

# Dr. Robert Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistles, Session 4, 1 Timothy 3

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This is Dr. Robert W. Yarbrough in his teaching on the Pastoral Epistles, Apostolic Instruction for Pastoral Leaders and their Followers. Session 4, 1 Timothy 3.

We continue our study of the Pastoral Epistles, looking at 1 Timothy, and we're going to be looking at 1 Timothy 3, and these are Apostolic Instructions for Pastoral Leaders and also for Followers.

And when we get to 1 Timothy 3, we're kind of between those designations because we're reading about Apostolic Instructions to a Pastoral Leader, Timothy, but it is affecting Followers who want to be leaders. Because we read at the beginning of 1 Timothy 3, here is a trustworthy saying, and I'm reading the NIV, and I have the New American Standard on the right-hand side just as a reference, because there are different ways to translate some of these words that we're going to encounter, and I just wanted an alternate translation up there for reference. Here's a trustworthy saying, and I think this is the third trustworthy saying that we've seen now in 1 Timothy.

Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. And overseer, I think, is just another term for Congregational Leader. There's a fluidity in the terms in the New Testament that denote different aspects of the pastoral task.

There's shepherd, either as a verb or a noun, there is overseer, there is elder, and probably one or two that I'm forgetting, but here the term overseer is used. The term in Greek is episkopos, from which we get the term episkopal. It's also translated in English as bishop.

That was the King James Translation, because it was an Anglican Church, and they had bishops, and bishop was connected with episkopos, the overseer, but if you look at a Greek dictionary, episkopos is just going to be overseer and not, first of all, bishop. So, we'll take it in terms of a Congregational Leader, like we call a pastor. Now, the overseer is to be above reproach.

So, verse 1 says it's a good thing if somebody aspires to this kalos, this beautiful, this good task, and now he sets out qualifications for such a person who feels this desire. Above reproach, faithful to his wife, and you can see on the right-hand side the New American Standard says the husband of one wife, and that's more true to the Greek, which people always say, and it's true, the Greek says a one-woman man, or a one-woman husband, and so husband of one wife is a more direct translation, but what

does that mean? People have suggested one wife at a time, not a polygamist. People have suggested, as the NIV does, that this really means being faithful to your wife.

It doesn't mean husband of one wife, which some have taken to mean, if you've ever been divorced, you can't be a pastor. Now, there are some people who've been divorced, I'm sure, who shouldn't be pastors, but that probably is extending husband of wife too far, because Paul's not addressing, what about men who are divorced? He's just giving qualifications generically for an overseer, and so I like the NIV here saying being faithful to his wife because I think that interprets correctly the spirit of what Paul means by the husband of one wife. Temperate, remember earlier we heard about men who were in temperament, were angry, well, if men are going to be overseers, they need to be temperate, they need to be self-controlled.

That's in the same direction, not out of control, not outraged people, but people in control. Respectable, and you could ask respectable to whom? Well, I think that would be pretty much everybody. Some people are outlandish in their behavior, they are not pleasant to be around, and there can be all kinds of reasons for that, and Paul's just saying, this person should not call attention to himself by outrageous tendencies or behaviors.

He needs to be hospitable, and there I think that's a reference to something that, all of these sort of envisioned married man. A married man is envisioned. I don't think that means a single man could not be a pastor, but most men in the course of being men for very long, if they can get a wife, they probably are going to get a wife. That's a great thing if they do.

In their marriage, they need to have these qualities, they need to be visible to everybody. They need to be visible in their marriage, and one of the things you do in marriage is, you live together, eat, and share a table. So you have a great gospel venue here for outreach because you can invite people into your family, which is a microcosm of the church. Since it's a house church, the church is a group of families, when the family is dispersed to their homes, they're still the church, they're just not the church assembled. But they're still witnesses to Christ, and a marriage is two people, where two or three have gathered in my name, there I am in their midst. Everything we do should be in Jesus' name. So, a Christian table in a home should be a table of witness and a table of reception of other Christians for fellowship, support, encouragement, and nourishment.

