

1Timothy 3:10–11

The Testing of Deacon Candidates for the Glory of Jesus

**Thursday, November 24, 2022 ▫ Read 1Timothy 3:10–11**

*Questions from the Scripture text: What must be done before a man can be a deacon (v10)? What is the work of the deacon called? How does he have to do in his test in order to be qualified to be installed to the office? Who else must be proven by testing (v11)? What is the first thing that they must be? What must they not be? What is the second thing that they must be? What must the testing show about them? In how many things?*

**What is the proper process for installing a qualified man to the office of deacon?** 1Timothy 3:10–11 looks forward to the second reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these two verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **deacons must be tested (and test those whom they enlist for service), and only after being found blameless, be admitted to minister in the office.**

**First, let these be tested.** This verse prescribes a procedure. Procedure, chronological words govern its shape: "first" and "afterward" ("then" in our version). Once we have found a man of v8 qualities, v9 doctrine, and a v12 track record, we are not yet sure that we have a deacon. Something else must happen first. They must be tested. It's not optional. It's a command, an imperative verb.

The verb is the same one that is often translated "examine himself" in 1Cor 11. It means to be proven by testing (which is where the concept of a "credible" profession of faith comes from). Before a man is made an administrator of the church's service in material things, he must function as one provisionally in test cases.

In these test cases, he should be found blameless. This "blameless" a different word than v2 where the word applied primarily to the character; this one is more "without reproach" than "irreproachable" and focuses on how well spoken of the specific performance was in his testing as a deacon. His service in the church should have the general acclamation of the body.

**Afterward, let them serve as deacons.** Here's the second part of the process. It, too, is not optional but a command. The ones having been tested and found blameless *shall* serve as deacons. This indicates the necessity of the office and the duty of the man whom the Lord calls to it. Where our version reads "let them serve as deacons," it is actually all one word—a single imperative verb from the root word for "deacon."

**Likewise, the women must be tested.** It's important to notice the structure of the passage. We have one office in vv1–7 and another office in vv8–13. The two are connected by a "likewise" in v8. Now, in v11, the word "women" is not an office. And it certainly doesn't mean "female deacons"; if that were the case, it would be bizarre for them to have a different set of qualifications than in v8.

However, there is an expectation that women will be doing much of the service under the administration and authority of the deacons. And, it is part of the blamelessness in his testing that a deacon is entrusting the labor under his oversight to particular sorts of women: women who will be dignified, not silly, so that the needy whom they serve experience honor by their conduct ("reverence"); not devils who would use information about others' needs to attack them behind their backs ("not slanderers"); self-controlled and sober, not easily controlled or unstable ("temperate"); reliable and dependable, doing whatever they are entrusted to do ("faithful in all things").

Our version says "wives," which is consistent with the same use of the word 'woman' immediately in v12. And, it must certainly be expected that a deacon who rules his house well will have such a wife, and that she will be involved in the work. But deacons' wives will not be the only ones serving under the diaconate, and all women to whom sensitive service is assigned must have a character as described here, which has been proven true by testing "likewise" unto how the deacons who oversee them have been.

What must be done with a man before he can be installed as a deacon? How well must he do? If he did so, what *must* he now do? Who else need to be tested? What should the test show about them?

*Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for Your gracious work in men who oversee the church's ministry of service in material things. And thank You for Your gracious work in women who participate in the sensitive work of distributing. Forgive us for taking diaconal ministry lightly, failing to value the honor that it brings to Christ when done well. Grant to us reformation and repentance in this area, we ask through Christ, AMEN!*

ARP128 "How Blessed Are All Who Fear the Lord" or TPH128B "Blest the Man Who Feels Jehovah"

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First Timothy 3 verses 10 through 11. But let these also first be tested Then Brooklyn Service Deacons Being found blameless. Likewise they're wives must be reverent not slanderers. Temperate. Faithful in all things.

So, for the reading of God's, Inspired and generic word.

Last week's portion and verses 8 to 9. We discovered the Character. And Theological convictions. And by which a man identifies to us. To his church whom He has called to be a deacon.

Now, verse 10, it tells us what to do with them. These versus prescribed, a particular procedure. Once we found a man of the qualities and verses 8 to 9, And of the track record. In his own home. And verse 12. We still are not yet sure that we have a deacon, something else must happen.

First. You see that word in verse 10? But let these also first. Be tested. There must be tested, it's an imperative verb. It's a command it's not optional. A church that recognizes versus eight to nine men. You have a verse 12 family And immediately. Approves and elects and installs them to the diaconid is disobeying Jesus.

Just as you learn from your earliest childhood. Well, we must obey right away. All the way. And cheerfully. And so, even in little commands, If we hope in Jesus, If we want the Deactyl Ministry of the church. To be fruitful to the glory of Jesus. If it depends on the power of Jesus.

