DEACON QUALIFICATIONS

I Timothy 3:8 In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain.

“In the same way” translates a word meaning the next in a list of similar things. It is the same word translated “in the same way” in verse 11.

“Worthy of respect” is a translation of a Greek word commonly translated

“dignified” or “serious” in other translations. It refers to being serious about one’s faith and conduct.

“Sincere” is translated “double-tongued” in the King James Version, which is a more literal translation. It means describing something one way to one person and describing it another way to another person. (Speaking with forked tongue.)

“Not indulging in much wine” is “not addicted to much wine” in the New American Standard. The idea is that drinking much wine is an important part of this person’s life. It is less restrictive than the qualification for an Elder.

“Not pursuing dishonest gain” is exactly the same as the qualification for an overseer in Titus 1:7. Seeking an honest return for your labor or investment is perfectly fine; trying to make money dishonestly is not.

Holding Truth with a Clear Conscience

I Timothy 3:9(ESV) They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience.

Ephesians 3:4-6 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

A New Testament mystery is something not previously revealed. This would include truth about Gentiles being included in the church and some of the Old Testament laws, like dietary laws, no longer being in effect. A deacon must know these things; an elder must be able to explain them clearly.

Romans 2:14&15 (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.)

Romans 9:1 I speak the truth in Christ – I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit –

I Timothy 4:2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

I Corinthians 8:7 But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled.

I Timothy 1:19 holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith.

Test Them First

I Timothy 3:10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

The Deacons Family

I Timothy 3:12 A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and household well.

“Faithful to his wife” is exactly the same as the qualification for an Overseer in I Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6.

“Manage his children and household well” if very similar to I Timothy 3:4 and Titus 3:6, although not as strict and detailed as the qualifications for an overseer.

Women Deacons

I Timothy 3:11 In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

“In the same way” is exactly the same as in verse 8.

“Women” does not have a possessive pronoun and so is a better translation than “wives.”

“Worthy of respect” is exactly the same as in verse 8. It means being serious about one’s faith and conduct.

“Not malicious talkers” translates not *“diabolos,”* slanderers. The word is used of Satan who accused Job’s motives for being righteous. It is generally used of false accusations, but can refer to truthful accusations given with the intent to harm. I Corinthians 4:1-5 which tells us not to judge motives.

“Temperate” means free from the use of intoxicants as it does in the qualifications for an overseer in I Timothy 3:2.

“Trustworthy” is more frequently translated “faithful.” Someone who reliably does what they say they will do.

Men deacons are to be worthy of respect, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine and must have a clear conscience.

Women deacons must be worthy of respect, not slanderers, free from the use of intoxicants and be faithful in everything.

Those Who Serve Well

I Timothy 3:13 Those who have served *(“diakoneo”)* well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus. (parenthesis added)

The word translated “assurance” essentially means “boldness” as in the King James Version.

Acts 6:5b They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip

Acts 6:8 Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.

Acts 8:5 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there.

Things to Remember

Qualifications for Deacons who are men:

They must be serious about their faith and conduct.

They must speak truthfully to everyone.

They must not be addicted to much wine.

They must not be pursuing dishonest gain.

They must have a good understanding of Bible doctrine.

They must maintain a clear conscience.

They must be faithful to their wives and manage their families well.

They must first be tested.

Qualifications for Deacons who are women:

They must be serious about their faith and conduct.

They must not be slanderers.

They must be free from the use of intoxicants.

They must be trustworthy (faithful) in everything.

Those who serve well:

Gain an excellent standing in the church.

Gain boldness in presenting the truth of God.