

Thursday, December 1, 2022 • Read 1 Timothy 3:12–13

Questions from the Scripture text: What sex must a deacon be (v12)? How many women may he have or be committed to? Over what two entities must he stand over? In what manner? Where else would we expect the same performance? What two things does such performance purchase? In Whom is this standing and boldness in the faith? What does aiming for boldness imply that deacons should be seeking an opportunity to do (cf. Ac 6:8–10, 8:5, 8:26, 8:40)?

What fruit may we expect the Lord to produce by the ministry of a faithful deacon? 1 Timothy 3:12–13 looks forward to the second reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these two verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **faithful deacons advance well in the faith, and are very free with their faith, for attesting Jesus to others.**

An ongoing proving, v12. In vv10–11, we received the Lord’s instruction that part of the ordination and installation process for deacons is their being proven by testing—in part, that they prove themselves as overseeing an operation in which they likewise entrust with the sensitive part of the work only those who are of proven character themselves.

The Spirit had already instructed us about the character of deacons in v8 and their doctrinal integrity in v9. So why, after both the qualifications and the testing requirement, does he now return to what deacons must be in v12? The answer (which we are helped to see by the future result in v13) is that deacons are expected to continue to prove to be men of such character and doctrine in all of their relationships.

Like an overseer must be to be installed to his office, deacons must continually strive to be “husband of one wife” (more literally, “a one-woman man”). Like an overseer, deacons must “rule their children and their own houses well.” The “good ruling” in v12 is tied by that adjective to the same one, which is used in the phrases “good deaconing” and “good standing” in v13.

In an age in which the covenantal view of the home has waned, we might forget the importance of a man’s ministry in his own home. The apostle has not. This congregationally-proven man must be a continually-proven man in his marriage, with his children, and in his daily affairs. A man must constantly be shepherding that household of Christ’s that has been assigned to him. His standing as a deacon can either greatly aid (a la v13) this ministry in the home or greatly harm it.

What good will it do a deacon or his household if his ministry is generally accepted by others, but he is an unfaithful husband, an unskilled or evil father, or a tyrannical employer? These will not only suffer the usual harm of ungodliness in the seat of the authority who is over them, but the harm will be magnified because they can see the contrast between what he actually is and what the church thinks that he is proven to be.

Sadly, many congregations’ histories are littered with unbelieving, rebellious, lost, or bitter officers’ wives, children, and associates. What have such officers “proven” to be? The proof came not in the brief testing prior to their installation to office, but in the prolonged testing of the sad outcomes of their lives.

With ongoing fruit, v13. For the deacon who “rules well his own household” (v12), his “deaconing well” (v13), leads to a “well-elevated faith” (v13). If he is a properly covenantally thinking man, one of his great hopes and prayers before God is that this calling that he has received to the diaconate will be blessed to the spiritual and eternal good of his wife. That it will be blessed to the spiritual and eternal good of his children. That it will be blessed to the spiritual and eternal good of every man, woman, or child that the Lord has providentially assigned to his daily affairs (his “household”).

Deacons, then, oversee earthly ministry, but they are anything but “earthly minded.” Their deaconing well is designed by the Lord to elevate their faith. Part of this is that they come to be highly esteemed by others and have not just more opportunity but more effectiveness in the ministry of the gospel. Part of this is that they attain a “great boldness” (“freedom” or “confidence”) “in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

As covenantal thought in our land has declined for the last 200 years, we have lost the sense that a man’s first mission field is always his own home. But the deacon knows better than that. Even with respect to material things, we’ll be hearing in a couple of chapters that the man who fails to take care of his own household “has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (v8). And how much more this would be the case if it is true with respect to spiritual things!

But praise be to God, His design for the diaconate is that they are an example in their own home, with an effective and fruitful ministry among wife, children, and associates. And in this care of their home, they join the elders in being a good example to the flock. In Ephesus, most of all, they should have known that every head of household is called to the Eph 5:22–6:9 ministry in their own home. An effective diaconate is designed by Christ both to enable and model this ministry.

What danger is there to a wife or children, when a man’s reputation in the ministry outpaces his ministry in the home? What benefit may there be to the family when the two match? What benefit may there be to the congregation?

