

**1Tim. 5:1 ¶ Rebuke not an elder, but intreat *him* as a father; and the younger men as brethren;**

**1Tim. 5:2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.**

The previous chapter ended with a charge for Timothy to provide confident leadership; he was not to let anyone disparage him just because of his youth. This chapter begins with words that temper those words. He is to be confident, but humble and loving. He is to minister to older men as though they were his father, younger men as his brothers, older women as his mom, and younger women as sisters. His actions were to be “clean and chaste” (from the Greek); in other words, free from any sexual impropriety.

**1Tim. 5:3 ¶ Honour widows that are widows indeed.**

**1Tim. 5:4 But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.**

Paul now begins quite a lengthy instruction regarding the treatment of widows. Instead of looking upon a believer that has been widowed and in need of support as a burden, they were to value them by providing financial support (from the Greek for *honour*, to “fix a valuation upon”). God established this principle in the Old Testament scriptures.

*Deuteronomy 24:19–21 “When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.”*

*Isaiah 1:17 “Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.”*

Verse 4 seems to define a “widow indeed” as one who has no children or grandchildren (better choice from the Greek than *nephew*) to take care of her. After looking at the Greek for *piety*, I think the NIV gives the heart of the meaning: “*But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.*”

My friend Dixie is an amazing example of a child who pleased God by the sacrificial tender care of her mom until He decided it was time for her to enter His presence. It seems as though our culture is moving very quickly to the point of embracing more programs that tend to just “get rid of the problem” through assisted suicide, mandates for withholding medical treatment for the elderly, etc.

God’s declaration for His will was made clear in the commandment that tells us to “*Honor thy father and thy mother.*” (Exodus 20:12) He also declared through the

prophet Isaiah that the type of fast or self-denial that honors Him is one that takes care of the poor and of one's family.

*Isaiah 58:6–7 “Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou **bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?** when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou **hide not thyself from thine own flesh?**”*

Jesus castigated the Pharisees for justifying their neglect of their parents based on the traditions of men in disregard for the command of God.

*Mark 7:9–13 “And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.”*

These thoughts will be emphasized in verses 7-8 below.

**1Tim. 5:5 Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.**

**1Tim. 5:6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.**

I think it is important to keep in mind that Paul is instructing Timothy regarding guidelines and responsibilities of the body of believers. Paul seems to expand the definition of one who is a “widow indeed” to be in reference to a woman lacking a husband (from the Greek for *widow*) whose faith in God is obvious. Her life is one of ministry in prayer and she is not seeking solace in the pleasures of the world. Those who turn to finding comfort in the flesh through what the world has to offer give a testimony of being spiritually dead though obviously physically alive.

**1Tim. 5:7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.**

**1Tim. 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.**

Paul is basically telling Timothy that he is to instruct the church according to Paul's teaching so that those in the church would be blameless before God. He emphasizes again that anyone who refuses to provide for family that is in need, especially those of his own house (mom or grandma) is openly rejecting God's authority. Then he makes a very interesting statement; he declares this person to be worse than an unbeliever. How so? The unbeliever does not claim God as the authority in his life. One who professes to be a believer and knowingly rejects God's authority is obviously dishonoring God as well as himself; his actions do not support his declaration of faith.

*James 2:17 "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."*

The unbeliever is to be pitied; the hypocrite is to be rebuked as Paul instructs in verse 20 below.

**1Tim. 5:9** Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man,  
**1Tim. 5:10** Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

Paul now adds an age limit to consider in defining a widow that is deserving of support. She should be at least 60 years old and known as a faithful spouse. She should have a reputation of good works. He then gives a list of the types of good works that should characterize her life:

- She has fulfilled her duties as a parent (from the Greek for "brought up").
- She has shown hospitality to others, including strangers.
- She has ministered with humility to others in the body of Christ.
- She has provided help to those who are suffering and/or in trouble.
- She is known for doing good works.

**1Tim. 5:11** But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

**1Tim. 5:12** Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

**1Tim. 5:13** And withal they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

**1Tim. 5:14** I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

**1Tim. 5:15** For some are already turned aside after Satan.

Paul goes on to explain the reason for having an age guideline. Practically speaking, younger widows would be better off getting remarried. Knowing that, it would be better for them not to dedicate themselves to the service of God through the church and then have to go back on their word. The implication seems clear from verse 12 that this was involved in being "taken into the number" to qualify for provision from the church. Scripture is full of admonitions regarding the keeping of vows before God. In fact, there is specific instruction regarding the widow.

*Numbers 30:9 "But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their souls, shall stand against her."*

Younger women are also much more prone to using idle time to gossip and meddle in the affairs of others. It is much better for a younger woman to remarry, have children (if able), and take care of her home. This will help them avoid being in a position to suffer reproach or shame that would affect her personally as well as the church. Probably the most often heard excuse given by

people today as to why they aren't Christians is to blame the hypocrisy of so many who claim His name.

Even as he is writing this letter, Paul is evidently being influenced by observing the actions of some who have already turned their attention to the things of Satan, the things of this world.

