

Mid Week • 1 Timothy 5

INTRODUCTION

Last Wednesday, as we were looking at the first verses of chapter 4, we saw Paul refuting the false teaching of asceticism that had taken root in Ephesus.

As we traced the history of the church in Ephesus we saw that Timothy followed Paul's instructions and the error of asceticism was rebuffed – for a time.

But eventually, it came to dominate a good portion of the Christian world.

In the late 2nd and through the 3rd century, many Christians became hermits – retreating from the cities to live in isolation in caves in the wilderness.

This evolved into the monastic movement where people lived together, but interaction between them was highly regulated, with in some cases, silence ending all communication for months or even years at a time.

Fleeing the city to live in a monastery or alone in a cave was a reaction to the error of Gnosticism which taught that matter was evil while the spirit was good.

Since God is pure Spirit, the only way to please Him is to avoid contact with the material world.

Any pleasure associated with the body or with enjoying the things of creation was considered base and immoral.

So people fled the comforts of the city and retreated to the cold, hard rocks of the wilderness, or the cold, hard cot of a monastic cell.

The result of all this was the loss of relationship with other human beings!

And that right there ought to have been a warning bell to the Christians of that time – for almost all of the virtues the Scriptures call us to embrace are traits that are lived out only in communication and relationship with other human beings.

The Apostle John is so clear in this regard; in 1 John 4 he says that our love for God is made manifest in our love for one another.

The fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5 are things that are only revealed in the midst of other people – love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

These aren't virtues that the lonely hermit manifests while sitting alone in his cave gnawing on a piece of moldy bread.

These are things that come out in the grip of daily relationships in the home, at work, at school, in the mall, at the theater, and in the coffee shop.

Just as John says – our relationship with God is made visible in the way we treat other people.

In this chapter, Paul tells Timothy *how* he is to conduct himself as pastor in his **relationships** with different **people**.

What we'll find here are excellent guidelines for **relationships** and **responsibilities** in the Church today.

CHAPTER 5

1 Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers,

2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.

In every flock of sheep, there are some who seem bent on wandering from the fold.

They are a source of continual anxiety and grief to the shepherd.

Every time he counts, he expects to come up one or two short because he knows that Wandering Willie & Wilma have once more gone off on their own and probably gotten into some kind of a jam.

Or sometimes, it's not a case of wandering but of *butting* – one or two of the sheep are locked in the mode of proving their superiority to the rest, so they lower their head and ram into the side of some sheep they feel is not giving them the respect they deserve.

In order to break these errant sheep of their anti-social behavior, the shepherd will often show special attention to

them, he uses the staff to tap or poke them; he calls out their name in a stern tone, letting them know what their doing is displeasing to him.

Well, sometimes the pastor of the flock of God has to do the same with his people-sheep!

He has to issue a word of rebuke, telling the errant that they're getting off track.

Here Paul tells Timothy *how* he is to go about **rebuking** different **groups** of **people** in the church.

You and I can gain some wisdom about *how* we ought to relate to different groups of people in the church as we read this.

First of all, Paul says that when Timothy has to rebuke a **man** who is **older**, meaning, someone *significantly* older, we would read this as **senior men** – then he is to exhort him as he would his own **father**.

The word **rebuke** is a strong word, a harsh word that looks toward **correction**.

It pictures someone **challenging** certain behavior and pointing out it's **error**.

Paul says that the tone *rebuke* ought to take when it's delivered to one of the senior men of the church is to be **exhortation**.

Exhortation is also a word that speaks of *correction* – but it's a much more **gentle** word.

Rebuke carries a **negative** connotation of just pointing out **error**, while *exhortation* is a **positive** word that speaks more of pointing out the **right path**.

Paul says that when this exhortation is given to one of the *senior men*, it ought to be delivered in the same manner

Timothy would speak to his father, with respect and honor as the 5th Commandment demands.

When he exhorts a **younger man**, it should be with the kind of compassionate care and concern for **restoration** he would speak to his own **brother**.

When he exhorts one of the **senior women**, it ought to be with the **tenderness** and **caution** he would show his own **mother**.

And when he has to speak a word of correction to one of the **younger women**, it needs to be with the **protective** concern he would show to his own **sister**.

There isn't a single person in the church who doesn't fall into one of these groups – and the common thread to all of them is that Timothy is to treat everyone as a member of his FAMILY!

As the children of God who all share the same spiritual Father, we are indeed brothers and sisters in Christ.

It ought to be the norm for the way we treat one another that we are *family*.

