

Fighting the Good Fight

A Study in First Timothy

LESSON FIVE

Prayerfully read through 1st Timothy, chapter five.

In chapter five, Paul instructs Timothy on how he is to interact and respond to those who are in the church. Separating them into categories, Paul speaks to Timothy about how each group is to be treated.

1. The first group Paul addresses is the “older men.” How does Paul say an older man is to be treated in **verse 1**?
2. At first glance, Paul’s instruction not to rebuke an older man might seem to be a contradiction to what he says in **verse 20** of this chapter, as well as what he says to Titus in **Titus 2:15**. The Greek word used here, however is different from the word used in those two verses. In fact, the word used here is used nowhere else but in this verse. The word is epiplesso, and its meaning is “to **strike** at” or “treat **harshly**.” The word used in verse 20 and Titus 2:15, (as well as most other places), is elegcho, and basically means to “**admonish**.” The idea here is to treat an older man **respectfully**. Paul says in this verse to “**exhort**” as you would a father. Look up **Leviticus 19:32** and record God’s instruction concerning older men below.

We have certainly lost some of this respect in today’s society, but God is clear that there should be a respect for the years and experiences of the older generation, and our treatment of them should reflect that respect.

3. Still looking at **verse 1**, what does he say about how the younger men are to be treated?
4. In **verse 2**, how does Paul say older women are to be treated?

5. We see the same focus on “respect” for the older women. Looking at the end of this verse, what does it say about how **both** younger and older women are to be treated?
6. Write down Paul’s instructions in **verse 3**.
7. Before Paul goes any further, he addresses the “families” of these widows. What does he say concerning a widow’s family in **verse 4**?
8. The word “honor” used in verse 3 has an association with, not only treating “with value” but with **financial support**. There was no welfare or government relief system back in those days and a widow left alone literally had no means of support. Because of this, the church was to assist those widows who were “widows indeed.” Paul, however, has some **guidelines** to be followed before a widow was to be taken into that group being financially supported by the church. This wasn’t a free-for-all handout. She had to prove her worth of such support. From **verse 5**, record what some of those qualifications were.
9. Paul required a **godly lifestyle** from these women under the church’s care. **Verse 6** gives us an insight into the concerns Paul had about those who were not living in a godly manner. But he also had some stern warnings for **family members** who refused to provide for them. He states in **verse 7** that Timothy needed to **teach these things** so that they may be **blameless**. This probably refers to both the widows and any family members that they have. His gentle warning in verse 4 is not so gentle in **verse 8**. Write the warning down below.
10. David Guzik states, “**In the strongest terms, Paul emphasized the responsibility of a man to provide for his family – to do all he could to support them. This is the *minimum* required of a Christian man; if he does not do even this, his conduct is worse than an unbeliever’s.**” What does Paul say about this subject in **2 Thessalonians 3:10**?

11. In **1 Timothy 5:9 & 10** Paul continues with some other requirements. Jot down those requirements from these verses.

These are all examples of someone who lives a **godly life**. The phrase “has been the wife of one man” does not mean that a woman who was widowed or biblically divorced and has remarried, and then became widowed again, is disqualified. **The Bible Knowledge Commentary** states that the word used here, just as in the instructions for deacons, refers to a **one-man woman** and concerns **fidelity** and **faithfulness** to that man.

The statement “has brought up children” does not mean a barren woman who had no children was disqualified either. The point is that those with children have brought them up in the truths of Scripture, and those without children have been a good example and a role model for the children of other’s to follow.

The requirement of her being not under sixty years of age was made because it was thought that a younger woman was likely to soon remarry. Paul didn’t want the provision of those women, who would most likely find another husband, to be the responsibility of the church.

12. Continuing with this in mind, we come to some difficult verses in **11-13**. Keep in mind that the subject here is about who meets the requirements to be among the widows **financially supported** by the church. Paul isn’t “refusing” the younger widows from the church, only from them being among the group of women being supported by the church. As stated above, we see Paul’s reason concerning the younger widows in **verse 11**. Write down the troubling statement he makes in **verse 12** below.

