



# The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V22 N11 March 29, 2020

## DEAR TIMOTHY

“A Profile of Christian Maturity”

1 Timothy 3:1-16

### THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

#### Kindness/Goodness

I choose to do the right things in my relationship with others.

*“Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for every one else.”*

1 Thessalonians 5:15



What does spiritual maturity look like?

The mission of Central Bible Church is “to make God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.” Mission statements usually include a reference to *purpose* expressed in a phrase beginning with “to,” to *means* expressed in a phrase beginning with “by,” and a reference to *result* expressed in a phrase beginning with “so that.” Our church’s purpose is “to make God known.” The means we use to accomplish that purpose is “by making disciples.” The *result* we anticipate is *so that* those disciples will “change their world.”

Having a clear mission statement is a good place to start, but apart from a definition or description of a “disciple” we cannot accomplish our purpose. Central has chosen to define or describe the profile of a true disciple in terms of 30 Core Competencies: 10 Central Beliefs, 10 Central Practices, and 10 Central Virtues. We believe that a more comprehensive understanding of the Central Beliefs coupled with a more frequent and consistent participation in the Central Practices will through the work of the Holy Spirit lead to a more robust manifestation of the Central Virtues—including the various fruits of the Spirit. The 10 Central Beliefs include: Authority of the Bible; Church; Eternity; the Holy Spirit; Humanity; Identity in Christ; Jesus Christ; Life Purpose; Personal God; and Salvation by Grace. The 10 Central Practices include: Bible Study; Biblical Community; Compassion; Disciple-Making; Evangelism; Generosity; Prayer; Single-mindedness; Spiritual Gifts; and Worship. The 10 Central Virtues include: Love; Joy; Peace; Patience; Kindness/Goodness; faithfulness; Gentleness; Self-Control; Grace; Hope; and Humility. These 30 competencies evident in various degrees are the marks of a true disciple.

Sanctification, spiritual formation, and discipleship are all terms that point to the process we all go through to become like Jesus. Paul writes:

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brothers and sisters” (Ro 8:29). Sanctification views the process from the perspective of *holiness*; spiritual formation from the perspective of *development*; and discipleship from the perspective of *training*. All three terms refer to a process that begins when we believe and are “born again” (Jn 3:3, 7; cf., “of the Spirit” v. 8), continues throughout our spiritual journey, and ends when we die—which suggests that the three terms are all relative. At no point in this life are we fully sanctified, completely mature, or absolutely disciples. We remain “in process” in this life.

Likewise in 1 Timothy 3:1-16, the spiritual qualifications Paul establishes for overseers and deacons, are all marks of Christian maturity, are all relative like the 30 Core Competencies, and are all progressive like sanctification, spiritual formation, and discipleship. Paul isn’t looking for perfect leaders who’ve arrived; he’s looking for leaders who are “above reproach” (v. 2). One commentator writes: “The meaning of [above reproach] is spelled out in the following instructions, which do not describe a person totally without sin, but one morally careful and responsible” (Walter L. Liefeld, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 118). And these qualities are not just for leaders. They are marks of maturity that should be evident more or less in every growing disciple. Another commentator writes: “These qualities should be goals for every Christian man who is a Christ follower. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul pulled together a number of characteristics he and other authors mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament for both men and women and outlined a marvelous profile for measuring Christ-like maturity in men in particular” (Gene A. Getz, *The Measure of a Man*, 22-23).

1 Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. 2 Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. 7 He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.

8 In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. 9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

11 In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

12 A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. 13 Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

14 Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, 15 if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. 16 Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great:

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,  
was taken up in glory.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Bracket "here is a trustworthy saying" in v. 1.
- Circle "overseer" in v. 1.
- Underline "faithful to his wife" in vv. 2, 12.
- Circle "family" in v. 4 and "household" in v. 12.
- Bracket "as the devil" in v. 6.
- Underline "the devil's trap" in v. 7.
- Bracket "in the same way" in vv. 8, 11.
- Circle "the women" in v. 11.
- Box "so that" indicating *purpose* in vv. 7, 14.
- Circle "assurance" v. 13.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about \_\_\_\_\_."

## DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Quote the “trustworthy saying” (v. 1).
2. The overseer’s task is “noble.” How so?
3. The terms “overseer” and “elder” refer to the same position. How do we know? (See notes.)
4. Paul lists 15 qualifications of overseers. Sort them into more *inward* or *character* qualities and more *outward* or *relational* qualities.
5. An overseer must be “faithful to his wife.” Must he be married? Explain why or why not.
6. Paul lists 11 qualifications of deacons, that is the men and the women who serve. Some are different than for overseers. List them.
7. Why would deacons need to be “tested” (v. 10) and elders not?
8. Identify “the women” in verse 11.
9. What two things do deacons get in return for serving?
10. **Discussion:** Talk about the relationship of Paul’s *closing hymn* to his discussion of the qualifications of overseers and deacons.