But also, opportunities to show the love of God to others and to evangelize, so this candidate should be a person who in combination with his wife is a hospitable person. I know wives who would love to be hospitable, but their husbands don't want their eating interrupted, or they want to be at the lake on the weekends, or they have other things they want to do. Their home is their castle. Their home is not a place for ministry. So, if that's your commitment, you should not be a pastor.

I also know of churches that aren't that warm because the pastor and his wife don't get

along very well. When you come into the church, you can be there for a long time and not know why, but there's not a welcoming feeling. It's because the pastor and his wife are not hospitable because they don't get along that well. Therefore the church is not hospitable. If the pastor and his wife don't model mutual acceptance and affirmation and a somewhat open household where they can make people feel comfortable, and hospitality is work. Whoever cooks it works, and whoever cleans up works.

In our household, my wife does the cooking, she's very good at it. I do the clean up, so I know that when we're going to be hospitable, number one I have to be involved in preparation, because a lot of times she'll say, would you go and get this, or she loves to say, well we're going to fix this. Then she says, and you'll grill, right? She usually asks me in a pleasant way, but I know what she's saying is, you're going to grill. That's all part of being hospitable. If you don't want to be hospitable, you shouldn't be in the ministry. So, this is a qualification.

Able to teach, of course, implies you're able to learn because you can't teach if you don't learn. So I mentioned in a previous lecture how important it was in the early church for women to be disciples, and for Timothy and pastors to make space and encouragement for women to be devoted to discipleship. A lot of women qualify for overseers because they are learners.

A lot of men never read, and sometimes they're even proud of it. I got through college, I've heard men say, and I never read a book. Well, that may be true, I wouldn't brag about it, and you're probably not going to be able to teach very much if you're not somebody who can't sit down and learn. But able to teach.

Not given to drunkenness, this isn't saying be a teetotaler, although it's fine to be a teetotaler, but you should not be a person who sort of lives from buzz to buzz. For some people it's kind of a ritual. Sometimes it's really excessive, but sometimes it's just on the edge of excessive. They just like to get, not two-thirds lit, but maybe an eighth lit. If you're given to drunkenness, Paul says that's not a good qualification.

Not violent but gentle, so not just not violent, but positively somebody who's got a bedside manner. Somebody who has a nurturing presence when the occasion calls for it. One thing I look for is how a candidate or how a minister looks in regards children. Do they notice children? Do they know the children's names? Do children like this man, because you can sort of fawn and fuss over children, but they, in that respect, they're like pets? Sometimes, pets know whether you like them or not. Dogs will growl for one person, then they'll lick somebody else's hand, what's that? Well, that dog knows that that person likes dogs. Some kids know this guy is creepy.

But there are some pastors who have a way with kids, I'm not saying you have to have a way with kids, but a gentle person. A violent self-important man is probably not going to notice children, but a man who's not violent but gentle.

Then go on with some of these other qualifications, there's a good chance that he's

going to have an eye for children, and care for children, and especially realize that the future of every church lies in its children.

And also, going back to the women being disciples, discipleship is a voluntary activity, and people have to want to learn from you. I call this having the goodwill of the women.

If a pastor does not have the goodwill of the women in the church, his ministry is not going to go very far. Women have to sense this man is serving our discipleship needs well. And to get back to being gentle, women notice if you care for their children, men do too, but fewer men will notice or care. But any woman with a child will be very, very gratified if that child develops a friendship with the pastor, but typically that has to be at the pastor's initiative. He has to be a gentle person, who doesn't come storming over to the child and terrify the child, but gets down and looks at the child, learns the child's name, prays for the child, and develops a relationship with the child.

So this person is a gentle person, not quarrelsome, again going back to the anger, not a lover of money. Now that eliminates a lot of people, but that's a qualification.

