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1 Timothy 3:1-7  
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What qualities do you look for in a leader? I was reading an article last week, "10 Qualities that make a great leader." It was very valuable. Things like, "Ability to Inspire" and "Ability to Delegate." What does *God* look for in a leader? In God's Word today, God gives his list of qualifications for church leaders. The striking thing is that almost all of the the qualities that God looks for in church leaders are the same as the qualities that God wants from every Christian! For example, "**faithful to his wife.**" God wants every Christian husband to be faithful to his wife. "**Not given to drunkenness**" God wants every Christian to not get drunk. "**Not violent but gentle.**" God wants every Christian to not be violent but gentle. The qualities of a Christian leader are *the same* as the qualities that God wants from every Christian. What God wants most from leaders in the church is he wants leaders to display and model the qualities that God wants from every Christian. God wants leaders in the church to **Lead by example: I. with a positive attitude, II. with godly conduct, and III. with a mission-minded outlook.**

Lead by example first, with a **positive attitude.** Paul says, "**If anyone desires to be an overseer,**" (1 Timothy 3:1). An overseer would include the pastors of a congregation. It would also include the church council of a congregation. Our church council includes the president of the congregation and the principal of the school and the head of school board and the elders of the congregation. Pastors and the church council oversee the congregation.

Paul says, "**If anyone desires to be an overseer, he desires a noble task.**" (1 Timothy 3:1) He calls leadership in the church a **NOBLE** task. It's really easy for church leaders to get burned out and worn down and discouraged. But Paul encourages you, "What you are doing is a *noble* task." That's meant to encourage you so that you can keep up a positive attitude.

One commentator said, "the word 'noble' stresses the positive and constructive nature of the task. ... Oversight in the church is a ministry that makes a positive contribution to the life of the believing community." (Towner, 249)

When you have a positive attitude about your role and also have a positive attitude about the church in general then that positive attitude will trickle down to the rest of the congregation.

Any positive attitude starts with what Jesus did for us on the cross. Every day I am confronted by my failures and shortcomings. But Jesus took those all away on the cross. And it's OK that the tasks that we do now are sometimes frustrating. In heaven God has promised that you and all believers will have work that is 100% satisfying all the time. And the work that you do right now is contributing to his kingdom. That gives to church leaders a positive outlook. And like I said the positive outlook of the leaders will trickle down to the rest of the congregation.

Lead by example, with a positive attitude. Second, lead by example, with GODLY conduct.

Paul says, **“Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife.” (1 Timothy 3:2).** God wants you to set an example by being absolutely faithful to your wife. Not looking at other women lustfully. Not actually cheating on your wife. God wants you to set an example by being a good husband.

God also wants you to set an example by being a good father. Paul says in verses 4 and 5. **“He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God’s church?).” (1 Timothy 3:4-5)** Parenting is definitely a LEARNED skill. Set an example for the believers by GROWING in your parenting skills. Pick up a book on parenting and read it. Go to Christian parenting workshops and seminars. Set an example for the believers by *growing* in parenting skills.

Set an example also in the way you deal with conflict. Paul says, **“Not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome.” (1 Timothy 3:3)** A Christian leader is someone who does not escalate situations with combative words. A Christian leader is someone who defuses situations with peaceful words.

Lead by example 1. With a positive attitude and 2. With GODLY conduct. Finally, lead by example 3. with a mission-minded outlook.

Paul says in verse 7, **“He must have a good reputation with outsiders.”** Paul wants leaders to have the attitude that I am always representing my Savior Jesus and my congregation. And because Jesus died for me and because I love my congregation I always want to represent my Savior Jesus and my congregation well.

When you go to restaurants, when you go to sporting events, when you’re at work, you always want to represent your Savior and your congregation well. When you represent your Savior and your congregation well, then you will win the respect of outsiders. And when you win the respect of outsiders, you might also win a hearing for the gospel. In a letter that is very similar to 1 Timothy, the letter to Titus, Paul says conduct yourself “so that in every way you will make the teaching of God our Savior attractive.” (Titus 3:10) And Jesus himself said, “Let your light shine before men so that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). When you are out in public be kind and level-headed, so that people will say, those people from St. John’s they really are good people, and they might even be willing to listen to the gospel. Mission-minded leaders think like that and so they lead the members in representing our Savior and our congregation well.

It really is amazing that when God talks here about what he looks for in a leader, he talks more about moral qualities than about skills. So with God’s help and God’s power, let’s ask for the Holy Spirit to develop these moral qualities in us. Lead by example, with a positive attitude, with Godly conduct, and with a mission-minded outlook. Amen.