



**Faith Baptist Church of Cabot, Arkansas**  
**Pastor's Mid-Week Bible Study**  
**November 11, 2009**

**Lesson Nine – The Bishop**  
**1 Timothy 3:1-7**

This *is* a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the *same* condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

**Introduction**

Having exhorted Timothy to remain at Ephesus and deal with issues within the church there, Paul has addressed in chapter two the attitudes and actions of men and women in the public worship of the church. Now he turns his attention to the character of the men who would desire to be leaders in the church – the bishops.

**Exegesis**

- ❖ The Position of a Bishop
  - The desire

The first “desires” in verse one speaks of reaching out for something. In this context, it may be the public declaration that someone wants to be a Bishop. The second “desires” in verse one speaks of an inward longing for something. This speaks of the burden of the heart that prompts the more public desire to be a Bishop. If there is no true inward compulsion, one will not last as a Bishop. But desire in and of itself does not qualify one as a Bishop. Desire must be matched with character, hence the list which will follow.

- The Bishop

The Greek word for “bishop” had the idea of investigation, inspection and oversight. It is used in 1 Timothy 3:1, 2 and Titus 1:7 and Philippians 1:1. In reference to the church, it describes the responsibility of the church’s leadership in regards to the spiritual oversight of the church. \*See note at end for more information.

- A good work

Being a bishop is good. It is a position of excellence and benefit to the Kingdom of God. It is a noble office. It is work. It is a labor in the Word and among the people. It is a good work, worthy to be desired.

- ❖ The Qualification of a Bishop

➤ A plural singular

The list given in verses two through seven is not a buffet of choice, but rather a snapshot of the whole picture of a bishop's character. Perfection is not the issue. But a bishop's character must generate the confidence of the people and be an example to the people.

➤ The list

- Blameless: Irreproachable; nothing in his character that would be grounds for accusation.
- Husband of one wife: Man of one woman.
- Temperate: Sober in respect to wine and thus sober, watchful and circumspect in character.
- Sober-minded: Of a sound mind; prudent.
- Of good behavior: Well arranged; mannerly.
- Hospitable.
- Able to teach.
- Not given to wine: Not given to wine so that one's behavior not be controlled by wine.
- Not violent: Not a man who looks for a fight.
- Not greedy for money.
- Gentle: Modest, mild, kind.
- Not quarrelsome: Doesn't carry a chip on his shoulder.
- Not covetous: Not a lover of things.
- One who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence: If a man cannot oversee his home and his family, he will not be able to oversee the church.
- Not a novice: A lack of maturity will leave a man open to the dangers of pride.
- A good testimony among those who are outside: His reputation must be solid outside as well as inside the church lest the Devil use his hypocrisy against Christ and the church.

### Application

1. A church must carefully weigh the character of any man who desires the office of bishop. The consequences of a hurried and non-comprehensive process can be devastating.
2. A man who desires to be and is acknowledged as a bishop must labor diligently not merely to project the right kind of character, but to be the right kind of character.
3. A man who desires to be and is acknowledged as a bishop must labor diligently to develop his ability to teach since teaching the Word of God is at the center of spiritual oversight.
4. A church must recognize the office of bishop as a good work lest they give little thought to the kind of man who holds the office or give little respect to a man who holds it well. (1 Timothy 5:17-18)

\*A fuller description of the office of a bishop, pastor or elder and its role in the church can be found in a sermon preached in August 2009 from a series entitled "Together in the Church". The sermon can be downloaded at <http://faithcabot.org/archive/sermonseries/list.htm>.

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