Commentator **Adam Clarke** says of this verse: “**Probably those who were received into such a list (*for financial support*) had promised to abide in their widowhood. But as young or comparatively young women might have both occasion and temptations to remarry, and so break their engagement (*or commitment*) to Christ, they should not be admitted. Not that the apostle condemns their remarrying as a crime in itself, but because it was contrary to their engagement (*commitment*).**” We know that Paul did not condemn remarriage, because we see in **verse 14** that he encourages it. (**Italics, mine*)

13. Looking at **verse 13**, keep in mind that women in that day couldn't just go out and find a job, therefore the danger, especially for those younger widows, was to become "**idle**." Paul believed the older widows who had experienced years of **godly living** would use their widowhood to **more fully serve the Lord**. However, that may not be as much the case with the younger widows. List the dangers Paul addresses of "**idleness**" in **verse 13**.

14. To prevent this from happening, what does Paul say in **verse 14**?

Paul observed that some of the younger widows who got caught up in the dangers of idle living had actually turned their backs on the faith. Paul was no doubt aware of specific cases where this had happened, thus the statement he makes in **verse 15**. This certainly made him all the more cautious about who should be admitted into the supported group of widows.

15. Paul concludes this subject with his statement in **verse 16**. Write this statement down.

Paul was looking out for the welfare of the church and the ability of the church to provide the funds needed to give relief to those widows who truly had no other support. This is much like the dilemma churches face today concerning those who come to them for financial help. While desiring to help those with legitimate needs, there also needs to be an awareness that this "help" is often abused. **Discernment**, **guidelines**, and **cautions** need to be followed so that the church has the funds to help with needs that are truly worthy of that help.

16. Paul moves on in **verse 17** to the support of pastor/elders. Write the verse down below.

The “honor” he speaks of here certainly includes “respectful treatment” but just as we saw concerning widows, the word also speaks of financial support, and Paul confirms that in the next verse.

17. Here in **verse 17**, he talks about those who deserve “**double honor**.” What specification does he make concerning those deserving of “double honor?”

18. Write down his reasons for this, stated in **verse 18**.

19. Read **verses 19 & 20**. Paul was very much aware of the those who would come into churches to oppose the ministry, stir up strife and cause division. Clearly, this was something already happening. Because of this, Paul laid out, what the **Bible Knowledge Commentary** calls “**procedures for separating valid accusations from false accusations**.” What is that procedure, according to **verse 19**?

20. Paul’s intention was to protect church leaders, however, if an accusation was determined to be true, how does **verse 20** say it was to be dealt with, and what reason does he give for this?

This is a far cry from what often happens in churches, where the wrongdoing of a pastor or elder is “hidden” or “covered up.” **David Guzik** rightly states, “**Many congregations have had great trouble because sin in the leadership was not forthrightly dealt with. It’s important that everyone understand that leadership in the church does not shield one from accountability; it makes one even more accountable.**”

21. Paul sternly “charges” Timothy about this matter in his instruction in **verse 21**. He does so, almost the way you would in a court of law. What does he say in this charge to Timothy that proves the seriousness of this charge, and what does he stress that Timothy needs to observe and follow?

22. His instruction in **verse 22**, most scholars agree, is in regard to “**ordination.**” Paul actually gives three instructions here. Write the **first one** down below.

David Guzik’s commentary states, “Paul cautioned Timothy to let a man prove himself before he was recognized in ministry. There should not be a rush; time must season a man and his ministry. Since ordination simply recognizes God’s calling, it is all the more reason to not be in a hurry – time should be given to allow those gifts and callings to demonstrate themselves.”

23. What is the **second instruction** Paul gives in **verse 22?** (*Note: I am using the NKJV*).

Guzik states that, “There are many ways we can do this.

