

Qualifications of Deacons

By Mark Mayberry
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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).

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). The Gentiles failed the test through improper analysis (Rom. 1:28-32). The Jews failed the test through improper application (Rom. 2:17-24). 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).

We test divine truth by faithfully submitting to its demands (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 5:6-10). We test actions and attitudes by comparing them to the Word of God (Phil. 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 5:21-22). 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). 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).

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. ...”

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). 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).