

Qualified to Lead

By David Feddes

Are you qualified to lead? That is an important question. Do not be too quick to say yes. Do not be too quick to say no. Think about it carefully: Are you qualified to lead?

Every Christian is a leader

The first thing I want to say is that if you are a Christian at all, there is a sense in which you are a leader. Whether you are qualified or not, you are a person who has influence. Jesus says, "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). If you can be called the light of the world as a follower and a disciple of Jesus, then in some sense you are already a leader. Every Christian is someone who has influence, and to lead is to influence others.

New believers, you may have only been a believer for a few minutes or for a few days, but you already have influence. You are already having an impact on the non-Christians who might be in your life or on other people you meet, and you are on track toward making a bigger and better impact the longer you walk with the Lord Jesus.

You may have a spouse, or if you are unmarried you have friends and family members and other relatives, and you are all influencing each other. If you understand leadership as influence, then every Christian is a leader in some form and to some degree.

Scripture says that church members affect each other and need to spur one another on. "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24). We cannot do it on our own. We need the influence, the spurring on, the empowerment, and the encouragement of others.

You are a leader in relation to your friends. You are a leader in relation to your neighbors. You are a leader in relation to your co-workers. Every time you do something that influences them, you are leading. If you do something that wrongly influences them, you are still a leader--but you are leading wrongly. If the light of Christ shines from you, then you are leading in a proper sense. You are a leader even if somebody else is in a higher position in the relationship than you are.

At the time the Bible was written, wives were under their husbands in an almost tyrannical form. When the Bible was written, it told husbands to treat their wives well, but it also said to wives, "Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct" (1 Peter 3:1-2). Scripture did not tell a woman to go be the boss of her husband. It did say that just because, in a certain sense, he is the head of the wife does not mean she has no influence. If he is not a believer and is not listening to the word of the gospel, she still has influence. She can still lead him to Christ through the attractive power of a Christlike life.

Slaves could influence their masters. "Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they

can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive (Titus 2:9-10). A slave could lead a master.

I remember the story of a famous Hollywood actor who interviewed a woman to serve as his maid. She was an immigrant from another culture. She was poor, and she also happened to be a Christian. He asked her why she was applying to be a maid in his household. She replied, "I am here to lead you to Jesus Christ." The actor was very far from being a Christian. He laughed in her face and said, "I am hiring you to be a maid, not to teach me religion." Yet he did hire her because there was something about her that suggested she would be a good maid. Before it was all over, she had led him to Jesus Christ. That is the same principle Scripture talks about in Titus, where the underling, the subordinate, the one taking orders, turns out to be the leader who makes the teaching about God our Savior attractive and brings the boss to Jesus Christ.

Even if you are not the boss, even if you are not the upper person in a relationship, you can be a leader by the power of Christ in you and by leading others.

The Bible teaches that leaders are always learning, and learners are always leading. Even if you are already a leader in a recognized position of leadership, you still have a lot to learn. Even if you are still in a learning phase and not the leader of a congregation, you already have influence and you are already leading.

Scripture says, "If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith... Train yourself to be godly... Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers... Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Timothy 4:6-16).

If you are a leader, keep learning because it is important for your own salvation and for that of your hearers. If you are still a learner and would like to be more of a leader but are not where you want to be yet, do not give up. You already have quite a bit of influence, and you can keep growing in godliness.

Leaders of leaders

All of us are leaders. All Christians are leaders in the sense that we influence others, and we can keep growing toward a better and then a bigger influence. I say that deliberately and in that order. Do not look first for bigger influence or for being more important. If you are not growing in your own personal walk with Christ, if your influence is not growing *better*, then it is a waste for it to get *bigger*. You want to be leading people to know Jesus Christ and to be formed more and more like him. Pray that you will grow in godliness, and as you grow in godliness, let God worry about how much your influence grows.

We are all leaders, but some Christians become leaders of leaders. As you influence a wider and wider network of people, you may find that in church life or in a community a number of people

start looking to you. You may not have an official title, but people connect with you. They look to you, and they take some of their cues from you.

Other Christians become leaders of leaders plus. They become leaders of an entire congregation, perhaps as a pastor or as an elder.