It's sad that there are so few *healthy* families around today for us to take as a model for the way we ought to treat one another.

Dysfunctional and broken families seem to be far more the norm.

But the fact that we can recognize dysfunction in a family proves that we do carry an ideal a model for what a family OUGHT to be, in here (heart).

We can't make excuses and say that we don't know how to treat one another as family because our blood-family was so messed up.

We can only recognize our family WAS messed up if we hold it up to some *ideal*.

That *ideal* is what we ought to strive for in the Church.

We ought to treat the older men as fathers, the older women as mothers, the younger women as sisters, and the younger men as brothers.

That means we show genuine warmth and care for each other.

It means that we greet one another sincerely, instead of just walking by each other pretending the other person isn't there.

It means we defer to each other and show a tough-minded kind of loyalty to one another.

We defend each other's dignity and urge one another on to success in the things of the Spirit.

We don't scam or manipulate.

We don't put designs on one another and scheme.

We don't criticize, but support and encourage one another.

WE ARE FAMILY!

Paul now turns to deal with one particular group in the church that has the potential either for tremendous ministry, or great damage – Widows!

3 Honor widows who are really widows.

4 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.

The care of widows was a proverbial problem in the ancient world.

Since there was no program of social security or welfare, and no retirement homes and few orphanages, the economically disadvantaged like widows and orphans often died of hunger or exposure.

Widows had it harder than orphans because as elderly women they didn't possess the strength or energy of youth and so depended completely on the charity of strangers.

Since the ancient world placed little value in women, they didn't find much charity – so they languished unless they were able to provide some kind of special service.

Alone among the nations of the ancient world stood Israel in terms of the way it treated their widows.

While the other nations mostly ignored them and let them perish, God gave commands to His people for their care.

In fact, God's care for widows is a recurring theme in Scripture.

One of the signs of Israel's departure from God was their turning their backs on the **widows** and **orphans** – a sign of evil the prophets continually decried.

In God's economy, the needs or the needy rank high.

As the New Chosen People, the Church took a radical departure from the ancient world in the way it treated widows.

Christianity sees each and every person, regardless of age, sex, or social status as having inherent value and worth.

The cross is God's definitive statement that all people are valuable to Him, and so we are all valuable to one another.

The church thus took an active role in reaching out with practical assistance to those society at large had passed by.

Slaves found dignity.

Babies exposed on hillsides and left to die in from exposure or in the teeth of wild beasts, were adopted by Christian families and raised as their own.

Widows were taken in and cared for.

In fact, in Acts 6, we see that the first *internal issue* to present the early church with trouble was the care of the widows.

In this section, Paul tells Timothy that he needs to make sure that those women who are being shown charity from the coffers of the church need to in **genuine need** and not merely using their situation as an advantage and opportunity to be **lazy** and **indolent**.

In v. 3, the honor he means when he says, "Honor widows who are really widows" was the honor of **support** from the **benevolence** fund of the church.

That's made clear by the v. 4 . . .

4 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.

Paul is saying that if a woman's husband dies but she has adult children or grandchildren with whom she can live and be supported by, then *it's those children* who are obligated to take care of her.

Their care for her is repayment of all the years she took care of them.

The woman who finds herself in this situation is to become a vital part of that house, attending to the daily and practical needs of the family.

By doing so, she earns her keep.

5 Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.

6 But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.

7 And these things command, that they may be blameless.

The woman who finds herself a widow and alone with no adult children has to ask the question – “Okay Lord, now what?”

Paul has already said that she is to be taken care of by the charity and benevolence of the church.

But in regards to her *time*, what is she to do? How is she to spend her days?

If she’s been freed from domestic duties, then what is to occupy her time?

She has a choice – she can spend herself in **ministry** or in the **pursuit** of **pleasure**.

If we separate v. 6 from it’s context, it’s difficult to sort out exactly what Paul means when he says,

... she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.

But we can’t separate it from it’s context. The setting gives us the meaning.

Paul is saying that the widow can either give herself to the ministry of prayer or she can live for herself and finish off her days on earth in the pursuit of nothing more than pleasure.

He is supposing that the widow is elderly and in her last years.

If she lives for nothing more than selfish pleasure, and isn’t accomplishing anything beyond her own fun, then she’s as good as dead as far as usefulness is concerned.

The church ought not be on the hook to support the selfish lifestyle of such a self-indulgent person.

But those widows who give themselves to intercessory and prayer and showing practical mercy to the shut-in and needy provide a service to the flock that is invaluable.

