

Sunday School Lesson: Qualifications for Overseers

Text: 1 Timothy 3:1–7 (BSB)

Audience: 6th–12th Grade (≈10 students)

Ice Breaker Questions

1. What qualities make someone a good leader in school, sports, or a job?
2. Would you trust someone to lead a team if they were talented but had a bad reputation? Why or why not?

Passage Context

Paul is writing to Timothy to help him organize and strengthen the church in Ephesus. After addressing prayer and worship, Paul now turns to **church leadership**.

The role of an “overseer” (also called an elder or pastor) is not about status or popularity. It is about **spiritual responsibility**—leading, teaching, and protecting God’s people.

Because the church belongs to God, its leaders must reflect God’s character.

Teachable Outline

1. The Desire for Leadership (v. 1)

- Wanting to serve as an overseer is a noble desire
- Leadership in the church is a good calling—but not a casual one

2. Character Above Ability (vv. 2–3)

An overseer must be:

- Above reproach (blameless reputation)
- Faithful in marriage
- Self-controlled and disciplined
- Hospitable (welcoming others)
- Able to teach
- Not violent or argumentative
- Not a lover of money

3. Household Leadership (vv. 4–5)

- Must manage their own home well
- Children should show respect and order
- If someone cannot lead their home, they cannot lead the church

4. Spiritual Maturity (v. 6)

- Not a new believer
- Pride leads to downfall (like Satan's fall)

5. Public Reputation (v. 7)

- Must have a good reputation with outsiders
- A bad witness brings shame and traps



Lecture Content

Paul begins with a clear statement:

“If anyone aspires to be an overseer, he desires a noble task.”

Desire alone is not enough—**character is the test.**

Notice what is emphasized: not talent, not charisma, not success—but **holiness and stability.**

Character Matters Most

An overseer must be:

- Controlled in behavior
- Gentle in conflict
- Faithful in relationships
- Not controlled by money or anger

Why? Because leaders represent Christ to the church.

A leader who is unstable in life will eventually bring harm to others.

Leadership Starts at Home

Paul says:

“He must manage his own household well.”

This is critical. The home is the first place where leadership is proven.

If someone cannot lead in small, private responsibilities, they are not ready for public spiritual responsibility.

Spiritual Maturity is Required

A new believer is not ready for leadership because pride can easily lead to downfall.

Even spiritual gifts without maturity lead to disaster.

Reputation Matters

“He must also have a good reputation with outsiders.”

Non-Christians should not be able to rightly accuse the leader of hypocrisy or scandal.

This protects:

- The church’s witness
- The leader from falling into disgrace
- The name of Christ from being dishonored



Key Word Definitions

- **Overseer (Elder/Pastor):** A spiritual leader who teaches, guides, and protects the church
- **Above Reproach:** A life free from ongoing, disqualifying moral failure
- **Self-Control:** Discipline over actions, emotions, and desires
- **Hospitable:** Welcoming and caring for others
- **Pride:** Exalting oneself above others and God
- **Good Reputation:** A consistent, trustworthy public testimony



Discussion Questions

1. Why does God care more about character than talent in leaders?
2. What are some dangers of giving leadership to someone who is not spiritually mature?
3. Why is leadership in the home connected to leadership in the church?
4. What does pride have to do with falling into sin?
5. Why is reputation important for Christians, even outside the church?



Application Questions

1. Are you developing character now that would honor God later in life?
2. Do you value spiritual maturity more than popularity or talent?
3. How do you handle responsibility at home, school, or church?
4. Are there areas in your life where pride could lead you into sin?

5. What is one way you can grow in self-control or integrity this week?

Final Exhortation

God does not build His church on charisma or skill, but on **faithful character shaped by His Word.**

Leadership in the church is not about being impressive—it is about being **faithful, stable, and Christlike.**

And the standard is high because the church is precious to God.

The ultimate example of leadership is Christ Himself:

- Humble
- Faithful
- Pure
- Self-giving

All Christian leadership is meant to reflect Him.