Leaders at whatever level, but especially leaders of leaders plus who have responsibility for a congregation, are to evangelize, to instruct, to pray with others, to evaluate what is going on, to equip people and make them more skilled, to develop their abilities to serve the Lord, to mobilize and motivate people, to coordinate the activities of various people, and to care for their needs. All of these things go into the various roles of leadership. The further you go in leadership and the wider your circle of leadership, the more urgent it is that you have gifts in these areas as well.

As we talk about being qualified to lead, I am not going to focus primarily on your gift for evangelism, your gift for teaching, or some of the other abilities I have mentioned. Those are important and need to be developed. I want to talk about what the Bible discusses when it talks about what to look for in a leader in the first place.

As we go into that, we need to realize that being a leader, particularly as an elder or a pastor, is both a very noble task and a very scary task. Scripture says, “If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task.” (1 Timothy 3:1). Overseer can also be translated as bishop or elder, someone who oversees or supervises a congregation. It is noble to want to reach that level of godliness and influence.

But it is also scary. James says, “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways” (James 3:1). If you are going to be someone who speaks God’s Word to others and directs them, you are judged with greater strictness than someone who is responsible only for managing his own life. You are responsible not just for yourself, but for those you are teaching. It is noble to desire that kind of teaching and ruling leadership, but it is also scary because you have a great deal to answer to God for.

Why should we learn the qualifications to lead as an overseer? One reason is that we need to know what to look for in a church leader. Who do you want to be your mentor? Who do you want to be walking the path ahead of you so that you can follow, trust their example, trust their teaching, and trust who they are? You want a church leader who is qualified so that you can look to him with confidence.

Another reason is that if you aspire to be a pastor or an elder, you need to know what you are aiming for. What do I need to be to qualify as someone God approves of for that kind of position of leadership and will call to that kind of position?

Qualifications: reproducibility

If I had to summarize it all in one word, it would be *reproducibility*. The kind of person you want to reproduce is the kind of person who is qualified to be a leader.

What beliefs and walk with God do we need more of? Find someone who has those beliefs and that walk with God.

What character and relational patterns do we need more of? Find someone with that kind of character who relates to people in a healthy manner and whom you would like others to imitate.

What kind of family life do we need more of? This is often neglected when we think about qualifications for leadership. As long as somebody is skilled, talented, and able to do many things, we think, “They have leadership qualities.” Maybe they have leadership skills, but do they have the kind of family life you would like to see multiplied? In Christianity today, sometimes a popular and powerful television preacher may seem impressive, but if you know the truth about his family life, it may be a wreck. And he is still reproducing what he is. We should not be surprised if we choose leaders whose families are a wreck and then see congregations filled with more families that are a wreck. What you put into leadership is what you reproduce.

What reputation with outsiders do we need more of? Is this person someone who has lived for the Lord? A faithful Christian can have people who dislike him, especially people who serve the world and not Jesus Christ, but even then there may be no legitimate accusations that can be brought against him. Overall, he may be known as an honest, reliable person of integrity and character. We need people with a reputation among outsiders that we want to see multiplied.

In short, leaders must be people who are worth reproducing. These four areas are areas we need to explore further.

What beliefs and walk with God do we need more of?

First, what beliefs and walk with God do we need more of? This is obviously critical. If someone is not walking with God and does not have sound beliefs and sound doctrine, why would you want that person leading? Scripture says, “Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Timothy 4:16). Speaking to a pastor, Scripture also says to choose “faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2)

Leaders need to be people of faith themselves. They need to be able to teach the firm truths of the gospel to others. “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9). He must be someone with backbone, someone who believes firmly in the truth of God and is ready to stand up for it when it is challenged. We need leaders who hold their beliefs clearly and firmly, who can communicate them to those who need to hear them, and who can defend them against those who attack them.

We also need leaders who walk with God in their personal lives, whose lives are in keeping with the Word of God. Remember what Jesus said to some Pharisees: “You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are” (Matthew 23:15). That is the danger. When beliefs and personal walk with God are wrong, people can still make converts. They can still build big churches or gather large crowds,

but because their beliefs and their walk are out of touch with the living God, they can turn an entire congregation into sons of hell.

That is why it is so important that leaders be sound in doctrine, sound in their beliefs about who God is, what Christ has done in his death and resurrection, how we are saved, how we are born again, how we are justified by faith in Jesus Christ, and that they walk faithfully in a life of prayer and devotion to the Lord.

What character and relational patterns do we need more of?

