**The Family Qualifications for a Deacon**

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. Briefly review first 2 lessons in the series.
2. #3: The family qualifications, found in 1 Timothy 3:12: “Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.”
   1. And, we’ll need to consider this passage, too, from the previous verse: “Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.”
3. What we won’t be considering is some of the more controversial questions: 1) Must a deacon have more than one child? 2) What if a prospective deacon’s first wife died and he remarried? 3) What if he divorced his wife for adultery and married again?

**BODY:**

1. “Let deacons be the husbands of one wife…”
   1. We cannot, then, appoint to serve as a deacon…
      1. Someone who is presently single, for whatever reason (never married, wife died, or divorced).
      2. A polygamist. Obvious to us, but what about those at the time this was written? Could there have been some brethren still doing what they were *permitted* to do under the Law of Moses?
2. “Ruling their children and their own houses well”
   1. Calls for a look at how he rules his entire household.
      1. One who rules with an iron first, in a domineering fashion, is not ruling well. He’s not ruling well, because he’s not following the pattern of rule established by Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33).
         1. Christ has all authority, and His house must submit to Him, but look at what He does for His house—gives Himself for it, shows patience toward it, nourishes and cherishes it, shows kindness, tenderheartedness, forgiveness.
         2. The husband/father should be doing the same for those in his house—his wife and children.
      2. On the other hand, he may **not** **be ruling at all**. He may just be flying by the seat of his pants, letting things go, not making the hard decisions.
      3. And in some cases, his wife may be ruling. Is HE the head of the house, or is SHE? If she’s not submissive, and he’s not taking charge, we’ve got a problem.
      4. One who does not provide for his family is not ruling well, either.
   2. Now, let’s focus on the children.
      1. Let’s notice, first, the difference between what is required of a deacon’s children as opposed to an elder’s children.
         1. On elders, see Titus 1:6—“faithful children,” or “believing children.”
         2. No such qualification is given for deacons. In other words, deacons do not have to have children who are Christians.
         3. Deacons, then, may be appointed at an earlier age than elders.
      2. How do we know if he’s ruling his children well?
         1. Look at what’s said about an elder’s rule, up in v. 4: “one who rules his house well, having his children in submission with all reverence.”
         2. So we should ask certain questions about his children. Are they well behaved? Respectful and obedient toward their parents?
         3. Do we have evidence that these children are being brought up “in the training and admonition of the Lord”? (Ephesians 6:4). Is there evidence that he and his wife have made this a priority?
3. The character of a man’s wife—does it have any bearing on his appointment as a deacon?
   1. “*Their* wives *must be* reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.”
      1. ASV and NASV have “women,” instead of “wives.”
      2. All women? Doubtful, since he’s talking about special servants in this context.
      3. Women who serve as special servants (deaconesses)? Not called that here, and evidence elsewhere in the N.T. is lacking.
      4. Wives of deacons? Perhaps, since deacons are discussed in immediate context.
      5. Wives of both deacons and bishops? Note the two “likewises” (vv. 8, 11) after the introduction of bishops in v. 1, perhaps tying both lists together with v. 11.
   2. Whatever the case, both his influence and effectiveness are affected by his wife’s character/behavior. Using 1 Timothy 3:11 as a guide, here are some questions to ask.
      1. In general, is she a faithful Christian? (“faithful in all things”)
      2. Is she serious and enthusiastic about spiritual things? (“reverent”)
      3. Show self-control with tongue? Any problems with gossip? (“not slanderers”)
      4. Does she exhibit self-control in other areas, such as dress (1 Timothy 2:9-10)? How about her temperament? Does she get angry too easily? (“temperate”)
      5. Is she in submission to her husband? He’s not ruling his house well, if she’s not.
      6. How is she doing as a mother? Is she more concerned with her children’s popularity than their godliness? Is she more concerned with their secular education than their spiritual education?