Then to the explicitly domestic side, verse 4. He needs to manage his own family well, and you see in Paul's writings an oscillation between the woman being the household manager, which she is, and the husband being the household manager, which he is. So there's a kind of reciprocity, there's that division of labor again, that ordered relational synergy. They have different responsibilities, but they share a responsibility for oversight of the family, just as the pastor teaches and exercises authority, and oversight in the church, the congregation, the families together.

The father, who's going to be an overseer, needs to show he's got a shot at managing several families because he manages his own family well. His children obey him, or as the New American standard says, keeping his children under control with all dignity. The NIV says, in a manner worthy of full respect. This is all, this language is all shorthand, it's very terse. I'll say more about that in a minute.

You need a sanctified imagination to see what he's saying here, you can make children comply, and you may have grown up in a family where you complied, and it was almost on pain of death. If you didn't, and especially fathers can be very violent in their discipline. They can instill a terror in their children, who are very resilient, and when they are out in public. It can look like everything is really fine, but in, back

at home, it's very dark, and it's very brutal. That's not the kind of subjection Paul's talking about. He's not saying, you need somebody who beats the heck out of his kids in private, but in public, it looks respectable. He's talking about a style of parenting that draws the children into a relationship where they're learning and growing, and they do what they're told because they're children. That's throughout the Old Testament, throughout the New Testament, children are to obey their parents.

But we're talking about obeying parents who are in a covenant with each other, in a covenant with God, and they are developing a covenantal relationship with their children. It's not by heavy-handed, draconian, brutal, abusive methods, either psychological or corporal. So when he says, in a manner worthy of full respect, you may have seen some parents do a pretty good job with their kids, and some kids turn out pretty well, because of their parents, A. were graced with God's favor, and B, didn't get in the way of God's nurture of their kids. They encouraged that nurture, and they loved their children, their children are now adults, and they give their parents the time of day, and they care for their parents. There's a wonderful relationship, you can see that developing from childhood.

You can see, even sometimes two or three-year-olds, you can see there's a relationship. The parents are doing it right, that's what you want to look for in a candidate, children obey him, in a manner worthy of respect. We're not talking about heavy-handed tactics or military discipline, we're talking about something that's nurturing and something that's Christ-like.

He must not be a recent convert, and there can be a lot of enthusiasm with new converts. We see this in the celebrity world, a celebrity, an athlete, an actor becomes a Christian, and they get interviewed, and suddenly, they're under the limelight, and they say these outrageous things, because they're new Christians. Then, the worst thing is, in two or three years, maybe they're not Christians anymore. They couldn't stand the pressure, Paul says, they may become conceited, and fall under the same judgment as the devil, the New American Standard says, fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. So, we don't know if it's the judgment that was on the devil, or the judgment that the devil brings about in somebody's life, but the effect is the same. New converts are susceptible to failure, they're not tested, they're not developed, they lack skills, and they lack the experience. They need, maybe to resist temptation, and maybe you might think of sensual temptation, but there are all kinds of temptations in ministry.

I had a friend once that talked about a fist fight that he got into with somebody in his congregation. He was the pastor, and he went to visit the man, and the man came out, and he was very unfriendly. They got into a verbal quarrel, and then this man reached out and pushed my friend, and then my friend, who was a pretty good fighter, and he beat this man up. It didn't end his ministry, but maybe it should have. He wasn't ready for the ministry. He wasn't a new convert, but he was a new

minister, and that also would run him into problems with this next verse, he must also have a good reputation with outsiders so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. Let's pause for some observations about this, and let me split my screen just a little bit because I need to look it up. First of all, the fact that Paul moves from chapter 2 worship to chapter 2 worship leaders, congregational leaders, reminds us that Timothy's role, as Paul envisioned it, must have included pastoral recruitment and pastoral training.