Second, what kind of character and relational patterns do we need more of? The people we look to as leaders are the examples we are going to follow. The kind of life they live is what is going to rub off on us. Scripture says, “An overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money” (1 Timothy 3:2-3). You do not want somebody who is in it for the money, somebody who is always ready to pick a fight for no good reason, somebody who is a hothead who blows up at the least provocation, or somebody with a serious drinking problem. The list there is not necessarily meant to cover every possible situation, but if you had to summarize it, the question is this: what kind of character do you want?

Similar words come from Titus 1. “An overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined” (Titus 1:7-8).

What kind of character do you have? This matters more than many of the other things that are often listed as qualifications for ministry. Do you see anywhere in these passages a requirement such as "must have a seminary degree" or "must have attended school for a certain number of years"? A leader should be able to teach and should be knowledgeable in the doctrines of the faith, but qualities of character are far more important than any degree that might hang on the wall.

What family life do we need more of?

A third question to ask about qualifying for leadership is this: what kind of family life do we need more of? It is devastating to appoint to leadership people who have the gift of gab, a certain amount of charisma, and the ability to attract a following, but whose family life is not something you want to see multiplied.

Here is a question. What occupations have the highest levels of divorce? You could mention a few. Some occupations are very hard on marriage, such as long-term military service or police work. Those can be tough on family life. But here is one of the big ones. One occupation with one of the very highest levels of divorce is marriage counselor! A marriage counselor may have several plaques and degrees hanging on the wall. He or she may have all kinds of academic qualifications and certifications from every psychological organization imaginable. But when

you go to that person for marriage advice and their own marriage has collapsed, are you really getting wisdom on how to relate to your spouse and heal your marriage? Probably not.

That reality applies not only to marriage counseling and therapy but also to ministry. Scripture says that for someone to be an elder or an overseer, “He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church?” (1 Timothy 3:4-5). That's quite a question. If you don't know how to manage your own family, how can you manage God's family? "Appoint elders in every town as I directed you— if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination” (Titus 1:5-6).

So if you want to know whether somebody is qualified for leadership, look at those who know him best. A man should be respected most by those who know him best. Anybody can put on a pretty decent show in public for a few minutes and give a good performance if they have the talent for it. But if those who know you best admire you and are walking with the Lord, that is a crucial test for leadership.

Another thing I want to point out about these verses is the simple fact that you do not have to be single to be a leader in the church. The Roman Catholic Church, several centuries into the development of the church, decided that married people could not be priests. That was an unbiblical decision. Read the verses that say an overseer or bishop should be the husband of one wife. That is not saying that no single person could be a church leader. We have the examples of Paul, of Jesus himself, and of others who served the Lord mightily as singles. But if a person is married, then he should have a strong family, believing children, and a godly wife. He certainly does not have to be single in order to qualify for leadership in the church of Jesus Christ.

When we think about church leadership, we need to ask why it is that Jesus and the twelve apostles could not get ordained as leaders in many churches today. I am not kidding. I am dead serious in saying that Jesus and a bunch of fishermen and former accountants could not get ordained in church leadership today because they do not have the right degree. Why is that? If you have different pictures of what the church is, then you also have different pictures of what a leader is like and what qualifications that leader has to have.

If you believe that the number one qualification for leadership in the church is an academic degree, then the underlying picture you have of the church is probably church as school. We live in a culture where most people go through school, go through lots of school, kindergarten, grades one through twelve, often college, often graduate degrees. We are a very school-shaped society, and so we may think that the level of schooling you have attained is what makes you a leader.

Another expectation for some people is that a pastor or a leader is someone who is really good at starting things and managing programs and overseeing them. Often that expectation comes from seeing the church as a business enterprise. There is an aspect of the church that is business-like, in that someone who can get things started and coordinate activities has a valuable skill. But is church as business the main picture you want to have any more than church as school? A church does educate. It does teach. It does a variety of things, but it is not primarily a school.

A church may have as its main image theater. You might say no church would call itself a theater, but many people decide what church they will go to based on how good the music show is. I do mean the music *show*, because often the people in the auditorium are not even singing along with those up front. They have great performers on stage, dramas going on, or a spellbinding speaker. Their image of church, even if they do not realize it, is that church is a production, and they want the best actors and the best performers for that production.