The physical vigor of an elderly widow may be weak, but their spiritual vigor is often brimming over and is best poured out in the arena of prayer and ministry to those who are shut-in.

Paul then turns to amplify what he wrote in v. 4 . . .

8 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.

Paul is not speaking of those who CANNOT provide for their own because of some disability or circumstances beyond his or her control.

In that day, when persecution of believers meant a man might be arrested and thrown in jail for months on end, Paul would not put this burden on him.

No, the Apostle is speaking of those who have the **wherewithal** to provide for their family, including their elderly mother or father or grandmother or grandfather, but they **neglect** them.

The Christian faith isn’t just fire insurance, it isn’t just a reservation on Rapture Airlines.

It isn’t just pie in the sky by and by – it’s A Way Of Life that alters our obligations and makes us duty bound to provide for the needs of our family.

To fail to provide for the needs of the family is equivalent to **apostasy** and being an apostate is **worse** than never having believed because the apostate at least once KNEW the truth, but willingly turned his or her back on it.

What Paul writes here needs to be considered by more believers because it speaks to more than just *working* – it speaks of *provision* for the family.

It is the head of household’s responsibility, laid on him or her by God, to make sure that the family is being provided for in a manner that brings honor to God and shows love to all the family members.

Some people like their jobs and work hard at them, but they don’t provide what’s necessary for the family.

In such a case, they need to find a job that does provide.

Some make enough money at their employment to provide, IF they reduced the expense side of the budget!

But they spend foolishly and so the debt robs the provision.

Some live in homes that are insufficient to the needs of the family.

They are unsafe, and unsanitary – but because of misplaced priorities or outright laziness, things are not getting fixed or cleaned.

Look at v. 8 again . . .

- 8 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.**

If we're to treat other believers as brothers and sisters, how much MORE ought we treat the members of our own blood-families as people of special consideration and care?

Since there were so many candidates for benevolence, Paul specifies some guidelines for the dole . . .

- 9 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,**

- 10 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.**

He identifies 8 things which qualify a widow for the support of the church.

Now, how are we to understand this because some of it seems to contradict what he's just written?

The 3rd thing he mentions is that they must have "brought up **children**."

Yet in v. 4 he said that if they have **children** let them take care of their widowed parents.

How do we square this?

The answer is found in realizing Paul is not giving a list of *finely detailed requirements* here; he's giving a picture of the character of a **solidly godly woman** who as an older believer has **demonstrated** a life of ministry and service as opposed to self-indulgent **pleasure** seeking.

First of all, in order to be a candidate for the dole she ought to be over 60.

Paul writes this because he knew in that culture women *under* 60 tended to re-marry.

In fact, he encourages as much in v. 14!

Since the plight of the widow was so severe, younger widows worked hard at finding someone who would marry and support them.

And if under 60, they had a good chance of finding a new husband.

These marriages were rarely for love but were more for domestic need.

A man needed a maid, and she needed a roof.

Of course, in the Church, this would take on the added dimension of Christian charity and mutual respect that over time might very well develop into romantic love.

The second thing Timothy is to consider in who's allowed on the official role of qualified widows is if she has been the wife of one man.

Now, this doesn't mean that she could only have been married once and then her husband died when she was over 60.

It's the same phraseology used for the qualifications of elders and deacons in chapter 3 – she has to be a one-man woman.

She must not have been a woman who was engaged in polygamous relationships or given to *serial* marriages.

The issue is loyalty – she needs to be a person of godly character and has a testimony to marital fidelity as opposed to wantonness.

She needs to have a reputation for good works.

She also needs to have demonstrated a willingness to assist the younger mothers in the bringing up of their children.

Parenting is a learned activity and elderly widows can provide a huge resource of wisdom and experience in helping young mother cope with the stresses of child-raising.

She should be one who has shown hospitality; done practical and humble ministry, and visited the afflicted.

If an older woman who has lost her husband and who is without means of support has demonstrated this kind of life, then she is a candidate for entrance onto the official role of widows the church supports.

Then Paul tells Tim some women to reject from that role . . .

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

- 12 having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith.
- 13 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.
- 14 Therefore I desire that *the younger widows* marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.
- 15 For some have already turned aside after Satan.

Please understand that while Paul sounds like he is being really harsh here, he is only reporting what he has seen time and again in the churches - and he had seen a lot!

The first phrase of v. 11 is the **instruction**, the rest is **reason** for the instruction.

The first phrases in vs. 9 & 11 are parallel.