And this is a reminder that pastors should always be seeking to nurture new leadership, better leadership. This is one of the reasons it's so important that pastors be gentle, we didn't see the word humble, but that would be a word that would be implied in a lot of these qualifications. Pastors can be pretty territorial, and pretty jealous of their leadership and of their turf, and it may not occur to them that they're expendable and that as the church expands, you need new leaders.

Or, it may not occur to them that God may require their life. Sometime soon, they may die soon, or they may be called elsewhere. So, pastors always need to be doing everything they can to work themselves out of a job, so to speak. We had a seminary professor at this seminary years ago, and he was quite successful, somebody asked, what was the secret to your success? He said, I always hired people smarter than I am.

And so, his organization flourished, and part of the diakonia of a minister is to make other people better, make other people better at their Christian calling and Christian service. There's a great film that won a documentary, I think, I don't know, Oscar or whatever the award was called, in 2014, for the best documentary, and it was called 20 Feet from Stardom. And it was about backup singers, and they happened to be African American women, mainly, who grew up singing in the church.

But they became backup singers in Motown songs in the 1960s, and for the Rolling Stones, on a song called Gimme Shelter, there's a woman named Mary Clayton, she got out of bed in the middle of the night, some guy called her, we need a backup singer. And that's what she did in studio, she was a studio singer. And these women, over a year, sang for Sting, and they sang for the Stones, almost none of them could succeed as solo artists.

But their forte was providing that background sound that just if you like the Rolling Stones and you listen to Gimme Shelter, that backup singer by Mary Clayton makes that song. And Mick Jagger gets the credit, but it's Mary Clayton who really provides the spice. And a pastor provides the spice for the lives of a lot of younger people, and young couples, and people who go out, they may even forget, I don't think they usually do, they usually appreciate it, but they may forget what the pastor did.

And they will never know how much the pastor prayed, and the service he did behind the scenes. But that's implicit, in turning immediately to qualifications for leadership, Timothy needed to have an eye and a sensitivity for people that he could make great, could encourage in the direction of their aspirations, so that the church would have the leaders that it needs for God's oikonomia, God's work, God's economy. Churches, in the providence of God, they do the will of God, the gates of hell will not prevail against the church, but as a general rule, churches do not rise above the level of their leaders, as a general rule.

And if you have selfish leaders, or leaders who are not doing their job, they're not developing leadership, because they want to run things, they don't want competition, or they don't like to work, it's work to develop leaders. When you have kids, normally you can do things four times faster without their help, but you need to use your kids, help them do things, do jobs jointly, A, they learn, B, you learn fellowship, C, they learn to do things on their own, you're developing them, future adults. So, this is really a beautiful picture of Timothy, not just, going in and wielding authority and setting up structures and making sure that people comply, but of encouraging people who want to aspire to be teachers and overseers in the church, shepherds in the church.

The qualities that we see in 1 Timothy 3 are not comprehensive, it's not a neat package that's complete, it's representative, and often you've been maybe in churches, I've been in churches where you're either assessing people, I was on deacon boards and we assessed people, and I've been assessed by people. That assessment process requires discernment, nobody is going to meet all these qualifications perfectly, and there are other qualifications that aren't mentioned, like say, gambling, or pornography. There are things that are not explicitly mentioned, but that we might infer from this representative picture that we get, something that isn't listed, but is present in the person's life, and for now it disqualifies them.

Or there may be other things that are positive that aren't listed that we can recognize, that would qualify them more. So don't use this, as I say in this next statement, as a punch list. All these qualities, I think, should be thought of, in covenantal terms, relationship with God, that we've talked about in these lectures already.

These qualities should be thought of as expressions of holiness. And I'm defining that as a walk with God, God is holy, and to walk in fellowship with Him, we need to allow the gospel of Christ to transform us and make us holy. And in that walk with Him, we can have a close and compliant, and fruitful relationship.

It's close, it's real, it's compliant, we're in subjection to the Lord, and it's fruitful. It's a fruitful life unto God. This is through faith in Christ Jesus, who is holy and who gives His Holy Spirit.