Some may envision the church as a support group, a place to get encouraged when you are down. Then a pastor or an elder is mainly expected to provide therapy and good counsel. That is an important part of church life, but it is not the central definition of what the church is, and it is not the central aspect of what it means to be a leader.

If we picture church as government, then the main job of pastors and elders is to regulate behavior, to set rules, to enforce some of those rules, and to make sure people behave according to them. There is an element of truth in that. There is accountability, leadership, and even an element of governing in the church. But that may not be the central image of the church in the Bible.

The Bible often speaks of the church as the household of God. When you picture the church as a household, you begin to ask what kind of leadership that implies for a family. If a person cannot lead his own family, does he qualify for leadership in the church as God's household? The Bible speaks of the church as God's household in the passage we read earlier from 1 Timothy. "If a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?" It then goes on to speak of "how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God" (1 Timothy 3:15).

Other passages say similar things. We are "members of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10), "members of God's household" (Ephesians 2:19). We are "the household of God" (Hebrews 10:21; 1 Peter 4:17). Again and again, the church is pictured as God's household. That is not the only picture of the church in the New Testament. The church is also pictured as the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, and the assembly of God's people, and there are many other images as well. So do not think of God's household as the only picture of the church in the New Testament, but it is a major one, and it has profound implications.

What reputation with outsiders do we need more of?

A fourth question to ask in qualifying for leadership is this: what kind of reputation with outsiders do we need more of? It is very important for the church to have a good image in the eyes of those we are trying to reach with the gospel. When church leaders fall into disastrous scandal, it makes the church look terrible in the eyes of the world. It gives unbelievers a chance to mock the church and to say, "We are pretty good at sinning on our own without any help from a bunch of hypocrites like that." So it is very important that leaders in the church be people who are much less likely to bring disgrace on the cause of Christ. That means their reputation matters. That means they need to be time-tested.

Scripture says, “He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil” (1 Timothy 3:6). It is very dangerous to take somebody who has an exciting testimony and put them in a pulpit by the next week and say they are a preacher. They may have talent, and they may have a wonderful story of how God worked in their life, and they should testify to the grace of God and do so in various settings with their friends, but do not turn them into a major leader and the public face of the church just yet. They may fall into pride because they are not mature enough yet, and they have not been tested enough to know whether they will uphold a good name in the future. “Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil... And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless” (1 Timothy 3:7,10).

In order to be a leader, you need to have some miles on you. You need to be tested. You need to have proven that you can walk with God for a while without falling into the major traps and disgraces of the devil. Scripture also says, “Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands” (1 Timothy 5:22). That does not mean do not pat someone on the back or give them a hug. It is talking about the laying on of hands in ordination or in setting someone apart for leadership. Scripture says do not be in a big hurry to ordain people. Make sure you have checked things out. Make sure they are tested. Make sure they have a track record.

Church leaders must be time-tested in godliness. When I say that, it has implications for some of the earlier things we talked about. We talked about character. We talked about family life. You may look back at somebody and say you know something about their character, something they did eight years ago. If it was eight years ago, they may have been time-tested since then in serving the Lord. You may know that someone had a divorce fourteen years ago. The question is not whether there has ever been anything in their past. The question is whether they are now time-tested and walking with the Lord.

There are people who did a lot of bad things before their conversion. The apostle Paul was a murderer and a persecutor of Christians before he became a Christian. That did not disqualify him from becoming an apostle once God changed him and called him. There may be people with very ugly things in their pre-Christian past who may still qualify as leaders in the church because after their conversion they have walked faithfully with the Lord. There may be someone whose family life was disturbed years ago but who is now a faithful one-woman man, walking with the Lord, time-tested, and known to be faithful. We need a good reputation with outsiders, and we need to be time-tested as we walk with the Lord.

As we think about these qualifications, we can summarize them in terms of reproducibility. What beliefs and walk with God do we need more of? What character and relational patterns do we need more of? What family life do we need more of? What reputation with outsiders do we need more of? Leaders have to be worth reproducing. That can be intimidating to think about, but it is important to think about it.