- **We can share in the sins of others by setting a bad example before them.**
- **We can share in the sins of others by approving of them or ignoring them.**
- **We can share in the sins of others by joining a church that spreads dangerous teachings.**

This would certainly include his previous admonition of how accusations and wrong-doing should be dealt with.

24. Write down the **third** instruction Paul gives Timothy in **verse 22.**

There are two thoughts of emphasis regarding Paul’s instruction here. One is in **regard to ordination**, and the other regarding the need for Timothy to keep **his own life pure**. The **Bible Knowledge Commentary states, “One way to avoid painful situations involving the disciplining of an elder is to be careful about who is ordained in the first place. Thus Paul counseled Timothy to a judicious reluctance in the laying on of hands. The words ‘do not share in the sins of others’ may be merely advice for Timothy to guard his own conduct generally. But more likely, in light of the context, this is a warning about the implications of hasty ordinations. Those who take part in the premature ordination of an errant elder share some of the blame for the negative consequences to their church. Whichever is the case, Timothy was to keep himself free from sin. One cannot deal with sin in another if one’s own life is not pure.”**

25. What does Paul tell Timothy in **verse 23**?

More than likely, Timothy was trying to set a good example by abstaining from drinking wine. However, the water in many places was not pure and probably added to Timothy's other "frequent infirmities." This makes a very good point regarding being **too legalistic** about what we allow and don't allow. Timothy's heart was probably in the right place, avoiding drinking wine, however, it proved in this case to be an unwise decision, as it was causing him stomach problems.

Along with that, we note that Paul mentions Timothy's **frequent infirmities**, but mentions nothing about asking for Timothy to be healed. We know that praying for healing is something we see throughout God's Word. However, this example regarding Timothy's frequent infirmities is proof that we are not guaranteed physical healing, even when we ask in faith. Paul's own prayer for healing came back to him with the Lord saying, "My grace is sufficient." We often find this hard to understand, but the fact that God sometimes chooses to heal and sometimes doesn't is evident throughout Scripture.

26. Look up the following Scriptures and after reading them, **record the "reason" you find** next to each for why God may choose not to heal.

John 9:2 & 3 -

2 Corinthians 1:3 & 4 -

2 Corinthians 12:7 -

2 Corinthians 12:9 -

27. As we come to our last two verses in this chapter, Paul addresses both "sin" and "good works." It is evident that Paul wants Timothy to be aware of these things, to be cautious, and to rely upon the Holy Spirit for discernment. Write out from **verse 24** what Paul says about some men's sins.

28. How you think Paul's statement in **verse 24** relates to his charge to Timothy in **verse 22**? Share your thoughts.

Some men's sins are clearly evident – Albert Barnes states, “**About such people he ought not to hesitate a moment, and, no matter what their talents, or learning, or rank in the community, he ought to have no participation in introducing them to the ministry.**” **Some men's sins follow later –** Regarding this, **Barnes** states, “**The meaning, in this connection, seems to be, that there ought to be circumspection in judging of the qualifications of men for the office of the ministry. It ought not to be inferred from favorable appearances at once, or on slight acquaintance, that they are qualified for the office - for they may be of the number of those whose characters, now concealed or misunderstood, will be developed (*come to light*) only on the final trial.**”

29. Write out from **verse 25** what Paul says to Timothy about some men's good works.

Albert Barnes on this verse says, “**The character of some people is clear, and accurately understood. There can be no doubt, from their works, that they are good people. We need not wait for the day of judgment to determine that, but may treat them here as good men, and introduce them to offices which only good men can fill. The idea here is that their character may be so certain and undoubted that there need be no hesitation in setting them apart to the office of the ministry.**”

David Guzik states, “**Good works are always eventually revealed; but sins are sometimes hidden and will be evident only at the judgment. These words are meant to be a caution to Timothy in his appointing of leaders. Sometimes what one sees on the outside isn't really an accurate picture, so we need to take it slow, so we can wait on God for discernment.**”

30. What was your greatest take-away from Lesson five on chapter five?

This study was written and prepared by Shawn Van Hook, 2023

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