So, these are not like qualifications for a good real estate salesman. It's great to be a good real estate salesman. And there are a lot of things, you need to be a people person and be a multitasker and know the area and, be good at numbers.

I don't know what all the qualifications would be. But these are not just, this is not just, qualitative or just quantitative things. These are characteristics that are often observable when a person has received the gospel and has been growing in the gospel.

And they get to a point where God draws them out and gives them this aspiration to live a life of service in congregational leadership. These are not formalities, they're not a punch list, but a composite sketch. So, let's go on with qualifications now.

Not for the overseers, but for the wingmen of the overseers. You have a pilot and then you have somebody flying a plane next to the pilot who can be called a wingman or can be a second pilot like a co-pilot can be called a wingman. Pastors devote themselves to the ministry of the word and prayer and congregational oversight.

There are a lot of works of service that need to be performed in the congregation that are not word and prayer-centered. I'm not saying deacons shouldn't teach or pray. I'm just talking about division of labor and focus.

You have deacons and they're to be worthy of respect. Don't overlook that in the same way, the first words of verse 8. Because that shows the close analogy in many respects between the overseers and the deacons. They both have high qualifications.

I think this implies they both feel a call from God. There's a need in the church. And I think people can sense, I need to step forward for this ministry opportunity.

Deacons are to be worthy of respect. Sincere. Have you ever met an insincere church-going person? A person maybe who even had church office but, you got to be their golf partner or something.

Or you go fishing with them and you find out, this person really isn't that religious or that spiritual or that godly. They've got a church face. But that's not the real person.

Paul is saying people for this job need to be what they are at point B the same as what they are at point A. They need to be consistent Christians. It needs to be a real thing in their lives. God is real to us 24-7.

That needs to be there. Again, something has to do with alcohol. Not indulging in much wine.

I think the King James said, not a wine-bibber. So, if that's the word you prefer, use that one. Not pursuing dishonest gain.

That's another way of saying free the love of money. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They need to be disciples who understand the doctrinal teaching of the church at a sophisticated level.

They must first be tested. It's sometimes easy to get volunteers and then think, well,

we'll train them as we go. But it's a mistake to appoint people to spiritual service in the church who have not reached a level of competence and a level of understanding of the deep truths of the faith and who are not living them out.

Their conscience is clear. That doesn't mean they're sinless, but it means that they're living in a cycle of obedience to God and repentance when they do sin. And they're tested.

That's up to us to determine how we test them. Then if there's nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. Now we have another in the same way, and this is very controversial.

Some say that this is going to be women deacons. Some say it's going to be the wives of deacons. And I would say that it's true of the wives of both deacons and overseers.

I think it's almost a given, but I think he makes it explicit with the deacons because he realizes, as he's talked about the overseers and the deacons, how important wives are in this picture. And I don't see a clear indication that Paul is commissioning women to be deacons. Now, I'll leave it to you and your church, her church order.

Lots of churches have women deacons, and certainly, we should have women who do diaconal work. And so sometimes that's more of a formality, and people are not so much trying to make a statement about women's roles. They're just saying we need to recognize women's value in doing diaconal service in the church.

I understand that argument. I respect that argument. But I think, from my understanding, this is not talking about women deacons.

It's talking about the wives of deacons and, by implication, the wives of overseers. They need to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers, but temperate and trustworthy in everything. They need to be of the same sterling qualities as their husbands are held to in these qualifications.

So, solid Christian guy, solid Christian woman. Back to the deacons per se, a deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well.

Those who have served well gain an excellent understanding and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

Now, I think that's the only reference to divinity. Well, there's God's church back in 3.5, and now we have here Christ Jesus. But doesn't it go without saying that all this, these overseers of God's church, all these qualifications, all these roles, it's all in Christ and for Christ and through Christ.

