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Looking for NT Deacons (II); 1 Tim 3:8-13

GPBC

8.18.19

Introduction – Next week we will nominate and elect 4 men to serve us as deacons. We are praying and asking the Lord to help us identify the men He has been preparing to take on this leadership role. God has not left us without instruction and guidance on this issue. Rather, in His Word, God has given us a description of a NT deacon through this list of qualifications in 1 Tim 3. These are not optional qualities of the men who are to serve. These are not good suggestions for deacons to abide. These qualifications are the biblical standard. Paul says in v8 “Deacons must be.” This is a serious calling. It is a serious endeavor to appoint men to serve. Namely because this is God’s church and we are God’s people. So He has left us with an instruction manual on how to identify those men He intends to serve us.

We must give ourselves to a careful study of these qualifications, and then over the week before us, let us give ourselves to prayer. Let us ask God who would He have be our servants, and let us take this passage as our guide. If we will be faithful to follow God’s guiding Word, He will be faithful to raise up men, and He will be faithful to help us identify those men. In the end, God will be glorified and we will be served well.

Last week we looked at the qualifications listed in vv8-10 and we learned that a deacon will be a growing Christian in the realms of his personal testimony, his individual faith, and his record of service in the church. Today as we look to vv12-13, we examine the realm of the home and the blessings of serving.

- I. Leadership Begins at Home (v12)
  - a. The deacon must not only be a growing Christian in his personal life and in the church, he must also be a growing Christian in his home.
  - b. First, he must be a growing Christian in his relation to his wife. When the Bible says, “Let deacons each be the husband of one wife,” the Greek literally reads “A one-woman man.”
    - i. As a side note, I don’t believe marriage itself is a qualification. I believe single men can serve as pastors and deacons. Cf. v2.

- ii. 1 & 2 Timothy indicate that Timothy was serving as a pastor in Ephesus and it seems that he was single. Paul was a single man, and he planted churches, which placed him in the role of pastor until more were established. Paul also speaks of the gift of singleness, in that a single person is able to be devoted fully to the work of the Lord without the responsibilities that come with married life. So I believe single men who are growing Christians and meet these other qualifications can serve as deacons and serve well.
  - iii. Therefore, I would read this qualification this way – if he is married, he must be a one-woman man.
  - iv. In other words, a deacon or pastor must be fully and faithfully devoted to his wife. His relationship with his wife must be known and observed to be honoring to the covenant of marriage.
  - v. Our pattern for devotion to our wives comes from Christ's devotion to His Bride, His people. Ephesians 5:25-33
  - vi. Just as a deacon should hold the mystery of faith with a clear conscience, he should also hold fast to his wife.
  - vii. A one-woman man is a growing Christian who loves his wife as Christ loves the church. When men love their wives well, it is easily observed and known. When men do not love their wives well, it is easily observed and known.
  - viii. A one-woman man will honor and protect and provide for his wife. He will be wholeheartedly devoted to her and to her growth in the Lord. He will not belittle her or neglect her.
  - ix. Use of pornography disqualifies a man from serving as a deacon. Being a womanizer disqualifies a man from serving as a deacon. If he can't honor the marriage covenant, he won't honor the covenant of faith.
- c. Second, He must be a growing Christian in relation to his children. He manages his children. That means a few things at least:
- i. He doesn't leave the raising of the children solely to his wife.
  - ii. Eph 6:4 – to manage your children means to disciple your children. To teach them the things of God, the ways of God, to impress upon them the gospel and their need for the gospel.

- iii. Fathers, we teach our kids to ride a bicycle, to do their chores, to fish, to play sports – we must teach them the most important thing to know – to know Jesus and know life and salvation.
- iv. Fathers should be the primary disciplinarian in the home. Fathers should set the tone and the expectations and the rule by instruction and by example.
- v. Fathers should train their children to behave, to be respectful, to do good to others, to share, to be honest. Unruly children are not so much a statement about the child as they are a statement about their fathers.
- d. Third, he must be a growing Christian in the managing of his own household. That covers a lot of territory. Managing a household entails everything from overseeing finances, to ensuring provision and protection, to providing a nurturing and godly environment, and more. It takes the grace of God to be a godly father!
- e. That's precisely why these qualifications are merely a description of a growing Christian.
- f. If love and devotion to his wife is not evident, if his children are without instruction, if his home is in shambles, he must give his full and undivided attention to his home. He's got work to do at home. And if he's not serving well at home, he can't serve well as a deacon.

## II. The Blessings of Serving (v13)

- a. There is no doubt that serving as a deacon will require much. Time is required. Involvement is required. Dealing with people, having conversations, helping answer question, settle disputes, offering encouragement and help and correction and ministry are all involved. The level of responsibility ebbs and flows, but for sure an extra weight is placed on the shoulders of deacons.
- b. However, no matter the amount or weight that service requires, it also yields great blessings.
- c. First, there is the blessing of being an example of faithfulness to the church.
  - i. This is something the deacon does not seek. He's not out for the spotlight, that's what identifies him as a deacon. Yet, as he faithfully serves the members of the church and the ministry of

the church, his life becomes a witness and example to the church. His humble, willing, steadfast service blesses the church, and the church takes notice of him who has no desire to be noticed. Young and old alike are encouraged in the faith when men serve the church.

- d. Second, there is the blessing to his own faith. You see the more you serve others, the greater your joy in Christ and your faith in Christ grows. Service to others, loving others, is actually one of the greatest keys of spiritual growth. A faithful deacon will grow in his faith.

Conclusion – As we seek to elect deacons next week, we are asking the Lord to help us identify the men among us who are growing in their faith – in their personal lives, in the church, and in the home. Those are the men God is raising up to serve us.

Last week we observed that really all of us should be growing in our faith. This is not just qualifications for deacons. This is a description of a growing Christian.

This week, I want to press this text upon us as men here at Grassy Pond Baptist. Men, God has called us to be the spiritual leaders in our homes and in our church. God is calling us to live our lives to the honor and glory of His name. God calls us to step up in the home, to step up in the church. God calls us to take the lead. The most important things we will ever do, the things that will matter the most, are how we lived life at home and how we served the gospel in our local church.

“Where are the men?” is a common issue every church faces. The ladies show up to study the Bible. The ladies show up to pray. The ladies are willing to serve. The wives shoulder the load many times at home to manage the home, to raise the children, discipline the children, teach the children the things of God. Listen men, there are more ways to be an absent father than abandoning your family. We can be spiritually absent. We are also prone to abandoning our responsibilities. Working to pay the bills is not the sum total of our calling. The real work begins when we get home and when we go to church. Men, let this passage be a wake-up call to us all. Let it never be said of Grassy Pond, where are the men to lead us spiritually? It shouldn't be difficult to think of names to write down next week. Rather, it should be difficult to narrow the names down because so many are ready and qualified.