

## A Community • 1 Timothy 5:1-16

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. A Family

1. Being a church this size means people are at different places in their spiritual growth.
  - a. Some are mature, others are new to the faith.
  - b. Some struggle w/one thing, others w/another.
2. No matter where each of us are along the path to spiritual maturity, we're called to be a part of each other's life – like a family.
3. In Christ, we **belong to each other**.
4. This is why being a part of a local church is a crucial part of being a follower of Jesus.
  - a. We need to be part of **a community** of believers where we can **really BE** part of the Family of God, not just a Christian in some **theoretical** sense.
  - b. That means **showing up**.
  - b. And it means finding a way to **contribute**, to **participate** in the life of that community.

#### B. Timothy

1. In this part of his letter, Paul tells Timothy how he was to relate to **different groups** in the church.
2. Now I want to let you know some of what we're looking at today runs **counter** to our culture.

### II. TEXT

#### A. V. 1-2

<sup>1</sup> Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father,

1. By older men, Paul doesn't mean senior-citizens.
  - a. Older is a word of **comparison**.
  - b. Paul means men **older** than Timothy, who as we saw last week was right around 30.
2. Timothy was in Ephesus to straighten out some of the elders who'd gotten off track & were teaching false doctrine.
  - a. Paul tells him what his **approach** was to be.
  - b. He wasn't to be heavy-handed.
3. Some Bibles translate it– **Do not rebuke an older man harshly**. That gets the **idea** across.
  - a. When someone is **rebuked** like this it's a **verbal body-slammed**.
  - b. There's no attempt to **correct** them. It's just to put them in their place & prove them wrong.
4. The **tone** Timothy **should take** was to treat these older guys as if they were his own father.
5. He was to encourage & urge them to return to the way of truth & grace.
6. Paul had a lot of experience in dealing w/people.
  - a. He knew when dealing w/**older** men, if you act the superior know-it-all, they'll will just write you off as a punk.
  - b. But if you treats older men w/**respect**, they're much more likely to listen.
  - c. You see, when a young guy understands **how important respect is to a man**, they'll figure maybe he **DOES** know what he's talking about.
7. V. 1 goes on . . .  
younger men as brothers,
  - a. Older men as fathers, & **younger** men, **not** as **sons**, but as **brothers**.
  - b. Because there's to be **no condescension**, no **lack of respect** that way either.
8. A father should aspire to **see** his son become his **peer** one day;
  - a. Make it his aim to raise him to be a man he'll respect enough to **accept** encouragement from.
  - b. Unfortunately, many men never honor their sons like that.
    - 1) When an **8** year old son says, "Daddy, you should pray more." We call that **cute**.
    - 2) But when at **18** he says, "Father, you should pray more," Well, that's **impertinent** – disrespectful!
9. The danger for **young men** is to think the older guys' day is past & it's time for them to move over & let the young guns have a go at it.
  - a. The older guys don't **want** to get out of the way.
  - b. So the younger guys get **frustrated & angry** at the older guys.
10. Older men often look at the young guys w/their **idealistic plans** & say w/a condescending smile, "Yeah, I remember when I was young & starry-eyed."

- a. “But now that I’m older & wiser & know how things really are –
  - b. Well, you’ll see you little whippersnapper.”
11. Older men probably ought to **listen** to the young men who’ve proven themselves faithful.
- a. Sure they’re young & idealistic!
  - b. And **yes**, you **are** older & more experienced. But remember **when you** were young & idealistic?
    - 1) Remember how you looked at your elders & didn’t understand why they sold out to mediocrity?
    - 2) You vowed when you got to be that age you’d be different.
    - 3) Well, here you are & now the younger men are doing the same.
    - 4) Maybe you should listen to them.
  - c. Why does the status quo have to be the norm? Why can’t we make it better?
  - d. Let’s stop resisting the younger men & instead **Partner** w/them.
  - e. Let’s embrace their dreams & instead of standing in the way – **Lead the way!**
12. **V. 2** – Exhort –
- <sup>2</sup> older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, w/all purity.
- a. Timothy was to treat the older women as carefully as his own **mother**.
  - b. The younger women as his **sisters**.
13. That’s the standard for the men here at CC.
- a. The older ladies we treat like beloved mothers.
  - b. The younger women – as **sisters!**
14. You young men This isn’t eHarmony or Match.com >This is CCO, not wife-mart. We are a spiritual family.
- a. Hey, we’re all for marriage > big time!
  - b. But it **begins** by being a family. And these single ladies are **sisters**.
  - c. If as you get to know 1 of them you’re attracted to her & she to you & you want to get all romantic w/her, then put a ring on her finger.
  - d. This isn’t a car dealership where you get to take her for a test drive first.
  - e. She’s a **daughter of God** & a **sister of all the other men** of this fellowship.
  - f. We’re not going to sit by & do nothing while you mess w/her heart.
  - g. If you intend anything **more** than having her as a sister, make it right & put a ring on her finger.
- B. Vs. 3-4
- <sup>3</sup> Honor widows who are really widows. <sup>4</sup> But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.
1. The care of widows was a **major problem** in the ancient world.
  2. There was no social security, welfare, or retirement homes.
  3. A woman was **totally** dependent, 1<sup>st</sup> on her father, then her husband, & after he was gone, her adult children.
  4. If he died & she had no relatives to take care of her, she was reduced to begging.
    - a. They sat along the streets w/hands out, hoping someone would drop a coin.
    - b. That coin determined whether or not she ate that day.
  5. Widows & orphans often died of hunger or exposure.
  6. Israel alone among the nations of the ancient showed compassion to widows.
  7. They did so because God commanded His people to care for them.
  8. Christians realized faithfulness to God meant a practical love & concern for widows.
    - a. In Acts 6, the **first challenge** the infant church faced related to the care of widows.
    - b. Wherever a new church was planted, it provided for the widows who became a part of the congregation.
  9. Paul tells Timothy he must ensure those women taken on the official support list were in **real** need.
  10. If they have family who can provide for them, then it’s the responsibility of the family, not the church.
    - a. If she has family w/whom she can live & be supported by, **they’re** obligated to take care of her.
    - b. That care is **repayment** for all the years she took care of them.
    - c. Of course, the widow should be a **contributing part** of the household, attending to the daily & practical needs of the family.
- C. Vs. 5-8

