



WEEK 4

Ready Leadership Formation

Any army is only as strong as its officers. Paul gives Timothy a detailed list of what to look for when choosing church leaders – both overseers (like pastors) and deacons (like ministry servants). These aren't just job requirements; they're battle readiness qualifications. Paul focuses heavily on character over talent because in spiritual warfare, a leader's integrity is their most important weapon. Leaders who are greedy, quick-tempered, or new to the faith become weak points that the enemy can attack. The church is like a fort that holds and protects God's truth, so it needs strong, mature officers. Paul ends by reminding Timothy that all Christian leadership finds its foundation in Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate example of godly leadership.

THE SCRIPTURE: 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-16

¹ The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer⁴, he desires a noble task. ² Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, ⁵ for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? ⁶ He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷ Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil. ⁸ Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹ They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰ And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. ¹¹ Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. ¹² Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. ¹³ For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, ¹⁵ if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. ¹⁶ Great indeed, we confess, is

⁴ **overseer** – In the New Testament, the terms “pastor,” “elder,” and “overseer” (or “bishop”) refer to the same office but emphasize different aspects of the role. “Elder” (presbyteros) highlights maturity and wisdom, “overseer” (episkopos) emphasizes leadership and supervision responsibilities, and “pastor” (poimen) focuses on shepherding and caring for the flock. This is clearly seen in Acts 20:17-28 where Paul calls the same group of men “elders” (v17), “overseers” (v28), and instructs them to “shepherd” or pastor the church (v28). Similarly, in Titus 1:5-7, Paul uses “elder” and “overseer” interchangeably when giving qualifications. First Peter 5:1-2 also combines these concepts when Peter tells elders to “shepherd” the flock and exercise “oversight.” The distinction between multiple elders/pastors and a single bishop developed later in church history and is not found in the New Testament pattern.

LIFEGROUP QUESTIONS: WEEK 4

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. What qualities do you most admire in a leader? What leadership failures have you witnessed that were most damaging?
2. Do you see yourself as a leader in any area of your life? What makes leadership challenging?

DIVING DEEPER

3. As you read through the qualifications and role of elders, answer this question: Why did God give elders to the church? How does God show His grace through the giving of elders?
4. Paul calls being an overseer a “noble task” (v1). Using verses 2-7, create a list of qualifications for overseers. Which of these qualifications surprise you most, and why?
5. The phrase “above reproach” (v2) appears first in the list. Why is character more important than competence in spiritual leadership?
6. Recall a pastor in your life that greatly impacted you through his faithfulness. What was it about him and his service that meant so much to you?

7. Verses 8-13 outline qualifications for deacons. Compare these requirements with those for overseers. What similarities and differences do you notice?
8. Verse 6 warns against appointing a “recent convert.” What dangers does spiritual immaturity create in leadership?
9. How would you answer someone who insists that this weekend’s message is not for him or her? In what ways is he or she wrong?
10. Rewrite verse 15 in your own words.
11. The “mystery of godliness” in verse 16 describes Christ’s work. How does this doctrinal foundation equip leaders for battle? Why must leaders be grounded in sound doctrine?
12. Which of these leadership qualities do you most need to develop? How can you begin growing in that area this week?