When we simply must do it. According to the words. Of Jesus. So, you must be tested. The word that's used for testing is actually the same word. That we have in first Corinthians 11, when it says let a man first examine himself. Then. Let me to the bread and drink the cup.

Here, we have a first. They must be. Examined, and then, Let them deacon. And we'll get to the deaconing in a moment. But it means to Prove. By practice and be uproot. By the recognition of that practice. To give evidence. It's where we get the concept of a credible profession of faith.

Not everyone who says Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven. Not everyone who says, I believe in Jesus should be admitted to the Lord's table. And not everyone. Who has the character described in verses 8 9? Is necessarily going to be installed into the deactinator ought to be biblically.

Installed into the Akinet. He should have. The function of a deacon before, he's installed to the office of a deacon. He can function in service, and he can function in overseeing and administering service provisionally before he's recognized as an officer of the church. This is. A biblical proof. One of many.

That the Lord intends to have formal officers of the church that he draws a distinction. Between having the function and being installed into the office. This doesn't mean that everyone, anyone who isn't a deacon can just have that function anymore than it means that anyone who isn't an elder can just have that function.

Remember in the last passage he doesn't say, I don't allow a woman To be an elder. He says, I don't love a woman to rule or to teach. So, the functions are for the office. But here, just to sometimes, for instance, In order to test aptness to teach. We'll put a man into a teaching position.

Or we'll let a ministerial candidate. Preach. Provisionally to test his preaching. So also, Deacons are to be given provisional oversight. Over. That its use of. The churches, earthly resources, the district. And the distribution. Of that, which is collected for those who have need.

And it when they are tested, they must be found blameless. The blameless word here is different word than verse 2. The word in verse 2. Applied. Primarily to their character that they are on blamable and doesn't mean that nobody blames them. And here it is more without blame. Then unblamable In other words.

The Lord during the period of testing. We expect him to give the congregation eyes to see heart to appreciate his blessing upon the deacons ministry. There's very strong view here of the Lord's. Personal close activity in the church. That he's the one who has graced the man. He is the one.

The Lord is the one through whom we expect. Whom we expect to work through the deacons. And so in the provisional task, we're not just looking to see for the consistency of the man's character or how well he does. We are looking to. To the Lord to bless. The provisional example, so that we may all Rejoice with the installation of the deacon.

And those in the congregation who have Blessed the Lord for what he did through the deacon will be prepared to submit to the deacon In matters of material things and choices about property and distribution to others and fairness. There's a lot of room for strife in the church.

There's a lot of room for strife in the church and we know Second Corinthians. Chapter one and two. For instance, that this is one of Satan's. Devices. That he uses strife in the church. And so the Lord in the area of the diagonal care. Of the church's resources has provided this testing and approving and In order to give this wholehearted joining together of the entire congregation as it comes into the ministry of a new deacon And you see the wisdom of the Lord and the goodness of the command.

And how foolish we would be to disobey the good commands of our God. And yet, we are very foolish. In every area of life. And so, We must resist that in every part of our life, the resist the Tendency in us to disobey God's commands. When we know that He is good and we are not and he is wise and we are not So that when we come to something that may seem little, Like, Let these first be tested and then let them serve as deacons being found blameless.

That we will follow the Lord's instruction and reap the benefit of his his own blessing on his good commands. Well, there's a first imperative. Let them be tested and the second is also a imperative. Let them serve as deacons. In fact that entire phrase is just one word in the Greek.

It's a third person. Plural imperative We don't have third-person imperatives in English. So it's difficult for us to understand.

It's difficult for us to have a good concept. Of a third person imperative, but it means that this is required. That the ones whom the Lord has said graced, the ones whose testing the Lord has so blessed. They don't have the option. Of whether or not they're going to be deacons and the church doesn't have the option of whether or not to install them Because the church is not in charge of the church.

The Lord Jesus is in charge of the church. And here is his word and what happens in the life of the church is his is his work and so they are to serve as deacons. Now, there's important part of the test And the important part of the test in verse 11, Is what sorts of women, what type of women, they employ they enlist in the work of especially distributing to the poor.

That's primarily, what's in view, there is the care For instance, of Elders who rule well and are worthy of a double honor so you don't muzzle the ox. And there are there's the collection and administration of gifts for other churches that are in times of famine and so forth.

But primarily in the New Testament, as we saw, With the way, the Deaconet began and as we'll see. You know, the primary concern in the redistribution First, Timothy 5 focusing on the widows. The, the primary care is For those who cannot care for themselves and women would be doing a lot of Distribution.

Now, I can sympathize with the translation wives in verse 11. Because immediately in verse 12, it's going to say let the deacons be men of one woman. There's not a separate word for husband or wife. In the Greek. And so since he's gonna say left, Deacons be men of one woman.

It. And he's using that word for to mean, wife in verse 12, he may be using that word that way in verse 11. It's often a clue. How a word is being used. But here. Woman is in plural. Not men. The deacons are in the plural in verse 10.

