



ill-equipped. An examination of 1 Timothy 3:2-7 shows that love for God and neighbor is the root of each of these traits (Matthew 22:36-40). Christians are called to imitate the love of Christ (Ephesians 5:1-2). The overseers of God's people exhibit this love through their desire to serve the flock. Certainly all Christians should love the brethren to the point that they are willing to strive for the position of overseer. This is a good work to desire because love for God and His people permeates every aspect of the position.

## CONCLUSION

Paul's trustworthy statements are certainly statements deserving our consideration and approval. Concerning the position of overseer, Paul says, "**It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do**" (1 Timothy 3:1). If we place our full confidence in this statement we can understand a few things about this position. First, we can recognize that to "desire" the office of overseer means to be actively pursuing the required qualities. Secondly, we learn that this is a good work to desire because these qualities are expected of every Christian.

What does this mean for us? Men must decide now that we are going to live our lives striving for this position. We don't desire such a position to attain status or authority, but we do this because we are motivated by our need to grow and our love for others. On the other hand, while it is not the place of women to lead the Church, they can learn from these qualifications as well. Women must take the initiative to grow as all Christians are commanded and they must also help create an environment that encourages the development of overseers in the church. How wonderful the design of God is when it is used as He designed it!



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THE OLSEN  
PARK CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# Faithful Sayings

August 25,  
2013

## Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM  
10:20 AM  
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM



## Elders:

Pat Ledbetter  
Jeff Nunn  
Kyle Pope

## Deacons:

Dean Bowers  
Eddie Cook  
Steve Dixon  
Jack Langley  
Neil Ledbetter  
Brady McAlister  
Walker McAnear  
Lance Purcell  
Rusty Scott

## Evangelists:

Kyle Pope  
Andrew Dow

## A Trustworthy Statement (1 Timothy 3:1)

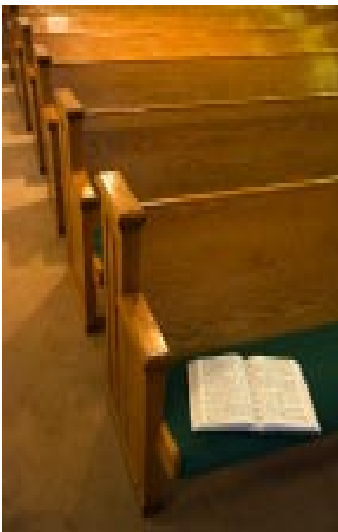
By Andrew Dow

In my last article we observed that on five occasions Paul used the phrase, "**it is a trustworthy statement**" (1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:11; Titus 3:8). We considered the first of these trustworthy statements to Timothy in which he declared that "**Jesus came into the world to save sinners**" (1 Timothy 1:15). Each time Paul identifies something as "trustworthy" it removes any doubts concerning the importance of what is about to be said. In the second of these "trustworthy statements," Paul writes, "**It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do**" (1 Timothy 3:1, NASB). Paul here gives a trustworthy statement concerning the office of overseer. In this article we will examine (1) what it means to "**aspire to the office of overseer**" and (2) why "**it is a fine work he desires to do.**"

### ASPIRING TO THE OFFICE OF OVERSEER

Paul's second trustworthy statement begins with a condition: "**if any man aspires**" (1 Timothy 3:1). IF it be the case that a

man aspires (or desires) this position, THEN he can rest assured that it is a fine work and a worthy desire. It is interesting to note here the kind of “desire” of which Paul speaks. There are two similar Greek words in this verse: *oregomai* and *epithumeo*. The New King James translates this verse, “**if a man desires (oregetai) the position of a bishop, he desires (epithumei) a good work.**” While this translation is accurate, it doesn’t dem-



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onstrate the subtle difference in these two words. The first word, *oregomai*, carries the sense of desiring something to the point of reaching out to attain it. The second word, *epithumeo*, is more of a desire of the heart. Thus, a translation might read, “**if a man reaches out for (oregetai) the office of overseer, it is a fine work his heart longs (epithumei) to do.**”

What do these subtle nuances add to our understanding? First, the desire Paul speaks of in relation to the overseer is an active desire. To desire the work of an overseer doesn’t mean you acknowledge the inclination to one day become an overseer. Rather, it is acknowledging, through your actions, that you long for this position in your heart. You demonstrate this heart-felt longing by reaching for the goal now.

How much better off would the church be if we had men desiring to serve as an overseer and living lives that demonstrate that desire? It’s clear that Paul expected men to desire this position to the point of action.

### A FINE WORK TO DESIRE

We understand that this statement was deemed by the apostle Paul and the Holy Spirit to be trustworthy, but we might ask the question, “why is it good that a man should reach for this goal?” After all, there is no indication in Scriptures showing that men must attain this position in order to be pleasing to God. What is it about this position that makes it a good thing to desire?

First, while a passage commanding Christian men to become elders cannot be found, all Christians are constantly reminded of their need to grow. This is the reason Paul told Timothy he needed to exercise himself spiritually (1 Timothy 4:7-8). It is our responsibility to “**grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**” (2 Peter 3:18). It should not surprise us then to find lists throughout the Bible that demonstrate what our goals should be. Peter tells us we are to grow in faith, moral excellence, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly-kindness, and love (2 Peter 1:5-8). Paul wrote that we are to bear “**love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, [and] self-control**” in our lives as the “**fruit of the Spirit**” (Galatians 5:22-23). It’s no wonder that desiring such a position that demonstrates this growth is considered by God a good thing to desire.

Secondly, we understand that Christians are to be constantly growing. Thus, when a Christian reads the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3, it should be his goal to accomplish these attributes in his life. The attributes found in 1 Timothy 3 are, in fact, found throughout the Bible for all Christians to emulate. For example, consider that overseers are to be “**above reproach... able to teach... gentle, peaceable...**” (1 Timothy 3:2-7). This sampling of qualities demonstrate the required growth for all Christians. Peter tells us that we are to strive for moral

excellence (2 Peter 1:5; cf. above reproach) and knowledge (2 Peter 1:5; 3:18; cf. able to teach). Paul writes that we are to bear gentleness and peace in our lives (Galatians 5:22-23). It is important to consider that the overseers Paul described were not super-Christians. To the contrary, they are the Christian men we all must strive to be. Why is desiring the work of overseer a good desire? Because it should already be our desire. We should all be trying to get to this point in our life.

Finally, one of the overarching themes throughout the Bible is love. It is a trait that Christians are called to implement in their lives (1 Corinthians 13). Although love is not directly mentioned in the qualifications of elders, it is something without which an elder would be