

The Qualifications of Elders

Part Two: Family Qualifications

Observations about Qualifications

- They describe a Christian man who is blameless in character and family life
- A person must have these qualities before being appointed as an elder
- These are individual, not collective qualifications
- Most of the qualifications are straightforward to understand
- The family qualifications require close consideration

1 Timothy 3:1–7 (NKJV)

This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. **2** A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife... **4** one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence **5** (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);

Titus 1:5–9 (NKJV)

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—**6** if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.

The Elder's Family

- Faithful Children
- One Wife

The Elder's Family

- Faithful Children
 - “not accused of dissipation or insubordination”
 - “in submission with all reverence”

Must an Elder have more than One Child to be Qualified?

The word “children” includes both singular and plural in its normal use:

- **Sarah** - She also said, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age.” – Gen. 21:7
- **Levirite marriage** - “Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.” – Matt. 22:24

1 Timothy 5:4, 9–10 (NKJV)

4 But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.

9 Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man, **10** well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

The Elder's Family

- Faithful Children
- One Wife

1 Timothy 3:2 (NKJV)

A bishop then must be blameless, **the husband of one wife**

Titus 1:5-6 - ... appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—**6** if a man is blameless, **the husband of one wife**, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination.

The phrase “must be the husband of one wife” seems to indicate...

- He must be currently married
- He must only have one spouse
- He must have never been previously married

1 Timothy 5:9–10 (NKJV)

Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she **has been the wife of one man**, **10** well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

A bishop then must be blameless, **having been the husband of one wife** ?

A One-Woman Man, a One-Man Woman

- The elder must be one who has demonstrated in his married life Christ's dedication to the church
- The widow indeed must be one who has demonstrated in her married life the church's dedication to Christ

Can a Widower be an Elder?

- These family qualities seem to specify not a status but a level of experience and dedication
- A man whose faithful children die does not lose the experience and wisdom gained by ruling his house well
- A man whose spouse dies does not lose the experience and wisdom gained by being the husband of one wife

The Elder's Family

- Faithful Children
- One Wife
- Qualifications of Elders' Wives?

1 Timothy 3:11 (NKJV)

Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.

Titus 2:1–5 (NKJV)

But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: **2** that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; **3** the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—**4** that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, **5** to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

The Elder's Family

- Faithful Children
- One Wife