So, there's a theological inlay with all of this that, again, we don't want to treat them as rote qualifications, like for the real estate salesman I just talked about. Now, early church ministry called for apostles and then pastors and then servants of the word, as well as those focused more on hands-on personal and social care for the church, so that the apostles and the pastors and the servants of the word could be freed up to focus on their work. Although the word deacon is not used in Acts chapter 6, there's quite an ancient tradition in the church of viewing those appointed in Acts chapter 6 to serve food to the widows who were either Hebrew-speaking or Aramaic-speaking, or Greek-speaking.

There was a dispute in the church because the social outreach of the church was, it had problems, it had partialities. And so, the apostles were getting bogged down, they were pastoring at Jerusalem, they were getting bogged down in these logistical, feeding people sorts of things. Waiting on tables, they called it.

And, Christ washed people's feet. So, waiting on tables is not above apostles. It's not above pastors.

And every pastor's probably going to wait on tables at times. But to be a pastor doesn't mean you have to do every task that anybody can think of, and the lower the better. At some point, you have to do your main task, which is the word and prayer and your spiritual care of people.

I call it care of souls. You need to care for souls. And there are a lot of logistical things in the ministry of the church that you need servants at another level and with other training and other callings for, and that was the deacons.

Deacon means servant in a support role of the church's pastoral care. And the church's pastoral care is headed by the teaching and oversight of the pastor. So you have a pastor and you have a deacon.

And I don't want to bureaucratize those roles, but I do think that what we find in Paul, justifies us in talking about a pastoral office. And for that matter, a deaconal office. This is a holy calling.

You're set apart for something, and it shouldn't glorify you or put you on a pedestal. At the same time, you are under a special responsibility. And you're promised, I think, a special enablement.

And that's why these special qualifications are given. Overseers or pastors and deacons alike are held to high standards. With that word in the same way.

Verse 8. High standards of holiness. High standards of competence. Able to teach.

High standard of knowledge of the faith. I don't know about your church and your locale, but I know it can be very difficult to get men to be studious when it comes to theology and the books and articles and discussions that it helps to be familiar with if you want to do ministry. If you want to do ministry well, there's a lot to learn.

And a lot of men are busy. And a lot of men may not have learned that much since they were in school or college when it comes to the sorts of things that teaching the Bible or teaching doctrine or understanding doctrinal or ethical issues, those are not skills may be that some men have developed very much. But there are high standards here for a reason.

And if you look at the two offices, so to speak, the difference is more one of calling than of commitment or discipleship excellence. There are some deacons who are very, very advanced in knowledge and very, very advanced in pastoral care. They're just not called to be pastors.

And so, we shouldn't think of deacons as like second or third-class pastors or deacons as, well, you can kind of be a flunky and be a deacon. No, deacons have very high standards. It's a holy task, but it's not the congregational oversight task and the instruction task that the pastor is called to.

Also, women and wives should reflect the spiritual character and competence of their husbands. They need and rely on each other. There's a great book I think of by the well-known American pastor R. Kent Hughes.

He may have even co-written it with his wife, but it was called Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome. And R. Kent Hughes, who, by the way, baptized both of my children, he tells the story of a great ministry that he began. And, , the church supported him, and he was going to plant a church, and he'd had a great success in his church, the home church.

And he went out to plant this church, and he gave it his best shot, and nothing happened, and it was so discouraging. And finally, he just gave up. He decided God hadn't called me to this.

And so, he came home, and Kent Hughes is, a man maybe my size, not huge, but not small. And his wife is small, Barbara. And he said to Barbara, I've thought about this, and I'm giving it up.

And she told him in no uncertain terms that he was not giving that up. And she said to him, I have enough faith for both of us. And, of course, that was somewhat unjust, but I'm sure it was also with a lot of strong feelings.

She was discerning, rightly, this was not a time to give up. This was a time to wait and pray and to continue to work. And they went on, and things developed.

