



## Elder Qualifications

***Above reproach***—that is, unable to be charged with sinful behavior that would impede his integrity and credibility in teaching, being an example to follow, or allowing the name of Christ to be maligned. This applies to his conduct and reputation both inside and outside the church ([1 Tim 3:7](#)). It is not that there will not be accusations in life, as any frontrunner blazing a trail of godliness in an ungodly world will face opposition and threats, but the accusations cannot be valid or stick to him. Just like that can of Pam in your baking cabinet that you spray on the pan so that the goodies won't stick, so the men of God live sincere and credible lives of integrity such that false accusations won't stick, as they are inconsistent with the manifest character of the man. Again, this overarching trait does not speak of sinless perfection but of a life growing in Christlikeness, exuding Christian virtue. This one overarching qualification is then fleshed out by the other qualifiers of what this unquestionable and irreproachable character looks like.

***Marital fidelity*** is a “one-woman man,” a phrase best understood to mean one who is totally dedicated to his wife in his heart and actions. A shepherd-leader is an example of those who love, desire and think only of his wife. He's not a womanizer. Thus, even if a single man is a man of moral purity with no hint of impropriety.

***Self-controlled***—controls his emotions, behavior, and life. This means that he is not quick-tempered and/or pugnacious, and he does not indulge in excesses of Christian liberty ([1 Cor 8:1-3](#); Rom 14). He is not self-indulgent but well-balanced, calm, and careful, with no excesses in life that diminish clear thinking and sound judgment.

***Respectable***—this applies to his life in regard to both those inside and outside the church. His character reflects a maturity and sobriety that adorns the doctrine of Christ.



***Hospitable***—his home must be one that is open to others. As he shows kindness to strangers, he is generous and caring toward others, using what God has given him to serve them. This also speaks of one who is friendly and approachable.

***Gentle***—he has a meekness of character, displayed in a pattern of humility, compassion for others, and an appropriate softness in dealing with people. This speaks of one who is not easily offended, patient, and concerned about bringing others along in spiritual maturity.

***Not covetous***—one who is content with God’s provisions in his life ([Phil 4:11–13](#)); he is not envious, does not show partiality ([Jas 2:1–6](#)), and does not seek his own gain ([Matt 6:19–34](#); [1 Tim 6:6–10](#)).

***Good leader at home***—one who manages his own household and has children who “believe” (cf. [Titus 1:6](#)). This is best understood as being not in open rebellion but respectful and under control.

The implication is one whose home displays a pattern of orderliness and not chaos; displays a model of biblical roles—of submission—within the marital and parental relations.

***Spiritually mature***—not a new convert ([1 Tim 3:6](#)), but one who has enough experience in the faith to show faithfulness and perseverance through testing. This also implies that he has attained a certain degree of Bible knowledge and understanding so that he can instruct others.

***Able to teach***—this means that he has biblical/theological knowledge to such a degree that he is able to instruct others, manifesting a Spirit-enabled ability to communicate and defend doctrine ([Titus 1:9](#)). This is a skill in communicating God’s Word and integrity to teach carefully what Scripture says. This is the primary quality that differentiates elders from deacons. Though both groups may be involved in teaching to some degree, elders must have cultivated an aptitude for handling God’s Word. During the public examination, he demonstrates this aptitude in answering questions



on biblical, systematic, and practical theology. Thus, the congregation gladly affirms and comes under the leadership of one who can shepherd them in biblical truth.

These biblical qualifications are Jesus's own non-negotiable requirements for all who would lead His church as under-shepherds.