Sample prayer: Lord, we praise You for Your design of the family, and Your covenant faithfulness in the households of Your congregation. Forgive us, for we are weak and sinful, and we are not faithful like You are. How often, O Lord, we are not what we ought to be, and not even what we lead others to think that we are! And our families are so vulnerable, because they are the first ones to see it. Forgive us, O God! And grant unto us a life of repentance and humility and grace, such that we may have a consistent and effective ministry, even among those who know us best. In particular, we pray for our deacons, that they might deacon well in the congregation, and that they might rule well in their own home, so that they may advance well in the faith. Give them great freedom and confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus, in whose Name we ask it, AMEN!

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First Timothy 3 verses 12 through 13. These are God's words. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife. Ruling their children, and their own houses as well. For those who have served well, as deacons. Obtained for themselves. A good standing, and great boldness. In the faith, which is in Christ, Jesus.

So far the reading of god's inspired and inherent work. Hopefully, remember from the last couple of weeks at first in, Verse 8, 9 the spirit gave us the character. That by which we would identify someone who he was calling to be a deacon in verse 8. And also the integrity of his doctrine.

Has convictions holding mystery. Of the faith with the pure conscience. And then in verses 10 and 11. The spirit instructed us that the church is to test to Uh, test by proving and approving. In a test case. A man who has the conscience. Has the character and doctrine of verse 8 and verse 9 that he is to be tested verse 10.

That the congregation might find him blameless that the Not only would he be? Um, Irreproachable in his character and in his conduct. But that the result of the test would be That. It has oversight of the diagonal service. Is a claimed by the congregation as a whole. And that he himself the deacons themselves, likewise Uh, for the ministry of the deaconate that is especially done by the women.

And therefore, that sensitive part of the ministry. That Um, Under the deacons, that is Especially to be carried out by women that if it is so sensitive. That it's that part of the ministry. That the deacons exercise, the same wisdom with respect to their own installation to office and for whom they enlist In doing these.

Um, this particular part of the diagonal ministry like that. Uh, to to, which they were originally called for which the office was originally instituted in Acts chapter 6. And that about, which we're going to hear. In. Chapter 5 namely in particularly the taking care of widow. So there was the testing Of the deacons.

In their oversight and particularly testing, whether they are Uh, they themselves exercise the wisdom. Of enlisting, those who are proven or will they be like, The church has been since the 70s trying to find a job for everyone just to quote unquote, get them involved so that they feel invested and And obligate it.

And therefore, Willy nilly including anyone in service without exercising the wisdom. That is described in verse 11. Well, once a deacon has been installed to his office, he's not done. Being tested. No, is still in the midst of Being proven out, there is an ongoing proving in this ongoing proving Uh, takes place not just in the congregation.

But also in the home. Uh, let deacons be the husbands of one wife. Ruling their, their children and their own houses. Well, just as an overseer, in order to be installed to his office, was supposed to be a husband of one wife back in. Verse 2. So also a deacon must be a one woman, man.

That's literally what it says here. A man of one woman Um, They're not being separate words for husband. And wife here. Or in greek. And we Consider that last week. When we noted that. Um, wives there. There's probably Adjust the word women, although the wives certainly would be Expected to have that character and expected.

To be among those whom the deacons and list for that sensitive part of the service. Uh, Notice that this doesn't Require. That deacons are men only the way the apostles required, it and act, six. It just presumes that what the apostles required in Act 6 was correct. Uh, it is impossible for a woman to be a man of one woman.

Regardless of what the perversion of a nation under great judgment, great spiritual judgment. Thanks. It is impossible for a woman. To be a man. And therefore, We read here that the deacons being installed already to their office. Must be consistently in the home. What they are in the congregation.

In other words, those who rule well and this word that's translated. Well Uh, for ruling their children and their own houses as well. In verse 12 is the same as the word for deaconing. Well. Verse 13, served. Well as deacons is just deaconing. Well, Obtained for themselves and it's the same word as good.

Um, A well or good standing attainment. Elevation advancement. The word translated standing is really of the The next level. Next degree. And so there's something that they attain to As. As they deacon well in the congregation but they don't just want it to be deaconing well in the congregation A man's first place of ministry is his home, and this is true of the deacons also, After all, we're going to hear in some instruction that pertains to their work in chapter 5, that a man who does not provide for his own household, those who are his own, and especially if his own house.

Has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. And if that's true and material things, how much more true and spiritual things. And yet the history of many congregations is littered. With. Uh, wives and children. And household associates are everyday, associates of men who were officers in the church.

And were thought to be one thing by the congregation. But proved to be something else. With their wife, something else. With their children, something else with their employees or servants or business. Associates. Um, But the lord is a covenantal. God The he has given us the household as the fundamental unit.