But I think it is expected that it won't just be Deacons wives who are participating. In the distribution or the administration. If the deacons are too few to do it by themselves, as surely they were in Acts chapter 6, for instance. So also, Their wives would be too few in number, it's probably better to say likewise the women.

Now notice there's a likewise deacons that is parallel. To the man who desires a bishop position, a bishop in verse one. So he goes the with the Office of Bishop or overseer and versus one through seven and then he says likewise deacons and he describes the office of Deacon in versus eight through 13.

And some will misread verse 11 when it says, likewise the women and say, oh, women is an office in the church. Well no, that's not what they say is it? They say, he means women deacons But if these women are the deacons, if they are among the diaconate, the ones who have qualifications and our first tested and Then install to the office.

Then why do they have? Different qualifications. Than in verse 9. And in verse 12, Now, when it says likewise, it's talking about testing That. Just as deacons are tested provisionally before. They come into the office of overseeing, the ministry of Service, Any women who are going to be regularly enlisted by the deacons for the distribution.

Under the oversight of the deacons, they should be tested first. Deacons should give them low sensitivity. A low stakes. Jobs in the management of material things in the church and distribution to others to see how they treat the needy. To whom they distribute. How they do with preserving the honor and the name.

Of those people. It's a very Precarious position to be needy and to be dependent upon. The charity of others. And you don't want. Malicious gossips. You you want dignified noble people? Not silly people. People who when they come to distribute are going to to treat the needy person with the full respect, that one not only made in the image of God, but redeemed, through God, the Son and indwelt by God, the Spirit.

You want a? A dignified. Lady. Not. Silly person of the world, adding a little social justice. To her church life. And so, she should be reverent. She mustn't. Be a slanderer. Some translations will say malicious gossip. It's actually a female form of the word devil. You want to say there can be female deacons by misreading, this verse.

Well, that's not what this verse teaches. But this verse does teach that there can be female devils That there can be those. In whose mouths? Other people's names are not safe. With whom other people's dignity. And other people's secrets. Are not safe. There is such thing as. A female human.

Who has the function of a devil. Because of the looseness of her lips, And the lightness of her heart. And so, just as the deacons had to be tested first before they were installed to the office. So also They are given the instruction here in their function in the office that the women who are Employed under the diaconate.

Are to be tested first and there to be reverent. And not slanderers. They are to be temperate, self-controlled, sober, not unstable or emotional. They may have to deal with or function and serving and sensitive situations. And, They need not to be. To easily affected emotionally, by what is going on and some people's lives in the church.

The church has sinners in it and Christians go through difficulty. And, The sort of woman who is going to be employed. Here needs not to be brand new woman in the church or a young lady who Doesn't have. Much experience, or Or. Is going to be. Overly emotionally affected, she needs to be temperate, stable.

Self-controlled sober. And then in the last place. Faithful in all things needs to be reliable and dependable doing whatever. She is entrusted to do. And that's that last characteristic is the one that really helps us understand the likewise at the beginning of the verse, Because only you only find out reliable and dependable by giving someone tasks and seeing, if they get done, and if they get done the right way, And if they get done, Done well, So there's this principle In verse 10 and 11 of Deacons being tested before, they're installed to the office and even those who serve under The deacons.

Being tested. By the deacons. Now. Wife. Not only is a plausible translation and verse 11. But would be A fairly easy in God's providence candidate. For a deacon, because he's been testing her and observing her and knows her her character. Better than he knows the character of any other women.

In the church. And surely we would expect that a deacon's wife will be involved in the work. There's not this sense in the Bible of a husband being called to one thing and a wife being called to some completely different thing. No wife is called to be her husband's wife.

And yes. There may be much liberty and much delegation in his A delegating things to her and employing her in many things. And yet is expected that she will be doing. Whatever it is that most enables Him and his calling that they served together as one. The tube will come.

One. Flesh. And so, The character of a deacon's wife because of the testing of the women who serve under the Deacons That will come into play. And especially not just in verse 11, which we have before us now But, As part of ruling. One's own house well, which will consider more fully next week when we do versus 12 and 13.

Lord willing and Lord sparing us. And if he doesn't and praise God, we'll have a good blessing in the Bible and never need ourselves to use it. But we may yet desire. That the church so long as she remains. Would obey Jesus. And bring Jesus glory. And dependence. Upon Jesus by his spirit.

Let's pray. Our Father, we pray that you would help us to obey you to obey Christ. In small things, those which seem small to us. Even such things as procedure by which How to install deacons in your church? We pray. Lord that you would produce in all of us.

These characteristics that make us useful for service. So that whether we ever come into office or not. We might be useful for service and bring Christ glory. By the character and conviction. That he Produces in us and the fruit of service that he produces through us. Oh, Lord. From marvelous that you redeemed, sinners such as we are.

By your great salvation. We pray that you would, That you would be glorified in your church. Even in this part. Of how you take care of your poor under the kingship of Christ which we ask in his name. Amen.