

1 TIMOTHY

The Household of God

Week 3

CONNECT

- When you were working on a skill growing up—sport, instrument, or the like—who's someone whose example you followed closely?
- Whose example did you try to emulate when you were growing up when it came to character?
- What's been your favorite takeaway from 1 Timothy so far?

INTRODUCTION

So far in his letter, Paul has instructed Timothy on what makes for a healthy church that advances the plan of God in Jesus. Timothy must confront bad teaching, because only good teaching advances the plan of God. Men and women must live godly lives in their specific designs, because it displays the gospel. Now he turns his attention to leadership in a healthy church. Surprisingly, the emphasis is on the character of these leaders. We see that the character required, however, is the kind of Christlike character every Christian should pursue. That's the point! In a healthy church, leaders lead the kind of lives that those in the church can emulate.

OBSERVATIONS & INTERPRETATION

Read: 1 Timothy 3:1-7

- Paul describes the work of an elder as a "noble task." In what ways can you see godly eldership being a good gift to a church?

- What aspect of these qualifications for elders stands out to you and why?

Read: 1 Timothy 3:8-13

- Based on what you've learned from 1 Timothy so far, what do you think Paul means in verse 9 when he says, "They must hold to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience"?
- Verse 13 spells out what deacons stand to gain for their service. What do these phrases mean and why are they a great benefit to those who serve?

APPLICATION

- Both elders and deacons are meant to embody Christlike character that can be emulated by those they lead. Listen to this collection of character requirements: Above reproach, a loving spouse, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, not quarrelsome but gentle, not a lover of money, humble, dignified, not deceptive in speech, not drinking too much, not greedy, not dishonest with money, a clear conscience, not tearing down with words, faithful in all things. In which of these areas is God calling you to grow? What is at stake if we do not grow in the character described here?
- Promotion in church leadership reflects a principle found in many of Jesus' parables: "You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much." (Matthew 25:21b) Is there a step in service God is calling you to take so you can be tested like Paul says in verse 10?
- How does the fact that Jesus is the Head of the Church shape your thinking, feeling, and doing related to this topic?

PRAYER

- Praise Jesus as the Head of the Church.
- Pray that what's said about elders and deacons here would be true in our church.
- Pray against the schemes of the devil to destroy the lives of leaders.

Note to group leaders:

Your group might have lots of questions about gender roles in church leadership. Review the 1 Timothy Resource that we shared so that you're equipped with answers to some common questions. Remember to lead with humility and that it's OK to say "I don't know but I can find out," and that your section leader and pastor are resources for questions. We are cheering you on as you lead hard conversations with both truth and grace!