<sup>5</sup> Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. <sup>6</sup> But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. <sup>7</sup> And these things command, that they may be blameless.

1. The widow who finds herself alone says – “Okay Lord, now what?”
  - a. Paul’s already said she’s to be taken care of by the church.
    - b. But in regards to her **time**, what is she to do? How is she to spend her days?
  2. She has a choice;
    - 1 • She can give herself to the ministry of prayer -
    - 2 • Or she can live for herself & finish her days in the pursuit of pleasure.
      - a) If she does, she’s as good as dead already.
      - b) And the church shouldn’t be on the hook to support a self-indulgent lifestyle.
3. On the other hand, those widows who give themselves to prayer & practical ministry provide a service to the flock that’s honorable.
4. In v. 8, Paul amplifies what he wrote in v. 4 . . .

<sup>8</sup> But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

5. Paul means the lazy & indolent.
  - a. They may be **busy** but it’s scheming how to get rich without working.
  - b. Really, they stay busy so they won’t **have** to work.
6. Paul isn’t speaking of those who **CAN’T** provide for their own because of disability or circumstances beyond their control.
  - a. Persecution meant believers could be arrested & thrown in jail for weeks.
  - b. Paul wouldn’t put this burden on him.
7. He’s speaking here of those who have the **ability** to provide for their family, including their elderly mother, father, & grandparents, but decide instead to **neglect** them.
8. We need to take a **closer look** at what Paul says here.
  - a. Family-life in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century was different from the Anglo pattern of Modern America.
  - b. It’s more like what many Asian-American families do. An **extended** family lives together.
  - c. In the ancient world, when a son married, he built a new room onto the family house.
    - 1) Over time, that house became a **complex** of 1 & 2-room houses.
    - 2) When the father died, the oldest son moved into the **main** house.
    - 3) This went on generation after generation.
    - 4) So families tended to stay close, **relationally & physically**.
    - 5) If a brother died, the rest of the family took on support for his wife & children.
9. Now, this was nearly something **everyone** did, Christian or not.
10. If a Christian **balked** at taking care of family, they were **less ethical** than unbelievers.
11. The challenge in this for our time is that our ideas of **independence** have taken us **far** from this family mindset.
  - a. Today, one of the chief signs of growing up is moving OUT & getting your **own** place.
  - b. Some young adults move **away** from their parents to try life in a distant place.
  - c. Many of the **seniors** who grew up during the Depression & lived through WWII have the attitude that they **don’t want to be a burden** to their children.
  - d. They get older & need help but **refuse** to move in w/their adult sons & daughters.
  - e. They prefer to go to a retirement home. And that’s fine.
  - f. But many of those kids would **prefer** to have grandma or grandpa come stay w/them.
  - g. [My mom]
12. There are government programs that help provide for the elderly.
  - a. But it’s **still** the **primary responsibility** of family to take care of family – not the State.
  - b. Let’s not let our desire for vacations, cars, hobbies & toys, diminish our commitment to taking care of our family.

D. Vs. 9-10

<sup>9</sup> Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, *and not unless* she has been the wife of one man, <sup>10</sup> well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has

washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

1. There were so many candidates for benevolence, Paul gave guidelines for who was to be admitted on the list.

2. 8 things qualified a widow for support.

1<sup>st</sup> - She needed to be over 60.

1) Since the average age of death was well below this, 60 marked a woman as quite elderly.

