

Worksheet #5: 1 Timothy 3:1–16 (NKJV)

This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work.² A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach;³ not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous;⁴ one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in submission with all reverence⁵ (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);⁶ not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the *same* condemnation as the devil.⁷ Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

⁸ Likewise deacons *must be* reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money,⁹ holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience.¹⁰ But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being *found* blameless.¹¹ Likewise *their* wives *must be* reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.¹² Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling *their* children and their own houses well.¹³ For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

¹⁴ These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly;¹⁵ but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.¹⁶ And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. In what sense does Paul mean that the work of a pastor is a “good work” (v. 1)? Is this to describe the tasks and specific actions carried out by a pastor, or is this to describe the work of the ministry as an “occupation” or “vocation”?

2. Why does Paul introduce his qualifications for the pastor with the word “then” (or, “therefore”) (v. 2)? What is the connection between the qualifications in vv. 2–6 and the prior context in v. 1?

3. In this context, what must the term “novice” mean (v. 6)? How is the word translated in other Bible versions?

4. How would a pastor’s poor reputation outside the church cause him to “fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (v. 7)?

5. What does the phrase “the mystery of the faith” in v. 9 describe? How does v. 16 help to clarify the nature of this mystery?

6. What does it mean for a faithful deacon to “obtain for [himself] a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (v. 13)?

7. Notice the phrases Paul uses to describe the church in v. 15. What does this language teach us about the nature of the church, both locally and universally?

8. Notice the six lines Paul uses to describe the “mystery of godliness” in v. 16. How are these six items interrelated? Are there any contrasts? How does this verse fit in to Paul’s argument as a whole?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?