And Kent Hughes is still a very effective minister today in, old age. But that's representative of how husbands and wives mutually stabilize each other encourage each other and provide the beachhead of companionship and joy that you need to be effective in ministry. You can't minister if you're just always burdened down, or if it's like your nine-to-five job, and then you've got a real-life over here. A minister of Christ, it's your identity. But you also have an identity as a husband and as a wife, and there can be, you can have, it's an oasis. It's a sanctuary from the storm of the larger world that you're both called to minister in and to.

And so, the reason he wants to promote character and wives is because he realizes how symbiotic wives and husbands are. Whether the husband is a deacon or whether the husband is a pastor, he's not going to get far without a wife who's affirming and also a wife who helps him in his daily life love her like Christ loves the church. the microcosm, the fueling of the pastor's gentleness and compassion and care for others is a healthy relationship with his wife.

And if you have a barren relationship with your wife, your Christian ministry as a deacon or a pastor is not going to bear the fruit that it could and should bear. They need each other. Finally, God rewards those who bear the burden of church leadership in a Christlike fashion.

And there the word is, I guess it's in the next section. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus. That's a glorious promise and we don't want to undervalue that.

Now we come to the end of the chapter, the reasons for Paul's instructions. He takes a deep breath here like I'm taking a deep breath, and I don't think he sipped coffee, but I'm going to drink the rest of this cold coffee. It wasn't cold when I started, but it's cold now, so it means I'm almost out of time for this lecture.

Paul says, although I hope to come to you soon, in verse 14, I'm writing you these instructions. That's why I'm calling this "apostolic instructions." So that if I'm delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household.

Which is the church of the living God. Now you'll notice on the screen that I have some

brackets and translations that go in different ways and the grammar doesn't help you. The grammar can go in two ways.

The NIV takes it in the direction of how people ought to conduct themselves. But there are no people in the text. It just says how it is necessary to conduct.

It's the middle voice, so it could be conduct oneself, but it could be either singular or plural. And I tend to think that he's saying you will know how you, Timothy, ought to conduct yourself in the household of God. Which is the church of the living God.

But the NIV and other translations, pluralize it. I'm writing these things so that you will know how people ought to conduct themselves. This is one of those sorts of beautiful ambiguities.

Since we can't exclude either, we have to say it could be both. It could be he wrote this for Timothy's sake, for the sake of the people. Or for the people's sake, through Timothy being and receiving what he needs to be and receive in order to aid the people in this direction.

But what is this church of the living God? It is the pillar and foundation of the truth. It is beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs. There's that word godliness again that doesn't appear often in Paul and only in the pastoral epistles, eusebia.

The mystery, literally just says the mystery of godliness. And they make that term of godliness, they understand it as a term of origin. And so, they say from which true godliness springs.

It originates here. But it really is just the mystery of godliness. It could be the mystery that constitutes godliness.

But here is that mystery. He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, and was taken up in glory. And you can see that this mystery is Christ.

It's his person and it's his work. Now I'll come back to these individual terms in just a second, but let's look at our observations. The first observation is that conduct is a test of true faith.

Conduct is a test of true faith. I'm writing so how people ought to conduct themselves. Let me get the verse up here and then down to my observations.

Obviously, the church is a place where people express faith in Christ. And Paul wants people to believe the truth about Jesus. And he's going to give us six truths here about Jesus.

But the test of whether we have Jesus or not is how we live. Jesus said, by their fruits, you will know them. And this is a life of faith in Christ.

It's a life of love for Christ. That's important to observe. Secondly, we see that the church anchors God's redemptive rule in the world.

The church is called the pillar and foundation of the truth. And it's interesting that it's called God's household. It's God's household.

God is spirit. God is transcendent. He's not limited to this world, especially not to a geographic location.

But the God of the Bible is the God who is termed Emmanuel, God with us. And just as God had ways of being with his people in Old Testament times and through Old Testament institutions, God has an assembly in the world made up of many assemblies, families, and individuals. That's the ecclesia, the congregation, the assembly of the living God.

