**Character Qualifications of a Deacon**

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. We begin today a more detailed look at the list of qualifications, found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. We’ll focus today on the CHARACTER qualifications (FAMILY qualifications next).
2. A few general observations, before we begin.
   1. In terms of character qualifications, nothing is required that is not required of any other Christian.
   2. Second, most of these specific character qualifications suggest a broader principle which should be considered when deciding whether or not a man is qualified.
   3. So, rather than look at these as a check list, we’re going to identify some broader qualifications, and then show how the specific qualifications fit.
   4. More on this next week, but what about the qualifications in v. 11?

**BODY:**

1. We will, however, begin with this specific qualification, the first one mentioned in the text. A deacon must be **reverent**—toward God, toward God’s word, and toward the things which relate to eternity.
   1. And he does that by being serious (“grave”—ASV, KJV) and enthusiastic about these things (not incompatible with a “merry heart” (Prov. 15:13, 15; 17:22).
   2. Some Christians seem to be serious about everything **except** spiritual things—job, hunting and fishing, college football, the various clubs to which they belong, etc.
   3. Perhaps it’s fitting that this one heads the list, because if one is truly reverent in all the ways we specified, he will in time develop these other qualifications.
   4. Specifically, how does one show reverence toward God’s word? Look at v. 9: **“holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.”**
      1. Revere the gospel by holding fast to it (2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 1:9).
      2. NOT by holding a false doctrine (Revelation 2:5).
2. A deacon, like any other Christian, can have only one master, and that one master must be God. He can’t be controlled, or brought under the power of anyone or anything else. Two different qualifications fall under this general principle.
   1. **“Not greedy for money”** (1 Timothy 3:8).
      1. “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24).
      2. And so the man who seemingly can never get enough of the things of this life (for himself or his children), let’s encourage him to repent and grow out of this obsession, but let’s not appoint him a deacon.
      3. There may also be a very practical consideration here, in that a deacon may have to handle church funds (remember Judas—John 12:6).
   2. **“Not given to much wine”** (1 Timothy 3:8).
      1. “You cannot serve God and [an intoxicating substance],” whether it be wine, another alcoholic beverage, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs.
      2. A.T. Robertson: “not holding the mind on much wine.”
   3. Of course, one can have a different master than money or alcohol—power, internet, the television set, or anything else that consumes too much of one’s mind and time.
3. A deacon must be someone in whom there is no deceit.
   1. We’re borrowing this phrase from what Jesus said about Nathanael in John 1:47: “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit.”
   2. Obviously, this would disqualify a liar, but think of other ways one can “lie”—by acting one way around some people, and entirely different around others; by acting one way on Sunday, and another way on Monday; by saying one thing to please one group of people, and something else to please another group (talking out of both sides of your mouth).
   3. See anything to match this description? **“Not double-tongued”** (1 Timothy 3:8).
      1. To use the words of Jesus, his “yes” is “yes,” and his “no” is “no.” He doesn’t change his tune to fit his audience, which is often what people do when they’re too interested in pleasing men.
   4. There’s something else in this list we need to put in this category, and that’s the “**pure conscience**” mentioned in v. 9 (used in connection with holding the mystery of the faith). Could someone be merely **professing** the truth without living it?
      1. How to maintain a pure conscience? “We are confident that we have a good conscience, in ALL THINGS desiring to LIVE honorably” (Hebrews 13:18).
4. And so…a deacon must be conscientious in striving to do ALL the will of God.
   1. Isn’t this necessary in order to be **“found blameless”** (v. 10)?
   2. As we pointed out in a previous lesson, we’re not looking for things in his past, for which he has repented and been forgiven.
   3. Is there anything in his life presently for which he can be blamed—some sinful action for which he has not repented?—that’s the real question.
   4. Is there some area of God’s will that he has obviously neglected, that he does not take seriously?

**CONCLUSION:**

1. We covered all the specific character qualifications, but we discussed them in the context of some broader principles.
2. Hopefully we have one or more men here, who after being “tested” (1 Timothy 3:10), meet these character qualifications.