First, what beliefs and walk with God do we need more of? There are people who are already leaders in the church, elders and pastors, who have never been born again and who do not know Jesus as personal Savior. One of the great Christians of about a century ago entered his first

charge as a minister without being converted. His name was Abraham Kuyper. He was a preacher in the Netherlands. He eventually became prime minister of the Netherlands, as well as the founder of a major university, a prolific writer of Christian teaching, and a preacher and pastor. He was a Renaissance man who could do almost everything. He was very brilliant and very well educated when he went into the ministry, with degrees from a prestigious college and seminary, but he had been educated in liberalism. He did not believe the Bible was truly the Word of God, and he did not believe that Jesus rose from the dead.

In his first church, while he was preaching, a couple of women, simple housewives attending his church, noticed that he did not have it. He did not preach the truths of redemption and of being born again. They talked with him, and Kuyper realized that he really was not a Christian, and that these women were. He came to know the Lord, and then he became mighty in the Lord's service.

Before you go into leadership, make sure you are born again and a child of God. Then grow in the character that qualifies you to be looked up to by others. Develop a family life. Do not neglect your family in order to do great things for God, because if you neglect your family, you erode out the foundation and credibility in the eyes of others. Do not be in a huge hurry to become important and famous. Develop a time-tested reputation in which you deal with people in a godly manner. These are some of the qualifications.

Who is competent?

It is a noble thing to aspire to that level of leadership. It is also a scary thing. When we ask what it takes to qualify, you might say, who in the world could do that? Who is competent? The apostle Paul says, "For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Corinthians 2:15–16).

If you are called to be a Christian at all, and especially if you are called to be a Christian leader, you are either the sweet smell of life to people who are being saved, or the stench of death to those who reject the gospel. That is a frightening responsibility. Who would dare to take on such a role? Who is sufficient for these things?

Paul answers his own question a little later in the same letter. "Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant" (2 Corinthians 3:5–6). We have talked about being qualified to lead. If you are going to be truly competent as a minister of God's new covenant in Jesus Christ, your sufficiency must come from God, through the work of the Holy Spirit in you, making you more like Jesus and empowering you to lead others in the path of Jesus.

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Slide Contents

Every Christian is a leader.

“You are the light of the world.” (Matt 5:14)

- To lead is to influence others.
- New believers have influence, and are on track toward making a bigger, better impact.
- Spouses, family members, and other relatives influence each other.
- All church members affect each other and “spur one another on.” (Hebrews 10:24)
- Friends, neighbors, and co-workers influence each other.

Leading by attracting

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives—when they see your respectful and pure conduct. (1 Peter 3:1-2)

Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive. (Titus 2:9-10)

Learners are always leading; leaders are always learning.

If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith... Train yourself to be godly... Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers... Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Tim 4:6-16)

Leaders of leaders

- All Christians are leaders in the sense that we influence others. Keep growing toward better and bigger influence.

- Some Christians become **leaders of leaders**, influencing a network of people.
- A few become **leaders of leaders plus** and oversee an entire congregation.
- *Evangelize, instruct, pray, evaluate, equip, mobilize, coordinate, and care for.*

A noble (and scary) task

If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. (1 Tim. 3:1)

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in many ways. (James 3:1-2)

Why learn qualifications to lead as overseer?

- Know what to look for in a church leader.
- Know what to aspire to in order to qualify.

Qualifications: reproducibility

- What beliefs and walk with God do we need more of?
- What character and relational patterns do we need more of?
- What family life do we need more of?
- What reputation with outsiders do we need more of?
- **Leaders must be worth reproducing!**

What beliefs and walk with God do we need more of?

Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:16)

... faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2:2)

He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. (Titus 1:9)

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An overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. (1 Tim 3:2-3)

An overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. (Titus 1:7-8)

What family life do we need more of?

He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? (1 Timothy 3:4-5)

Appoint elders in every town as I directed you— if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination. (Titus 1:5-6)

- Respected most by those who know him best.
- Need not be single (as Roman Catholics require)

Pictures of church shape expectations for leadership

- Earn academic degrees: church as school
- Start & manage programs: church as business
- Draw & fascinate crowds: church as theater
- Provide therapy: church as support group
- Regulate behavior: church as government
- Family leadership: church as household

Church as God's Household

If a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God? ...you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God" (1 Tim 3:15).

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What reputation with outsiders do we need more of?

- He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil... And let them also be tested first (1 Tim 3:6-7, 10)
- Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands (1 Tim 5:22)
- Church leaders must be time-tested in godliness.

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For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? (2 Cor 2:15-16)

Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant (2 Cor 3:5-6)