### Commentary On The Text

In 1 Timothy 3:1-16, Paul paints two portraits using a kaleidoscope of words rather than colors — one of the “overseer” (vv. 1-7) and one of the “deacon” (vv. 8-13). Some would divide the passage into three parts suggesting three portraits, namely, one of the overseer, one of the male deacon, and one of the female deacon. One commentator writes: “In this section [3:1-13] Paul discussed the qualifications of three groups of church leaders. In 3:1-7 he discussed overseers or bishops. In 3:8-10, 12-13 he discussed the requirements for deacons or church helpers. In 3:11 he presented requirement for women helpers” (Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, NAC, 105).

Based on the assumption that only those who are standing up need to be told to sit down, another commentator infers from Paul’s list of requirements for overseers that mature leaders were lacking in the Ephesian church. He writes: “The major problem in the Ephesian church was its leadership. From within the ranks of the church, a group of false teachers had sprung up who were perverting the gospel and teaching a message that ultimately stemmed from Satan. Not only was their theology erroneous but their behavior was reprehensible” (William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, *Pastoral Epistles*, 184). Having a list of qualifications would enable Timothy to set errant leaders straight and, if necessary, to replace them with others who meet these requirements. And since the qualifications are also marks of Christian maturity, they provide a useful profile for measuring Christ-like maturity in all believers.

Verses 1-7 contain a list of 15 qualifications that more or less speak for themselves. Here is a list of these qualities with a brief sense of their meaning: “above reproach” (not liable to criticism); “faithful to his wife” (morally pure). On this qualification there is serious disagreement as to its meaning: “Virtually all commentators agree that this phrase prohibits both polygamy and promiscuity, which are unthinkable for spiritual leaders in the church. Many Bible students say the words a ‘one-woman man’ are saying that the affections of an elder must be centered exclusively on his wife. Many others hold, however, that the phrase further prohibits any who have been divorced and remarried from becoming overseers” (A. Duane Litfin, “1 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 736).

The list goes on: “temperate” (sober minded); “self-controlled” (disciplined); “respectable” (orderly, a good role model); “hospitable” (unselfish and generous), “able to teach” (communicates sensitively and effectively in a non-defensive manner); “not given to drunkenness” (not

addicted to substances); “not violent” (not abusive); “gentle” (sensitive, loving, kind); “not quarrelsome” (not contentious, a peacemaker); “not a lover of money” (not materialistic); “manages his own family well” (a good husband and father), suggesting that overseeing a church requires the same skills as overseeing a household; “not a recent convert” (not a neophyte, mature); “a good reputation” (respected by unbelievers). Some of these pertain to *inward* or character qualities like “temperate” and “gentle”; others pertain to *outward* or relational qualities like “hospitable” and “able to teach.”

The following paragraph begins “in the same way” (v. 8) or “likewise” (ESV), indicating that although their responsibilities are significantly different, deacons, too, must be mature. Verses 8-13 contain a list of 11 qualifications that again more or less speak for themselves, a number of which are nearly the same as the qualifications for overseers. A few are different, however. For example, deacons are required to be “sincere.” “This has the connotation of saying something twice with the bad connotation of saying one thing to one person and something else to another. Bunyan typically speaks in *Pilgrims’ Progress* of ‘the parson of our parish, Mr. Two-Tongues’” (Ralph Earle, “1 Timothy,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 11:367). The list continues: “hold the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience” (maintain integrity of belief and behavior); and “be tested” (prove themselves) before serving as deacons.

The next verse begins with the same words as verse 8, which introduces the qualifications for deacons, a second position. This suggests to some that verse 11 introduces the qualifications for deaconesses, a third position. Others see here a reference to deacons wives, who must not be “malicious talkers” but “trustworthy in everything.” It seems best to take a mediating position here. The reference is to women who serve in the church, some of whom may be deacons’ wives while others may be other women with ministries in the church (see note). The section on the qualifications for deacons ends on a note of encouragement. Those who serve well “will gain an excellent standing” in the church as well as “great assurance” or “great confidence” (ESV) in their faith.

The passage ends with a hymn that testifies to the fact that the spiritual maturity expressed in the qualities required of church leaders is rooted in the mystery of Christ revealed in the incarnation, in his miracles climaxing in the resurrection, after which he was seen by angels, was preached among the nations and believed on in the world following his ascension to the Father.

