but goals for every maturing believer.