

# Qualifications of Deacons

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*1 Timothy 3:10 ... 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. (KJV)*

*1 Timothy 3:10 ... 10 But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. (NKJV)*

*1 Timothy 3:10 ... 10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. (NASB)*

## **And let these also first be proved (KJV); But let these also first be tested (NKJV); These men must also first be tested (NASB).**

The Greek word *dokimazō* is translated “proved” (KJV) or “tested” (NASB). Thomas says it means “to test, by implication, to approve” [1381a]. BDAG say it means “(1) to make a critical examination of something to determine genuineness, put to the test, examine; (2) to draw a conclusion about worth on the basis of testing, prove, approve, here the focus is on the result of a procedure or examination; (a) prove by testing, of gold; (b) accept as proved, approve.” Louw & Nida defines it as “to try to learn the genuineness of something by examination and testing, often through actual use.” [27:45].

This Greek word occurs 23x in the NT (Luke 12:56; 14:19; Rom. 1:28; 2:18; 12:2; 14:22; 1 Cor. 3:13; 11:28; 16:3; 2 Cor. 8:8; 8:22; 13:5; Gal. 6:4; Eph. 5:10; Phil. 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:4; 5:21; 1 Tim. 3:10; Heb. 3:9; 1 Pet. 1:7; 1 John 4:1).

Men often test physical objects, such as the appearance of the earth and sky (Luke 12:54-56), or a team of oxen (Luke 14:16-19).

*Luke 12:54-56 ... 54 And He was also saying to the crowds, “When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, ‘A shower is coming,’ and so it turns out. 55 “And when you see a south wind blowing, you say, ‘It will be a hot day,’ and it turns out that way. 56 “You hypocrites! You know how to **\*analyze** the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why do you not **\*analyze** this present time? (NASB)*

*Luke 14:16-19 ... 16 But He said to him, “A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; 17 and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’ 18 “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.’ 19 “Another one said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to **\*try** them out; please consider me excused.’ (NASB)*

Men are tested by God (1 Thess. 2:3-4), through facing difficult circumstances, trials and tribulations (1 Cor. 3:10-15; 1 Pet. 1:6-7).

*1 Thessalonians 2:3-4 ... 3 For our exhortation does not come from error or impurity or by way of deceit; 4 but just as we have been **\*approved** by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who **\*examines** our hearts. (NASB)*

*1 Corinthians 3:10-15 ... 10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will **\*test** the quality of each man's work. 14 If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. 15 If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (NASB)*

*1 Peter 1:6-7 ... 6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though **\*tested** by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; (NASB)*

The Gentiles failed the test through improper analysis (Rom. 1:28-32).

*Romans 1:28-32 ... 28 And just as they did not **\*see \*fit** to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. (NASB)*

The Jews failed the test through improper application (Rom. 2:17-24).

*Romans 2:17-24 ... 17 But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon the Law and boast in God, 18 and know His will and **\*approve** the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, 21 you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God? 24 For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," just as it is written. (NASB)*

We may also fail the test by arrogantly putting God to the test (Heb. 3:7-11; cf. Deut. 6:16-19; Matt. 4:5-7).

*Hebrews 3:7-11 ... 7 Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, “Today if you hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, As in the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tried Me by **\*testing** Me, And saw My works for forty years. 10 “Therefore I was angry with this generation, And said, ‘They always go astray in their heart, And they did not know My ways’; 11 As I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’ ” (NASB)*

*Deuteronomy 6:16-19 ... 16 “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah. 17 “You should diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and His testimonies and His statutes which He has commanded you. 18 “You shall do what is right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may be well with you and that you may go in and possess the good land which the Lord swore to give your fathers, 19 by driving out all your enemies from before you, as the Lord has spoken. (NASB)*

*Matthew 4:5-7 ... 5 Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, ‘He will command His angels concerning You’; and ‘On their hands they will bear You up, So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’ ” 7 Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ” (NASB)*

We test divine truth by faithfully submitting to its demands (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 5:6-10).

*Romans 12:1-2 ... 1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may **\*prove** what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (NASB)*

*Ephesians 5:6-10 ... 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them; 8 for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light 9 (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), 10 **\*trying to \*learn** what is pleasing to the Lord. (NASB)*

We test actions and attitudes by comparing them to the Word of God (Phil. 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 5:21-22).

*Philippians 1:9-11 ... 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, 10 so that you may **\*approve** the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. (NASB)*

*1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 ... 21 But **\*examine** everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; 22 abstain from every form of evil. (NASB)*

We engage in self-examination by measuring our lives by the Gospel of Christ, and by living consistently with the same (Rom. 14:22-23; 1 Cor. 11:27-32; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 6:4).