*John 8:44 "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."*

*1 John 2:16 "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."*

*Ephesians 2:2-3 "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."*

**1Tim. 5:16** **If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.**

Paul again emphasizes that it is God's will for His people to take care of their own families. I think he is saying that Christian families should be willing to care for any of their widowed relatives that are in need so as not to burden the church since it has a responsibility to provide for those who have no one else to turn to.

**1Tim. 5:17 ¶ Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.**

**1Tim. 5:18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.**

The Greek for *honour* is the same as used in verse 3 regarding widows in reference to provide financial support. "Double honour" would seem to be a reference to greater financial support because of the greater responsibility of the ministry involved. This support is to be based on the effort and energy they invest in sharing the truth of God's word and teaching the people how to apply it to their lives. Paul utilizes a principle from the law that declares you should allow the ox to take nourishment from the corn he is treading on your behalf. The elders that are working so hard in one's behalf in providing proper instruction from God's word are worthy of reward. You are benefitting so you should express your gratitude through financial support.

**1Tim. 5:19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.**

I believe this instruction is to limit the possibility of false accusation doing damage to the ministry of an elder. This instruction is based on the law established by Moses.

*Deuteronomy 19:15 "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established."*

This principle was also taught by the Lord Jesus.

*Matthew 18:15–17 "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."*

**1Tim. 5:20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.**

This is the natural follow up to the previous verse based on the words of the Lord quoted above. Consequences of sin should always be such as to instill godly fear into others. Consistent application of the consequences is an effective deterrent to others who might face testing through the same type of sin. God's heart in providing consequences for sin is expressed beautifully in Hebrews.

*Hebrews 12:5–11 "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."*

**1Tim. 5:21 I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.**

In this verse Paul is emphasizing the importance of treating everyone as equal before the Lord; no one is to be shown partiality due to social position or perceived importance to the ministry. In doing so he claims God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels as his witness. The "elect angels" I would assume to be a reference to those angels who chose to remain faithful to God and reject Satan's call of rebellion. This would equate to those of us who are "elect" as part of God's family of faith.

*Colossians 3:12–13 “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”*

This is just one of several verses that indicate that there are heavenly witnesses to what is happening on planet earth—especially as concerning men and women of faith.

*2 Kings 6:15–17 “And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”*

*Matthew 18:10 “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.”*

*Luke 15:10 “Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”*

*Luke 16:22 “And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;”*

*Hebrews 1:13–14 “But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”*

*Hebrews 13:2 “Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”*

**1Tim. 5:22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure.**

Paul here instructs Timothy to give careful consideration before laying hands on anyone for specific ministry. This goes hand-in-hand with the principles laid out in chapter 3 regarding designating men to positions of leadership. Those so appointed should be men of proven faith. This provides the best possible safeguard to any service done in the name of the Lord as representing a specific church or Christian ministry.

Paul then adds a warning for Timothy to safeguard his own testimony by avoiding sin through association. This would seem to be directly related to making wise choices concerning those who would assist him in leadership positions in the church.

Paul also encourages Timothy to be conscientious in trying to maintain a life of purity that is above reproach. Again, this is so very important to safeguarding the honor of God's name when you claim Him as Lord. I pray often for God to safeguard His name through the ministry of my church and through my pastor and his chosen assistants.

When we claim Jesus as Lord, we pretty much paint a target on ourselves. The enemy takes great delight in getting the man or woman of faith to fall into sin and besmirch the reputation of His Lord. God takes the honor of His name very seriously.

*Exodus 20:7 "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."*

*Leviticus 19:12 "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD."*

*Malachi 2:2 "If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, saith the LORD of hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart."*

**1Tim. 5:23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.**

Evidently, Timothy was a bit sickly and had some ongoing stomach problems. Paul advises him to quit drinking only water and start drinking a little wine to provide a bit of physical relief from his ailments. Note that he was careful to say a "little" wine; he wasn't encouraging him to drink himself into oblivion or even enough to dull his leadership capabilities. Medicines available at that time were minimal compared to the wide variety of choices we have today that are targeted to specific ailments. Several commentaries noted that wine was also effective at preventing dysentery because fermentation kills germs.

I think it is also important to note that Paul didn't heal Timothy. There is simply no basis in scripture for assuming that it is God's will for everyone to experience physical healing.

**1Tim. 5:24 Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.**

**1Tim. 5:25 Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.**

This chapter closes with more wise counsel; my paraphrase: Some men's sins are obvious, while the sins of others are hidden. It is also true that the good deeds of some are obvious, while the good deeds of others are not. Eventually the truth about both will come out.

We humans have a tendency to judge based on what we see without regard for the fact that what we see can sometimes be deceiving. Satan and his followers like to operate as angels of light or as wolves in sheep's clothing.

*2 Corinthians 11:13–15 “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”*

*Matthew 7:15 “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”*

This is important truth to remember when considering those to appoint to leadership. You are more likely to make better choices when you allow time for flaws in character to be revealed and for strength of character to emerge.