In Vs. 9 & 10, Paul tells Timothy what to look for in official widows

In vs. 11-15, he tells Timothy why younger widows need to not be on the list of official widows.

Simply put – because the desire and drive to find a new husband will negate their offering themselves in ministry to the church.

It's important that again, we understand this against the cultural backdrop it was written in and to.

Most marriages were arranged affairs in which the parents of a young boy approached the parents of a young girl and negotiated a suitable marriage arrangement.

Marriage was not about love but about economics and politics.

If love developed between the two, it was a bonus, and more often than not, especially among the common people, love did indeed blossom.

A young couple actually worked hard at loving each other because divorce was not really an option.

But if the husband died, the wife was left pretty much destitute since her welfare was tied up completely in her husband's income and estate.

For purely practical purposes, she would begin to look *immediately* for new support.

Re-marriage was more than an *option*; it was *necessary* for *survival*.

For young Christian widows, there was an added option: they could go on the church benevolence role.

But quite frankly, if it was a choice between the role and re-marriage, re-marriage was far more appealing to the vast majority of young women.

Again and again, Paul had seen young widows added to the benevolence of the church, but rather than give themselves to the kind of ministry we find in vs. 9 & 10, the church's benevolence had only provisioned laziness and a gossip mill among them.

Paul says that by **refusing support**, it will encourage these **younger widows** to get on with the task of finding a new **husband** and settling down to a new family and home.

If they don't do this, then they are indolent and idle hands are the devil's workshop.

- 16 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.

Once again, Paul says the preferred source of support for widows is the **blood-family**.

By families taking care of their own members, it frees up more resources for the church to take care of those who have no family but the Family of God.

Anyone who has ever been a part of a local church's financial matters knows that the *needs* and *opportunities* presented to the church are always greater than the income.

I can tell you that working here day to day, we receive many calls from people asking for assistance, and we try to help as many as we can.

But we're painfully aware that there are not a few con-artists who prey on churches.

We regularly get calls from people who give us a really slick schpeel about how they're in town looking for work and living in their car and need a place to take a shower for an interview tomorrow and so on.

It would be easy to just cut a check or hand cash to these people a hurry them on their way.

But we feel a great responsibility to be good stewards with what the Lord gives through the faithful and generous giving of His people.

So we ask questions and qualify people before giving them aid.
And sometimes that means we have to say, “No,” because we sense something isn’t right.
When we do help people, we encourage them make changes in their lifestyle that insure they won’t be in the same place again.
Others, because of their situation, we’ve taken on the official role of people we help with regular benevolence.

*** PUT UP SLIDE

Each year, as part of our budget, we set aside the first 13% to giving.

Calvary Chapel is a channel of blessing, not the end of it – so we take the first 13% of giving to the General Fund and apportion that to give away.

Of that, we designate a certain percentage to Benevolence, which we understand as ministering to the needs of individual and families both in the fellowship and people we come into contact with.

As well, all income that exceeds our projected income and so not specifically budgeted to expenses, is divided up between extra Mortgage reduction, savings to acquire new equipment, a reserve fund, depreciation, and more benevolence.

10% of that goes to Benevolence.

I wanted you to see tonight what this means in actual dollars . . .

*** NEXT SLIDE

The Total “Tithe” for 2000 was \$95,223

Of that \$8,671 went to Benevolence

Another \$3,883 was contributed from the over-budget amount.

Members of the church designated gifts to Benevolence of another \$4,861

The Total amount contributed this year to our Benevolence fund from all these sources is \$17,415.

The actual amount given via Benevolence so far is \$13,258.

That leaves a balance of a little over \$4,000 to meet any new needs that come in.

Paul now turns to tell Timothy how to treat men who serve in the capacity of elders.

17 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.

18 For the Scripture says, “*You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,*” and, “*The laborer is worthy of his wages.*”

These verses are important because they clear up some confusion about those who are employed in full-time ministry.

“Double-honor” refers to **pay**, to **income**, as v. 18 makes clear.

While there are to be elders in every congregation, some of those elders are appointed the task of “ruling.”

These are the elders we call “pastors,” the *leaders* of the flock.

They’re entrusted with the task of administering the needs of the church.

It’s their task to oversee the congregation and apply themselves full-time to it’s care.

Since they do this full-time, they have not time for any other occupation and so ought to be supported by the fellowship.

Pastors, whose *primary task* it is to teach and instruct in the truths of the faith, need to be supported.

In the ancient world, it might be thought that the mental and spiritual work of studying and teaching was less worthy of remuneration than those pastors who ministered to the flock in a more *active* manner.

