

1 Tim. 3:1-7

Aspiring to Graceful Leadership in the Church

I. Introductory questions:

- How can we *honestly* answer the call to be blameless?
- How can we urge our men to *aspire* to lead?
- How can our assessment of ourselves be *balanced*?

II. Paul's highest priority: Acts 14:21-23

A. Securing competent men to lead who will ...

- strengthen the souls of God's people - encourage faithfulness
- remind them of tribulation

B. Aspiring to lead ... is a difficult, but good work

III. Primary qualifications for ἐπι-σκοπή:

- be willing to be assessed
- have a consistent personal character

A. Blamelessness: The umbrella term for all the requirements that follow

- The best shepherds have a deep, profound sense of their sinfulness

IV. Things that must and must not categorize an elder: Fleshing out *blamelessness*

A. Married life:

- you won't deceive your wife that you are sinless
- absolute faithfulness to the woman you marry

B. Moderation: soberness, sound mind, well-ordered

— inner consistency establishes our usefulness

C. Managing your household

D. Hospitable

— loving strangers

— long tempered

— patient and forbearing

E. Be indifferent to wealth

— ‘must not be greedy of filthy lucre’

— tithing

F. Not newly planted (recent conversion)

G. Protecting the sheep with sound doctrine H. Be people of prayer

CONCLUSION

Recognize the distinction between striving and attaining Phil. 3:12-16

— On the one hand: Romans 7:14-17; 1 Tim. 1:15

— On the other hand: 2 Tim. 1:3; 1 Cor. 11:1

Paul’s conscience is clear because his sincerest desire is to strive to do God’s will.