Of his covenant people. So there's covenant home with covenant children and even to some respect for Corinthians 7. Covenant spouses. Uh, where The the husband for the sake of the children and because of the believing of the wife is considered as if he had been holy. And so those covenant children of just the believing mother and first corinthians 7 are treated by god as if their father also was a believer.

As if their father also had been a saint Uh, you're not a half covenant child. If you have just one covenant parent, you're a full covenant child. As god as a covenant of god. And, Um, It offends against god of blasphemes against god and his gospel. When a man who seems to have been proven, Uh, to be godly and qualified in the congregation generally.

Is proven otherwise in the home. And this makes disasters, spiritual disasters. Wives, who are hard against god? And rebellious in their spirits. And unbelieving and hopeless of the gospel children who abandoned the faith. And accept any sort of false doctrine, who become self-indulgent and anti-authoritarian. Associates and servants who are inoculated against made.

By their own unconverted state. And yet with the The treatment that they receive from this officer of the church who's in their life. Uh, becoming the occasion

upon which Uh, they blaspheme and slander. The faith of the lord, Jesus and even our lord himself. Is exactly the opposite of what the office of deacon is designed to do.

Uh, verse 13 for those who deacon. Well, Obtain for themselves. A good standing. And great boldness. The word. Uh, boldness is fine but to help your understanding of it, freedom in the faith confidence in the faith. That they're never, they don't have to be halting and stuttering and Shrinking bashful ashamed.

With the faith? No, they're free and open. Uh, with who Jesus is and what Jesus has done as they have experienced. Not only the gracious work of Jesus and themselves. But seeing the fruit of the lord's gracious work in his people because they're overseeing, the people of the lord Jesus Christ, and the service that they that they oversee the people of God in Is a proving ground to demonstration ground for the gracious work.

Jesus has been doing and then, and they come home, and they see the Lord's blessing bone, their ministry, to their wife, on the ministry to their children. In their every day. Laborers, with Those who are their servants or employees, or, or business associates, their neighbors. Um, they are enjoying the lord's blessing.

And not only are they. Then freer in themselves and And more ready to testify and who Christ is and what Christ has done? But the proof in their lives that others can see also affirms. Uh, that the word of about Christ in their mouth. Is true. This is how it altered to work with deacons.

This is how we see it, working in the book of Acts, you remember, Steven and you remember, Philip Philip, who's ministry in his own house to his daughter's results in his In his daughter is being used by the spirit, sometimes to prophesy Saying that which comes not from them, but Directly from the lord and Steven and Philip both becoming.

Being used by the lord for effective evangelism. Um, Therefore not only in their own homes. Uh, but in the household of God. So the deaconate is Not just a place where you set it and forget it. You Install, the deacon. And he's done. Once a man has been installed as a deacon, his ministry, has just beginning.

And the great place of that ministry. Is to be his own home. How is he to oversee others? And Teach them. Press upon them their obligation in their own home. If he himself is not fulfilling that obligation, In his own home. And so there's much glory to be brought to Christ and to the gospel, through good deaconal service.

And the instruction of the holy spirit for pursuing the glory of Christ, and the glory of the gospel, in good diagonal, service includes the installation of deacons who not only have proven character and proven theological convictions through a testing that has taken place. In anticipation of their installation to the office.

But also deacons who continue to prove forth the gospel in their own home. In their own life. And obtain. For themselves. This. Level where they become. Um, Elevated in the eyes of others, they attain to A level of maturity, that is an example and an encouragement for the rest of the congregation.

As well. Indeed. All husbands all fathers. That should be seeking to be these things and that's one of the reasons why the lord gives to his church, both overseers and deacons Who are examples? Not because they are unique. But because they are the sorts of husbands and fathers that ought to be in every home.

In the church. Let us pray that we Would have such as well. Father, we pray for me, we pray for the boys, especially That you would be producing in us the character of Christ. We pray for our church. That we would have elders into deacons. According to the description who are Installed.

According to the instructions. And who continued to proceed? In the manner. All of which are described here. And This chapter, the last. Several weeks worth of study. We pray. Lord that Christ would be glorified. That he would do gracious work in every man woman. Boy. And girl. In our home.

In our congregation. And that this gracious work would be displayed. By the proper ordering and carrying out. Of his church according to his word ring glory. To our redeemer. In this way, we ask In Jesus name, amen.