

Are You Above Reproach?

Leadership Qualifications

“Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach.” (1 Ti 3:1-2)

What is an overseer? An overseer is an individual who has received a calling from God and confirmed by God’s Word, and the church, who has pastoral oversight, he or she desires an important work. (1 Ti 3:1-13; 4:12; Tit 1:5-9) God has established absolutes that church members must use to test any professed call of God to do the work of a pastor. In addition to these absolutes, the church must consider the individual’s heart motive, education, burden, and alleged vision for that portion of the Body of Christ. As an overseer, you are an ambassador for the Kingdom of God and you must be a credible living testimony of example of who He is.

Standards for Overseers

The focal point of the absolutes rest upon behavior that has persevered in godly wisdom, right choices and personal holiness. The spiritual history of the individual desiring to become an overseer must be evaluated. The individual must be a born again believer who has steadfastly adhered to the ministry of Jesus Christ and his principles of righteousness, and exemplifies as a role model of faithfulness, truth, honesty and purity. His or her character should reflect an ability to be faithful with a few things which leads to a position of being in charge of many things. (Mt 25:21) This individual should demonstrate the highest example of perseverance in godliness, faithfulness, purity in the face of temptation and loyalty to and love for Christ and the gospel. (1 Ti 4:12,15) Church members will learn Christian ethics and true godliness from the Word; this individual must live the example of an unblemished pattern for church members to follow or imitate. (1 Co 11:1; Php 3:17; 1 Th 1:6; 2 Th 3:7,9; 2 Ti 1:13)

Be the Example

The overseer must model leadership in the home, in the marriage and in the family. (1 Ti 3:2,4-5; Tit 1:6) The overseer must be an example of faithfulness to his wife and children. If one is not able to lead his family, he will not be able to lead the body of believers. (1 Ti 3:5) A faithful husband, (*mias gunaikis*, Gk) a one-woman man, a faithful husband of his one wife. Persevering moral faithfulness to one’s wife and family is required for anyone desiring to be a leader and an example in the church.

The Word sets forth the principle that an overseer who throws aside his loyalty to God and the Word, and his fidelity to his wife and family, must be removed from

the office of an overseer. He is no longer “above reproach”. If the individual has godly sorrow and repentance for that sin, the church and God will mercifully forgive the individual and he will be restored in his relationship to God and the church. Keep in mind that there are some sins so grave that disgrace and shame of that sin will remain with the individual even after forgiveness, and for the rest of the individual’s life. (2 Sa 12:9-14)

Stumbling Block

The church must require from its leaders the highest standard of holiness, perseverance in faithfulness to God, His Word, and godly daily living. You must “set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” (1 Ti 4:12) If there are any habitual sins, addictions, soul ties, or sins in general, that haunt your life, eventually your secret will be exposed, and the members of your congregation will be forced, if functioning in accordance to the New Testament absolutes, to require you to step down from the position of overseer. Take responsibility and seek confidential counsel before bringing shame upon yourself and your church.