Paul corrects this and says that the PRIMARY task of the pastors is the ministry of the Word of God and instructing His people in His Ways!

Anyone who’s really studied to teach and then stood before a group of people and shared with he or she has learned knows that studying and teaching is indeed work!

Paul quotes two passages in support of his positions that those in full-time ministry ought to be supported by the

Church.

The first is Deut 25:4 and the second is Luke 10:7, from the Lord Jesus Himself as he sent out the disciples two by two.

Warren Wiersbe has some great comments in his commentary on this passage.

Wiersbe used to pastor a church in Chicago and now travels doing pastor's conferences and pastoral training.

He is well respected by many groups as being a pastor to pastors.

He writes, "If pastors are faithful in feeding and leading the people, then the church ought to be faithful and pay them adequately. "Double honor" can be translated "generous pay." (The word *honor* is used as in "honorarium.") It is God's plan that the needs of His servants be met by their local churches; and He will bless churches that are faithful to His servants. If a church is *not* faithful, and its pastor's needs are not met, it is a poor testimony; and God has ways of dealing with the situation. He can provide through other means, but then the church misses the blessing; or He may move His servant elsewhere."

Wiersbe goes on to say, "The other side of the coin is this: A pastor must never minister simply to earn money (as Paul warns in 1 Tim. 3:3). To 'negotiate' with churches, or to canvass around looking for a place with a *bigger salary* is not in the will of God. Nor is it right for a pastor to bring into his sermons his own financial needs, hoping to arouse some support from the finance committee!"

The reason why these two verses are important is because some of the cults claim they're superior to the Christian church because their clergy isn't paid.

Both the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses like to taunt Christians and say that their leaders are more pure in their motives because they don't get paid but do it on a volunteer basis.

No, they just don't follow the Word of God in one more area – for Paul is quite clear here.

Also, the cults don't have anyone laboring in the word and doctrine, if they did, then they'd quit the cult!

19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.

As I've said before, it is a primary tactic of warfare to kill the **officers**.

Satan is no fool and follows this same policy in spiritual warfare – he tries to take out the **leaders** of the Church.

So he sets his sights on the elders and pastors and deacons.

If he cannot get them to fall, he will still attack their **reputation**.

Paul warns Timothy to not entertain isolated accusations against an elder.

If he gets a report from two or three disconnected sources, that's a different matter and may very well indicate that there *is* a flaw in the subject elder.

In that case he may will need to investigate.

The disciplining of church *members* is explained in several passages of scripture and different relationships and kinds of offences require different forms of confrontation and discipline.

But when it comes to the discipline of errant elders, that's spelled out here . . .

20 Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

While we might confront a *non-elder* in *private*, elders need to be corrected publicly, in the context of the assembly, because as elders, their entire lives stand as an example of godliness FOR the whole congregation.

If two or three know of an elder's failure, then there's a good chance that failure is already known far and wide.

So they need to face a public rebuke so things can be cleared up publicly and no more gossipy discussion or private inside talk can go on about it, offering more ground for the devil to work harm.

Elders are to serve as an **example**, including when they fall and are corrected.

There's a fuzzy headed idea floating around today that says a leader can be a *great* leader and at the same time have a totally messed up private life.

There's been a debate raging over the last 10 or so years that says we ought not get involved in the private affairs of public officials.

We can certainly agree with the need for privacy in *everyone's* life.

We ought to respect the home and family life of public people and keep it out of the public eye.

But to think that a man or woman can be *immoral* in their private life and that doesn't effect their public conduct is ludicrous!

Leadership is far more than specific decisions regarding minutiae.

Leadership IS example.

A leader isn't a functionary, sitting in an office pulling a lever.

A leader is someone who says, "Follow ME!" not, "Follow my ideas or ideals."

He or she *has* ideas and ideals and is pursuing them.

The quality of their leadership is directly proportional to how sincere they are in their pursuit of those things and how inspiring their example is to others.

Elders need to be in private what they say everyone should be in public.

If they fail and fall – then because of their position and the example of spiritual maturity they expressly provide – then they need to be corrected publicly as well.

21 I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.

Though at a distance, Paul uses his apostolic authority to commission Timothy to his task as pastor.

With the witness of God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and all the holy angels, he gives Tim a charge that he is to show no favoritism.

Remember that racism was a big deal in the early church, specially between the Jews and Gentiles.

Other groups got in on that as well – and Paul knew first hand how contentious things could get in a church that wasn't spiritually minded.