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## Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *trustworthy saying* This formula appears in 1:15; 3:1; 4:9. The formula precedes the saying in 1:15 and follows it in 4:9. Scholars debate whether it precedes or follows in 3:1, although the obscurity of 2:15 suggests it follows at the end of verse 1.

v. 1 *overseer* Two Greek words are used to refer to the same office or leadership position in the church: *episkopos* translated “overseer” (or “bishop” KJV; cf., Php 1:1; Tit 1:7), and *presbuteros* translated “elder.” The nuance of the first suggests the function and responsibility of the leader and the second suggests the maturity and dignity of the leader. “In such passages as Acts 20:17, 28 and Titus 1:5, 7 the terms ‘elders’ and ‘overseer’ appear together to suggest that the positions are partially, if not fully, interchangeable” (Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, NAC, 107).

v. 2 *faithful to . . .* Lit., “a one-woman man.” Cf., “the husband of one wife” (ESV); “have only one wife” (GNT); “faithful to his one wife” (NEB); “married only once” (NRSV). One commentator lists four major interpretations. An elder “(1) ‘Must be married,’ (2) ‘Not polygamous,’ (3) ‘Faithful to his [one] wife,’ or (4) ‘not remarried/divorced’ (William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, *Pastoral Epistles*, 170; see a comparison of the evidence for and against each view in Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 Timothy,” 2020 ed., 63-68, [plano-biblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1timothy.pdf](http://plano-biblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1timothy.pdf)). The first is unlikely; must he have children, too? The third entails the second and is most likely, while the fourth, namely, not divorced, remains a possibility.

v. 4 *family* Cf., “household” (ESV). The same word is translated “household” in verse 15. The “household” often included more than immediate family, but the reference to “his children” in verse 4 suggests the translation in the NIV.

v. 6 *as the devil* Lit., “condemnation of the devil” (ESV). “it is not clear what is meant by falling into the condemnation of the devil. It may mean (a) the condemnation reserved for the devil, i.e. the judgment meted out for the sin of pride; or (b) the condemnation wrought by the devil, i.e., the condemnation brought about by further intrigues of the devil when a man is once lured into his grasp through pride; or (c) the condemnation of the slanderer, taking devil in its original sense, and under-

standing by the phrase the malicious attacks to which an arrogant neophyte is subjected as a result of his vanity . . . the more natural seems to be the first, since pride is clearly a pressing danger for a promoted neophyte” (Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, TNTC, 82-83).

v. 7 *devil’s trap* Lit., “snare of the devil” (ESV). “The *snare of the devil* is again ambiguous, for it may either mean the trap laid by the devil into which a man unpopular among non-Christians will easily fall; or it may refer to the devil’s sin of pride [i.e., the snare in which he was caught]. The mention of *reproach* suggests the format as the more probably interpretation, although the latter forms a better parallel with the previous verse” (Guthrie, 83; cf., Ralph Earle, “1 Timothy,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 11: 366).

v. 8 *deacons* “The term ‘deacon’ refers literally to someone who serves . . . Bible scholars view the overseer as providing administrative leadership for the church. They see the deacon as helping the overseer in the ministries of work of the church . . . Sometimes the Bible uses the term ‘deacon’ to refer to a *person* who functions as a helper or a servant (Matt 20:26). At other times the term refers to a *position* (see Phil 1:1, where ‘deacon’ is the translation of *diakonos*). In 1 Timothy 3 the term ‘deacon’ refers to a position. Several traditions and various denominations commonly view the seven men mentioned in Acts 6:5-6 as deacons” (Lea and Griffin, 115).

v. 11 *the women* “Does this verse refer to female deacons? Historically, most interpreters have preferred this view. Others believe it refers to the wives of male deacons. Still others believe it refers to unmarried women who assist the deacons. Exegetically it is very hard to decide” (Constable, 76). There is no consensus (see Mounce, 202-204; Earle, 368; Liefeld, 134; Lea and Griffin, 120-21). One commentator writes: “The truth probably lies between these two views. The reference is too general to postulate with certainty a distinct order of deaconesses, but some feminine ministration was necessary in visitation and in attending to women candidates for baptism. For such work certain moral qualities would be essential whether for deacons’ wives or for deaconesses in their own right” (Guthrie, 85).

v. 13 *assurance* “The rewards for faithful service as a deacon are two: a good reputation (‘high standing’), and increased (‘great’) ‘confidence’ in dealing with other people and with God (cf. Matt. 20:26-28; Mark 10:43-45)” (Constable, 78).



