

# Sunday School Lesson: Qualifications for Deacons

**Text:** 1 Timothy 3:8–16 (BSB)

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

## Ice Breaker Questions

1. What makes someone trustworthy enough to be given responsibility in a group or team?
2. Have you ever seen someone do a job well just because they had a good attitude, even if it wasn't a “big” role?

## Passage Context

Paul is continuing his instructions to Timothy about how the church should be organized. After describing the qualifications for **overseers (elders/pastors)**, he now turns to **deacons**.

Deacons are not “less important” leaders—they are **servant-leaders** who help meet practical needs in the church so that the ministry of the Word and prayer can flourish.

This passage shows that the church needs both:

- Spiritual leadership (elders)
- Servant leadership (deacons)

Both are essential, and both must reflect Christlike character.

## Teachable Outline

### 1. Character Comes First (vv. 8–9)

Deacons must be:

- Worthy of respect
- Sincere (not double-tongued)
- Not addicted to wine
- Not greedy for money
- Holding firmly to the truth of the faith

### 2. Proven Integrity (v. 10)

- Must be tested first
- If found faithful, they may serve

- Character must be demonstrated over time

### 3. Godly Household Life (v. 11–12)

- Women (or wives/serving women) must be:
  - Respectable
  - Not slanderers
  - Self-controlled
  - Faithful in all things
- Deacons must be faithful in marriage and manage their families well

### 4. Reward of Faithful Service (v. 13)

- Those who serve well gain:
  - Respect
  - Confidence in the faith

### 5. The Foundation of the Church (vv. 14–16)

- The church is the household of God
- The truth of Christ is the center:
  - Christ appeared in the flesh
  - Was vindicated by the Spirit
  - Seen by angels
  - Proclaimed among nations
  - Believed on in the world
  - Taken up in glory



## Lecture Content

Paul begins by describing deacons as people of **integrity and spiritual maturity**.

Unlike worldly leadership, church leadership is not about status—it is about **trustworthiness in character**.

### Integrity Matters

Deacons must not be:

- Dishonest (“double-tongued”)
- Controlled by substances
- Motivated by money

Instead, they must be people who are stable, honest, and spiritually grounded.

Why? Because deacons handle real needs in the church. If they lack integrity, the church suffers.

## **Tested Before Trusted**

“They must first be tested...”

This means leadership is not rushed. A person’s life must show consistent faithfulness before being given responsibility.

In other words: **character is proven over time, not declared in a moment.**

## **Service in the Home First**

Before serving the church, deacons must demonstrate faithfulness at home. This reinforces a key biblical principle:

**Private faithfulness comes before public responsibility.**

## **The Reward of Faithful Service**

“Those who have served well gain an excellent standing...”

God sees faithful service, even when others may not. Deacons are not seeking attention—they are seeking faithfulness.

## **The Church is God’s Household**

Paul ends with a powerful reminder:

“the household of God...”

The church is not a human organization—it belongs to God. And its foundation is the truth of Christ:

- Christ revealed in the flesh
- Christ exalted in glory
- Christ proclaimed to the nations

Everything in the church—including leadership—exists to support that truth.



## **Key Word Definitions**

- **Deacon:** A servant-leader in the church who helps meet practical needs
- **Sincere:** Genuine, not pretending or deceitful

- **Double-tongued:** Saying different things to different people (dishonesty)
- **Integrity:** Being consistent in truth and behavior
- **Tested:** Proven over time through experience and observation
- **Household of God:** The church as God’s family and spiritual community

## Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think character is more important than talent for church leadership?
2. What does it mean to be “sincere” in your faith?
3. Why is it dangerous for someone to lead if they are dishonest or greedy?
4. How does serving in small ways prepare someone for bigger responsibilities?
5. What stands out to you most about the description of the church in verses 14–16?

## Application Questions

1. Are you trustworthy in the small responsibilities you already have?
2. Do your words match your actions, or do you act differently in different settings?
3. Are there areas where honesty or integrity need to grow in your life?
4. Do you serve others quietly, or do you only want recognition?
5. How does remembering that the church belongs to God change the way you treat it?

## Final Exhortation

God does not build His church on talent or appearance, but on **faithful servants shaped by His truth**.

Deacons show us that even “behind-the-scenes” service matters deeply to God.

Every act of faithful service—no matter how small—matters when it is done for Christ.

And at the center of it all is Jesus Christ Himself:

- The One who served perfectly
- The One who gave His life for sinners
- The One who builds His church

True greatness in God’s kingdom is found in **humble, faithful service**.