*Romans 14:22-23 ... 22 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he **\*approves**. 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin. (NASB)*

*1 Corinthians 11:27-32 ... 27 Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. 28 But a man must **\*examine** himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. 30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. 31 But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world. (NASB)*

*2 Corinthians 13:5 ... 5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; **\*examine** yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test? (NASB)*

*Galatians 6:4 ... 4 But each one must **\*examine** his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. (NASB)*

We also test others by the inspired standard of truth (1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:7-8, 16-24; 1 Tim. 3:8-10; 1 John 4:1).

*1 Corinthians 16:1-4 ... 1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. 2 On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. 3 When I arrive, whomever you may **\*approve**, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem; 4 and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me. (NASB)*

*2 Corinthians 8:7-8 ... 7 But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also. 8 I am not speaking this as a command, but as **\*proving** through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also. (NASB)*

*2 Corinthians 8:16-24 ... 16 But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus. 17 For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord. 18 We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches; 19 and not only this, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and to show our readiness, 20 taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; 21 for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. 22 We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often **\*tested** and found diligent in many things, but now even*

*more diligent because of his great confidence in you. 23 As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ. 24 Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you. (NASB)*

*1 Timothy 3:8-10 ... 8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, 9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 These men must also first be **\*tested**; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. (NASB)*

*1 John 4:1 ... 1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **\*test** the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (NASB)*

### **Then let them use the office of a deacon (KJV); then let them serve as deacons (NKJV & NASB)**

A prospective deacon must, therefore, be carefully examined and tested. Note the significance of “then.” Testing comes first; appointment comes later. According to Thomas, the Greek particle, *eita*, meaning “then, next, therefore,” is an adverb denoting sequence. As used in this context, BDAG say it “pertains to being next in order of time, *then, next*.” One must be carefully scrutinized before being appointed to this office. After having been proven, he is to faithfully serve the needs of the congregation.

The Greek verb *diakoneō*, here rendered “let them use the office of a deacon” (KJV) or “let them serve as deacons” (NKJV & NASB), occurs 37x in the NT. Thomas defines [diakoneō] as from *diakonos* [a servant, minister], meaning “to serve, minister” [1247]. BDAG say it generally means “to render service in a variety of ways either at someone’s behest or voluntarily and frequently with suggestion of movement.” Specifically, it means “(1) to function as an intermediary, act as go-between/agent, be at one’s service; (2) to perform obligations, without focus on intermediary function; (a) of unspecified services perform duties, render assistance, serve someone; (b) of attention at meals wait on someone at table; (3) to meet an immediate need, help; (4) to carry out official duties, minister; (5) Acts 6:2 poses a special problem: care for, take care of ... ‘look after tables’ can be understood of serving food at tables, but it is improbable that some widows would be deprived of food at a communal meal. The term diakonia (vs. 1) more probably refers to administrative responsibility (see *diakonia* 5), one of whose aspects is concern for widows without specifying the kind of assistance that is allotted. ...”

For more information on this word, see “COC Organization - Deacons (Greek Words).docx” which examines the various Greek words describing the office and function of a deacon.

### **Being found blameless (KJV & NKJV); If they are beyond reproach (NASB).**

The Greek word *anegklētos* is translated “blameless” (KJV) or “beyond reproach” (NASB). Thomas says it refers to that which is “not to be called to account” [410]. BDAG define it as

“blameless, irreproachable of Christians generally, and of Christian leaders.” Nouw & Nida say it pertains “to one who cannot be accused of anything wrong – ‘without accusation’” [33.433]. Strong/Thayer say it describes “that [which] cannot be called into account, unproveable, unaccused, blameless” [410].

This word occurs 5x in the NT (1 Cor. 1:8; Col. 1:22; 1 Tim. 3:10; Titus 1:6, 7).

*1 Corinthians 1:8 ... 8 who will also confirm you to the end, **\*blameless** in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (NASB)*

*Colossians 1:22 ... 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and **\*beyond \*reproach** -- (NASB)*

*1 Timothy 3:10 ... 10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are **\*beyond \*reproach**. (NASB)*

*Titus 1:6 ... 6 namely, if any man is **\*above \*reproach**, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. (NASB)*

*Titus 1:7 ... 7 For the overseer must be **\*above \*reproach** as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, (NASB)*

Generally demanded of all disciples (1 Cor. 1:4-9; Col. 1:21-23), this quality is specifically required of both elders (Titus 1:5-9), and deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-10).

*1 Corinthians 1:4-9 ... 4 I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, 6 even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, 7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will also confirm you to the end, **\*blameless** in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (NASB)*

*Colossians 1:21-23 ... 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and **\*beyond \*reproach** — 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister. (NASB)*

*Titus 1:5-9 ... 5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, 6 namely, if any man is **\*above \*reproach**, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. 7 For the overseer must be **\*above \*reproach** as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,*

*9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. (NASB)*

*1 Timothy 3:8-10 ... 8 Deacons likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, 9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are **\*beyond \*reproach.** (NASB)*