As the pastor, Timothy needed to be on special guard against any kind of favoritism that would lead to divisions in the church.

That applies to you and I as well.

We must never allow **prejudice** or **partiality** to infect us with hatred or hatred's close cousin, indifference.

22 Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

By laying on hands, Paul means to **appoint** someone to **leadership**.

The master apostle tells his protégé to not be too quick to select people for leadership positions.

Let their qualifications be **proven** first.

That's good counsel – we're often so desperate for help we appoint someone to a position, hoping once they're appointed they'll do the job.

Paul is saying, don't **appoint**, wait, and then when you see them doing the work, **recognize** them!

There's another problem; if someone is appointed to leadership before you've had a chance to examine them, there's a chance they may be involved in something inappropriate.

Paul amplifies this in vs. 24 & 25 . . .

24 Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later.

25 Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

Paul means that Tim is to give it some time; let time reveal the real character of potential leaders.

If he lays hands too quickly on someone who isn't qualified due to some moral failure, he may actually end up being guilty of encouraging their sin!

Then he tells him to "keep himself pure."

Pure means "**single** – **one** thing – no dilution."

When Paul tells Timothy to keep himself pure he means that he is to stay focused on the **glory** of **God**.

If he does that, he won't be struggling with a negative kind of spirituality.

It won't be a religion of don'ts but a joyous relationship of do's!

23 No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

Timothy was not only young and given to timidity, he was also prone to illness.

Because of regular problems with his digestion, Paul told him to mix wine with his water.

It seems that Timothy had been in the habit of drinking *only* water, which was unsafe at best.

Paul tells him to follow the normal practice of putting wine into the water so the alcohol would kill the germs that were contributing to his health problems.

Of course, they didn't know about germs back then, only that wine made drinking water safe.

CONCLUSION

V. 23 presents us with an interesting discussion we'll only touch on tonight due to the time constraints.

The great Apostle Paul told Timothy, the pastor of the Church at Ephesus which boasted several thousands members, that he ought to apply a little homespun medicine for his health problems.

Why didn't Paul, a man who had witnessed first-hand many powerful miracles and healing tell Tim to exercise his faith and pray for healing?

Better yet, why didn't Paul just heal Tim?

He could have sent him one of those anointed prayer hankies or something and told him to put it on his stomach!

Timothy had likely seen his share of miracles and healings as well.

So why not pray and be a man of faith?

Well, the answer is simple – you can be sure they had prayed, but to date, the Lord had not given healing.

So Paul told Timothy to apply a little medicine of the day – take wine with his water.

Let me read James 5:14 . . .

14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

15 And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.

When James says the elders should anoint the sick with oil in the name of the Lord, he's actually referring to the application of *medical treatment* – not some mystical application of special holy oil.

Oil was the base and carrier for almost all herbs and medicines of that day.

To anoint with oil meant to *apply medicine*.

When James tells the elders to anoint the sick with oil in the name of the Lord, he's saying they need to make sure the proper medical treatment has been applied but that it's ultimately the power of God, not medicine alone that effects healing.

When people come forward after service and ask the elders to pray for healing, we usually ask some details about the illness and see if they've been to the doctor yet.

Because of what we read here in 1 Tim. and James, we don't hesitate to recommend going to the doctor or using the medical expertise and skill of trained practitioners.

We don't see this as at all contrary to faith because we believe that God is the author of all healing, whether it comes through medicine or through a sovereign act of instantaneous healing here at the front – which we've seen many cases of I might add.

We do anoint people seeking healing with oil, but that is not really an application of James 5's anointing with oil in the medical sense.

Our use of oil is for another reason – we see it more as the fulfillment of what James says when he says, "in the name of the Lord."

Oil is a strong biblical image for the Holy Spirit.

As we pray, we anoint with oil, as a way of consigning the one prayed for to the power of God.

We ought not see **medicine** and **faith** as in opposition to each other.

These verses show us they work **hand** in **hand**.

The point is that ultimately, all healing is from **God** and it's to Him we give the glory.

Deut. 14:29; Ps. 94:6; Mal. 3:5

Warren Wiersbe's "Be" Series: NT • Volumes 1 & 2, Copyright © 1989 by SP Productions, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America

Matthew 18:15-18; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 5; 2 Corinthians 2:6-11; Galatians 6:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-16; 2 Timothy 2:23-26; Titus 3:10; and 2 John 9-11

Page - PAGE 13

“Feed My Sheep”

DATE \@ "MM/dd/yy" 12/27/00 • FILENAME mw1tim05.doc