

QUALIFICATIONS FOR A PASTOR

1 Timothy 3:4-5 ... “one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence. For if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?”

There are many practical things to consider when installing a man as the pastor of a church. He should be a fervent student of the Bible, and trained to interpret the Bible so he can present it to his congregation in an easy to follow roadmap. He must confess his sins daily so he can teach without hypocrisy, and care more about the lost than he does himself. We could list a hundred practical qualifications for a pastor, but today we will consider how a pastor leads his own family.

If you are a parent you know there are no guarantees how your children will turn out. Perhaps in your own life you rejected some of your parents' values and disappointed them. Is it realistic for every pastor to have submissive children and to rule his house well, as today's verse states? Let's look at the historical perspective.

Children grew up quickly in ancient times. Boys left home as early as age 13 to work and find their own way in the world. Girls often married at that same age. (We believe Mary was about 14 when she became pregnant with Jesus.) David was a young boy when he slew Goliath. Jesus debated the Jewish rabbis at age 12. So, when Paul wrote his letter to Timothy, children generally passed into adulthood at about age 13 and were no longer under the authority of their parents. In that context, we can see more clearly what Paul meant when he expressed concern for a pastor's inability to lead his own family. How can a pastor admonish his congregation to: obey Christ, confess and repent of their sins, share their faith with the lost, and encourage them to develop great faith in God, if he is unable to teach those same things to his own children? However, children in our culture were adults in Paul's time.

The decisions a pastor makes – his selection of a wife, the pastoral training he pursues, the morals he subscribes to, how he trains his own children, and how he attends to his own spiritual development (which is a lifelong effort) – have a direct bearing on how suitably he will lead his church. He may not be able to guarantee that his children will turn out to be good, honest, moral, and godly adults (because we all have a free will). But, as long as a pastor's children remain in his home – whatever their ages – the rules of the home should be patterned from God's Word, and ALL occupants of that home should submit to those rules. If there is division, rebellion, immorality or ungodliness in a pastor's home, his role as a spiritual leader of others is compromised.

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