2) Paul knew younger widows usually remarried. Later he says that's precisely what they **ought** to do.

a) Since the plight of widows was severe, younger women worked hard at finding someone to marry.

b) Generally, they had a **good chance** of finding a new husband.

c) In that time, marriages were **rarely for love**; they were more for domestic need.

d) A man needed someone to run the house & a woman needed someone to provide for her.

e) Christians had the added dimension of charity & mutual respect that over time often developed into romantic love.

f) But don't miss the point In the Church, there were men who married young widows, **not** for romantic reason, but out of a sense of **duty** before God to take care of them.

2<sup>nd</sup> - Official widows needed to be **one-man women**.

1) It's the same phrase, in reverse, used for elders & deacons we saw a couple weeks ago.

2) In other words, she can't be a **polygamist**.

3) She needs to have shown marital fidelity to her husband while he lived.

3<sup>rd</sup> - She had a reputation for good works.

4<sup>th</sup> - She assisted younger mothers in bringing up of their children.

5<sup>th</sup> - She's given to hospitality;

6<sup>th</sup> - She does practical & humble service,

7<sup>th</sup> - She visits the needy.

Finally, she does these things **consistently**, not once so she can check them off to qualify for the official widows list.

E. Vs. 11-15

1. Now Paul tells Tim some women to **reject** from that list.

<sup>11</sup> But refuse *the* younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry,

<sup>12</sup> having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. <sup>13</sup> And besides they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.

2. Young widows didn't qualify Because, as Paul had seen repeatedly, 1 of 2 things happened ...

1) Either they **remarried** -

2) Or, they grew lazy & caused trouble.

3. Sure there were rare exceptions. But the overwhelming tendency was for them to follow one of these courses. So the best policy is to follow this guideline.

4. The Official Widows List we're talking about here meant a **commitment** on the part of the church to take care of these women for the rest of their lives.

a. The **widow committed** herself to prayer & practical ministry to shut-ins & young moms who could use the help raising the kids.

5. What happened gain & again was that young widows made that commitment & the church began to support them.

a. But instead of prayer & ministry, they went to work looking for a new husband.

b. Once she found one, as part of the deal, she had to take his religion.

c. If she married an unbeliever, she left the church.

d. The other tendency was for young widows to use the time they were supposed to be helping others for idle talk & gossip.

6. Paul has a solution to the need of young widows

<sup>14</sup> Therefore I desire that *the* younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. <sup>15</sup> For some have already turned aside after Satan.

7. Instead of taking the young widows on the widows list, they should marry & become the responsibility of a

husband A **Christian** husband!

8. His lament was that some had a greater desire for a husband than for the Lord & had married unbelievers.
9. I'm going to share something now that's a radical idea.
  - a. Because of insurance, Social Security & such, we don't have a big issue w/widows as they did in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century.
  - b. There are some here, precious sisters!
  - c. The pressing issue we have today is **single mothers**.
  - d. And we have single men.
    - 1) Many of those single guys have **never** been married & want a woman who's never been married, no kids.
  - e. I want to suggest you single guys think about what Paul says here.
  - f. There are some wonderful single moms who **ache** to be married.
  - g. They're finding it really hard to find a good Christian man who will love them and help them raise their child.
  - h. They don't want to go to bars & clubs & use an online dating service.
  - i. They want to find a guy at their church who will love them, their child & lead them in the Lord.
11. Psalm 68:5 says that God is a **"Father of the fatherless & a defender of widows."**
12. This is the heart of God!
  - a. And this is what you can step in to.
  - b. You single men, just prayerfully consider expanding your vision a bit.

F. V. 16

<sup>16</sup> If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.

1. That the church was able to supply the needs of real widows means people were giving.
2. But history tells us these churches were attended by commoners & slaves.
3. They weren't wealthy. The budget was thin.
4. They didn't have the wherewithal to support everyone who asked.
5. So they had to **qualify** the needs to make sure those who had nowhere else to go were provided for.
6. How sad to think some widows went hungry because others w/means were taking their portion.
7. As part of the 13% of the general budget CCO commits to give away, a portion of that goes to benevolence – to meeting the needs of our members & the needy of the community.
8. We get lots of calls from people asking for help or a hand out.
  - a. Just as Paul tells Tim here to apply guidelines to qualify legitimate needs, we don't just toss cash to whoever asks. We ask questions.
  - b. What's a bummer is when we ask those questions & people cuss us out.
  - c. There's a network of drifters that makes the rounds hitting up churches for handouts.
  - d. When they find a place that offers help, they tell others & soon there's a string of people calling or dropping by.

### III. CONCLUSION

A. Stats

1. In the last 5 years, we've given out nearly \$160,000 in benevolence.
2. At present we don't have **any** widows that receive regular support because there's been no such need.
3. What we have seen are a number of single mothers who've need on-going help.