## APPLY THE TEXT

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### CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

While spiritual maturity should be the *goal* of all Christians in general, it is the *requirement* of all Christian leaders in particular.

### CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



## 3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



## FAMILY TALK

Nearly every job has a job description and nearly every job description has a list of necessary qualifications needed to perform the essential functions of the position. Have you ever wondered what the qualifications would be on the job description for “Mom” or “Dad?” How about, “Must be able to function on very little or no sleep. Must be able to fill endless cups of water at bedtime. Must be able to do elementary science fair projects.” I’ve learned through the years that the ability to do the hundreds of parenting tasks in front of me doesn’t qualify me to parent; God is the great qualifier. What matters most in parenting is the ability to gently and lovingly point my kids to the Lord. The heart of leading our kids to Jesus, to parenting with grace and to His glory, beats in rhythm with our connection to God. We simply cannot lead our children well if we aren’t intentionally seeking God ourselves. Parents, we need time with the Lord to realign our heart to His will. We need time in the Word to point the compass away from ourselves and learn what He wants. We need connection in prayer to remind ourselves that while we don’t have what it takes to be patient, kind, loving and faithful, God will equip us. Only then will the fruits of the Spirit fill us and overflow to our children. Parents, I’m praying you seek the Lord with all your heart. You will find Him and that will make all the difference in your parenting.

### What Does The Bible Say?

What does the Bible say? Read 1 Timothy 3

1. List five qualifications for an overseer.
2. List five qualifications for a deacon.
3. Why did Paul write this letter to Timothy?

### What Do You Think?

Why is it important to have qualifications for leaders in the church?

### What Do You Do?

Think of a leader you respect. What about that leader makes you want to follow them? What do you need to change in your life to become more like that leader?

## CORE COMPETENCY: Singlemindedness

I pay attention to what God thinks is important for my life.

## MEMORY VERSE: Ephesians 5:1

*Be imitators of God, therefore as dearly loved children . . .*

## KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: [kids@wearecentral.org](mailto:kids@wearecentral.org)

- \_\_\_\_\_ I completed my Bible Study
- \_\_\_\_\_ I memorized this week’s verse
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought my Bible to church
- \_\_\_\_\_ I brought a friend



CHILD’S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

# OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

## CENTRAL BELIEFS

**Authority of the Bible** (2 Timothy 3:16-17)  
*I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.*

**Church** (Ephesians 4:15-16)  
*I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.*

**Eternity** (John 14:1-4)  
*I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.*

**The Holy Spirit** (Romans 8:9)  
*I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.*

**Humanity** (John 3:16)  
*I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.*

**Identity in Christ** (John 1:12)  
*I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.*

**Jesus Christ** (Hebrews 1:1-4)  
*I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.*

**Life Purpose** (Acts 20:24)  
*I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.*

**Personal God** (Psalm 121:1-2)  
*I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.*

**Salvation by Grace** (Ephesians 2:8-9)  
*I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.*



## CENTRAL VIRTUES

**Love** (1 John 4:10-12)  
*I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.*

**Joy** (John 15:11)  
*I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.*

**Peace** (Philippians 4:6-7)  
*I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.*

**Patience** (Proverbs 14:29)  
*I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.*

**Kindness/Goodness** (1 Thessalonians 5:15)  
*I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others*

**Faithfulness** (Proverbs 3:3-4)  
*I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.*

**Gentleness** (Philippians 4:5)  
*I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.*

**Self-Control** (Titus 2:11-13)  
*I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.*

**Grace** (Colossians 3:13)  
*I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.*

**Hope** (1 Peter 1:3-5)  
*I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.*

**Humility** (Philippians 2:3-4)  
*I choose to esteem others above myself.*



## CENTRAL PRACTICES

**Bible Study** (Hebrews 4:12)  
*I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Biblical Community** (Acts 2:44-47)  
*I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.*

**Compassion** (Psalm 82:3-4)  
*I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.*

**Disciple-Making** (2 Timothy 2:2)  
*I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.*

**Evangelism** (Acts 1:8)  
*I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

**Generosity** (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)  
*I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.*

**Prayer** (Psalm 66:16-20)  
*I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.*

**Single-Mindedness** (Matthew 6:33)  
*I focus on God and His priorities for my life.*

**Spiritual Gifts** (Romans 12:4-6)  
*I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.*

**Worship** (Psalm 95:1-7)  
*I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.*

**Tom Bulick** (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for 12 years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church in 1998. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

**Stephanie Thomas** (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. She and James are Shepherds of the Bailey Community Group. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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**CENTRAL  
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard  
Fort Worth, Texas 76120  
817-274-1315  
wearecentral.org