

“WORTHY SERVANTS FOR CHRIST”

I TIMOTHY 3:8-13

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INTRODUCTION

“Joe is not very faithful in his attendance; let’s make him a Deacon and maybe he’ll get more involved in the church!” There have been many such foolish reasons for selecting people to the office of Deacon and the results have been quite disastrous. In this passage, Paul makes clear: 1) that only those who are tested and proven should be selected as deacons: 2) that only those who meet certain definite Biblical qualifications should be selected: 3) that there is an important place for female deaconesses also who must meet certain qualifications: 4) that those who faithfully serve will be greatly rewarded.

Most believe that we can trace the origin of the biblical office of Deacon to Acts chapter 6. After acknowledging the need for persons to take care of the benevolence ministry of the congregation, so that the apostles could be free carry out their significant spiritual ministry, the congregation looked for men with the following qualifications (vv. 3, 5):

- 1) men of good reputation
- 2) men full of the Holy Spirit
- 3) men full of wisdom
- 4) men full of faith
- 5) men who could take charge of the work

But the church soon became aware of the fact that some of the ministry performed by deacons was delicate in nature because it was directed to ladies; godly females could more safely and effectively counsel, baptize, and minister to ladies in the congregation with special needs.

Deacons have a very important ministry – ministry it is indeed because the meaning of the word “deacon” is “minister, servant.” Jesus promoted the importance of being servants; in fact, he included himself as a servant who came to minister to others and to save them from their sins. Jesus was the greatest “deacon”, and even the apostle Paul referred to himself as a “deacon/servant” and told other pastors that they also are to be “servants/deacons” So although Paul makes a place for a special group of “servants” that have taken on the official title of “deacon,” there is a sense in which every Christian is to be a “deacon/servant” of Jesus Christ.

YOU MUST YIELD YOUR LIFE TO BE A SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST [and you must be willing to be a Deacon or Deaconess if you are qualified].

- I. THE TESTING OF THE DEACON (10)
 - A. Not a novice—same as bishop/pastor.
 - B. Tested with the goal of approval.
 - C. “Serve as deacon”—technical meaning of verb “minister, serve,” again in v. 13.

- II. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE DEACON (8-9, 10b, 12)

NEGATIVE

 - A. Men of dignity—serious-minded in purpose and dignified in conduct
 - B. Not “double-tongued”—talking out of both sides of the mouth
 - C. Not addicted to much wine
 - D. Not fond of disgraceful gain—money becomes the goal rather than God’s glory; also deals with dishonest methods and possible embezzling

E. Not called into reproach, blameless (10)

POSITIVE

- A. Holding on to sound doctrine—"the mystery of the faith." (9)
- B. Having a pure/clear conscience while holding sound teaching (9)
- C. One-wife type of men—"husbands of one wife" (12)
- D. Good managers of their household and children (12)

III. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF THE DEACONESS (11)

First, we must be clear that the reference here is not to *women in general, or even to *wives of deacons.

Note the same 4 quality kinds: her demeanor, her tongue, her wine, her trustworthiness.

- A. Dignified—same as the men
- B. Not "she devils"—"slanderers/malicious gossips"; same word used in singular most often for the Devil.
- C. Temperate/clear-minded/self-controlled (same as for bishops in v. 2)
- D. Faithful in all things—especially in material and financial dealings

IV. THE REWARDS OF THE DEACON (13)—"Those who have truly "**deaced**"—served as deacons.

- A. A high standing—an honorable position, recognized and esteemed; also can reflect an honorable relationship with God, blessed by God and honored by Him.
 - This does not refer to his promotion to being a pastor—not that that has not happened on many occasions—because the main purpose of being a deacon could not be to have a stepping stone to becoming a pastor!
 - "Purchase" gives the wrong idea; it is to "attain, acquire, gain for oneself."
- B. Great boldness and confidence "in the faith that is in Christ Jesus"
 1. Boldness in working with the congregation—freedom of speech, plainness, courage, confidence, fearlessness.
 2. Boldness and confident access to God and in doing his work for God.
 3. All of this takes place in his spiritual standing: "**in Christ Jesus.**"
 4. All of this is due to and by means of his "faith/trust/confidence" in Christ Jesus.

CONCLUSION

In serving the Lord, you always get more than you give! The rewards outweigh the duties and burdens!

God desires dedicated men to serve as deacons in the local church; God desires dedicated men to be His servants in doing his will—whether technically deacons or not!

God wants women to serve as deaconesses, and dedicated women to serve Him and His people even if not deaconesses.

BEREAN NEEDS SOME WOMEN TO COMMIT TO SERVING IN THIS WAY RIGHT NOW!

Men, will you respond to the call? Ladies, will you respond to His call?

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