And that church is the pillar and foundation of the truth. The church doesn't have a monopoly on the truth. God is present in the world with his people.

He's especially present through the church. We should have a high view of the church. Paul did.

And then, how God's church and God's kingdom function, how they succeed when they sometimes look like they're dying, it's beyond human grasp. It is a mystery. But the success of the church is guaranteed by the mystery of the success of its head, of its Lord, of its Savior.

And that would be Christ. And his person and his work are the key and the core of the godly conduct that Paul writes to promote. So, it's very important that we see these six.. . It's really just a few words in Greek.

I'm doing some spacing here to put it all in one place. We see Paul saying, I'm going to come soon, I hope, but until I get there... , I want everything to run like it needs to run. I want you to live like you should and the church to live like it should.

And how this can possibly happen in the opposition and the confusion, the ambiguity of an unknown future, how can that happen? It's a mystery, but here's the mystery from which the godliness I'm calling for, this is where it all comes from. So just as he

started out by saying, Christ, our hope. He comes back here, taking a deep breath in verse 14.

He'll start up again in a minute, but he just lays out the foundation of the mystery that produces godliness. The incarnation, Christ appeared in the flesh, which doesn't fit in with the Jewish understanding of God. Deuteronomy 4 forbids making an image of God in the shape of a man or a woman.

Now the early Christians weren't making an image of God in the shape of a man or a woman, but they extended that, and rabbis still today extend that to prove that Christianity is some aberrant understanding of God because it images God as a man. No, we don't image God as a man, we say God took on flesh in Jesus. He was incarnate, it's not an image, it's the truth.

He appeared in the flesh. He was vindicated by the Spirit. And some people think this was the baptism when the Holy Spirit descended like a dove and there was a voice, this is my son.

Other people think in Romans 1-4 he was declared with power to be the son of God by the resurrection of the dead. And I think that's the spirit of holiness there, the Holy Spirit. He was seen by angels.

Angels were instrumental in announcing Jesus' resurrection. For that matter, they announced the coming of the Messiah in the Nativity scene in Luke 2, angels were there. He was preached among the nations.

Nations is a fine translation, but to Jewish ears that would be the Gentiles. Go and make disciples of all the ethnicities. The word in Greek is a kind of hard word, ethnicity.

He was preached not just to the Abrahamic people, but he was preached everywhere in the Roman world. He was preached in Ephesus. He was believed on in the world, not just preached, but people received the message and they were transformed and were made into a church.

And he was taken up in glory. He ascended into heaven and he is seated at the right hand of God, from which he will come to judge the living and the dead. So, this is a stirring, and if we had the words up there in Greek, if you had learned Greek, you would see they're all aorist passive verbs.

There's a beautiful symmetry and a beautiful artistry to this commendation of Christ. So much so that some of the editors of modern Greek texts, make it look like a hymn or poetry. And I don't have any way of verifying that it's a hymn or poetry and they don't either.

I just think Paul was moved by the Holy Spirit and he was gifted literarily. And he just throws out six things that result in eusebia, godliness, being manifest in congregations,

through the wives, through the husbands, through the deacons, through the overseers, through the people who are deaconed and overseen. It's this amazing picture of grimy people like us being cleaned up, being called into a life of purpose.

I don't know about your country, but in recent years in the United States, we're up over 100,000 people a year dying from drug overdoses. We have suicides. A very high degree of depression and mental illness.

People getting younger and younger. No sense of purpose in life. No hope.

Mankind is in a shambles around the world. And Christ comes and because of the mystery of how he works, he can't be stopped. And he is doing glorious things in marriages, in personal lives, in families, in congregations, in an outreach around the world.

To do that, the church needs leaders who are servants. This and chapter 3 do a great job of laying a foundation for appointing those men and their wives. Thank you.

This is Dr. Robert W. Yarbrough in his teaching on the Pastoral Epistles, Apostolic Instruction for Pastoral Leaders and their Followers. Session 4, 1 Timothy 3.