

1. I Timothy 3:1 --

- a. Explain the “desire” in the phrase “...desire the office of a bishop”

The word used here is “**oregetai**” which means: To eagerly desire to accomplish some goal or purpose – ‘to strive to attain, to aspire to, to eagerly long for.’ The meaning of “**oregetai**” normally involves greater intensity of feeling than the meaning of “**epiqumia**”, which is the word used for the second “desire” in this verse.

■ Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament – Louw & Nida

This word is used in I Tim. 3:1; 6:10 and Heb. 11:16 all to describe a strong desire for something that one does not currently have. In I Tim. 6:10 it is the evil desire for money, in Heb. 11:16 it is the good desire for Heaven.

In this passage this word would probably better be rendered as “aspire”.

However, as we will see later in the passage this desire does not qualify a person for the position.

- b. What is meant by “bishop”? How broad is this?

The word here is “**episkophs**” which means: one who serves as a leader in a church. This word comes from the verb “**episkopew**”, which means to care for or look after, with the implication of continuous responsibility.

It is important to combine the concepts of both service and leadership (a servant/leader), in other words, the responsibility of caring for the needs of a congregation as well as directing the activities of the membership.

Though in some contexts this word has been regarded traditionally as a position of authority, in reality the focus is upon the responsibility for caring for others or caring for the church.

■ Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament – Louw & Nida

I believe that this word is broad in its meaning in reference to responsibility, but narrow in reference to position. The position is one of the under-shepherd, and ultimate earthly overseer of the church, which, based on this and other passages I Cor. 14:34,35; I Tim. 2:8-14 would be limited to a man. However the implied responsibilities are great and many, although the two main ones being prayer and ministry of the Word (which takes on many forms (Acts 6:4; 20:20; etc.)).

- c. Explain the “desire” in the phrase “...he desires a good work”

The word here is “epiqumia”, which means: to greatly desire to do or to have something – ‘to long for, to desire very much’.

■ Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament – Louw & Nida

Within the context of this verse, given the meaning of bishop as explained above, the desire in this passage is not necessarily referring to a desire for the position, but rather a desire for the work and responsibilities that come with the position.

- d. Can a women be called to ministry? Explain. How about to a mission field?

For starters the phrase “called to ministry” or any form of that phrase is never used in scripture. If what we mean by call is the first word “desire” in I Timothy 3:1, then we have to also define “ministry”.

The word usually rendered ministry in the NT is “diakonia” as used by Paul in I Tim. 1:12, “...appointing me to His ministry”. It is also translated as the title to the specific church office of deacon in I Tim. 3:8, as well as the service that the men in Acts 6 were elected to accomplish.

However, this same word is used in Eph. 4:12 to describe the work that all members of a local congregation ought to be doing “...to equip the saints for the work of the ministry”, and specifically to a women in Rom. 16:1 “I commend your sister Phoebe, a deaconess...”

■ Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament – Louw & Nida

So if we define “call” as stated above, “a strong desire for” and “ministry” the way it is most often used in the NT, I would conclude that not only can a women be “called” to ministry, but ought to have a “strong desire” to do the work of the ministry!

However, if we define “ministry” as “episkophs”, then based on the context that this word is used in the NT it is only for a man. This ministry of caring for the needs of a congregation as its spiritual leader is restricted to that of a qualified Spiritual man. Having the desire does not even qualify a man.

In relation to missions. If we define mission work as the work related to preaching the word and planting churches, which I see as being the model of missions in the NT, then obviously this work can only be done by a man.

- a. What is meant by “blameless”? What sort of things would make a man blameworthy?

The word used here is “*anepilhmpton*” which means: “pertaining to what cannot be criticized, above criticism, beyond reproach.”

■ Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament – Louw & Nida

Or “not to be taken hold of”. It describes a person of such character that no one can properly bring against him a charge of unfitness.

This word is being used to express that for a man to be qualified for the position of bishop, he must be above reproach in all areas of character, specifically the areas mention in this and the following verses.

The type of things that would make one blameworthy is anything that gives way for legitimate reproach in any of the character descriptions given in these verses. The standard is very high, we ought to keep it there.

■ The New American Commentary on I Timothy

- b. What is meant by “the husband of one wife”?

The Greek phrase used here is best rendered: “one-woman kind of man”. In other words, it describes a man who cannot be taken hold of on the score of sexual promiscuity or laxity.

■ The New American Commentary on I Timothy

3. Must a bishop be married? Is it better for a bishop to be married?

The idea behind the phrase “one-woman kind of man”, is that a man ought to be blameless and faithful in his relations to women, whether married or not.

■ The New American Commentary on I Timothy

God said; “It is not good that man should be alone”, and that was in paradise. Is it better for a bishop to be married? I would say that it is God’s design that man should be married. However, there is nothing from this passage that would indicate whether it is better or not.

4. Must a bishop have children? Is it better for a bishop to have children?

Verse 4 does not require a bishop to have children, just like verse 2 does not require a bishop to be married, the same phrasing is used in both places. However it is saying if a man does have children he is to manage them well, like all the other aspects of his home.

■ The New American Commentary on I Timothy

For a married man without children or a single man, other aspects of his life out to be looked at to determine if he is “managing his household well”.

Is it better for a bishop to have children? Again there is nothing in this passage to indicate whether it is better or not. Having children would give the bishop some credibility with the people that he may not have otherwise. However, I don't believe that we can take from this passage that it would be better, nor should it be necessary for the people to give him the credibility and respect that the position requires.