

1 Timothy 5

1 Timothy 5:1–2

As the Church, we are family and we should love one another like family.

1. If we are talking to people older than us (men or women), we should treat them with respect...much like we would do if we are speaking with our own parents.
2. If we are speaking to younger men, we should speak to them as if they are our brothers.
3. If we are speaking to younger women, we should speak to them as if they are our sisters. Men should treat them with honor and protect them; not seek to harm them.
 - a. We should be tender with them and be respectful of our church family. Jesus said in John 13:35 that people would know His disciples (us, the Church) by how we love people. If we aren't loving the people within our church families well, it will be hard to love people outside the Church. Additionally, people outside the Church will not trust our love as much.

1 Timothy 5:3–16

As the Church, we should care for our members who have no family (widows).

Paul spoke about how we should generally love each other in verses 1–2. In these next verses, he goes into great detail to describe one group of people within the Church—widows—and how the Church must provide for them.

God commands His people to take care of widows and orphans (James 1:27). God is not only a father to the fatherless, but He is a defender of the widow. God showed His care for widows throughout both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Paul specifically speaks about widows who are without help from family. These were to be widows who had been the wife of one man (not a divorced woman) and one who had a good reputation (1 Timothy 5:3).

We need to be careful in today's context in application of this text to today's models. Our widows today (generally) are not like the widows in the first century church in Ephesus. Widows today may have insurance payments, retirement accounts, jobs, etc. "May" is the critical word here. Not everyone does. However, the widows in Ephesus would have had none of that. Additionally, Paul makes a big deal here to emphasize the older widows (generally 60 years and over) because it was the younger widows in Ephesus that were causing some division and problems within the church (1 Timothy 2).

If we are looking at the verses solely in the historical context, we see that Paul is telling Timothy that the church must honor

destitute widows through support. Paul used the word “truly” so there was a definitive difference in the widows Paul was saying the church needed to honor. Paul specifically said the church should care for their widows...especially the destitute widows.

1. Must have no available relatives (1 Timothy 5:4–5)

- a. Relatives and children should care for their parents and grandparents. They are primarily responsible for the widow in their care. 1 Timothy 5:4 says, “this pleases God.” 1 Timothy 5:8 says it demonstrates our faith.
- b. Paul said that if one didn’t care for those within their household, they were denying the faith. If we go back to the commands of “Love God. Love Others.” this makes sense. If we love God, we will do what pleases Him (take care of our family members) and if we love God, we will love our family members. If we fail to care for our family members, we aren’t seeking to love God and please God.
- c. By caring for their own relative, people are relieving the Church of the burden to care for the widow. The Church was never meant to be the sole support of all widows.

2. Must depend on God (be a believer) to be called a “real widow” (1 Timothy 5:5)

3. Must be devoted in prayer (1 Timothy 5:5).

- a. Anna in Luke 2:36–38 was such a devoted widow. She went to the Temple every single day. She served God daily through prayers and fasting.

- i. These widows can be powerful intercessory prayer warriors because they are not typically burdened by a job. This godly position provides them with a great purpose in the Church and helps keep their devotion to God on the forefront.
 - ii. These widows (who did not have relatives) were freed up from their responsibilities to husbands, children, and grandchildren.
- 4. Churches should provide for these widows physically, financially, and in other ways as needed.
- 5. We should also enlist these older widows for service. Verse 9 says the widows were put on a list of some sort. Only the older widows, Paul says, were to be put on the list and younger widows were encouraged to marry again and have children. Why? Because Paul says in verses 11–12 that they will have desires and that if they claim to devote themselves solely to Christ when they become a widow, but their young desires take over, then they will break their pledge to Christ. Additionally, younger widows are able bodied and might become busy bodies if they do not have anything to do with their time. They may not be as likely as the older women to follow through on devoting themselves to prayer as the older widows would and, if they are still in their prime, they can fulfill the plan of God to marry and have children.

- Women were generally separated at around the age of forty years old, and elders were generally over the age of fifty.
6. These issues may not seem like they all go together, but the passage in 1 Timothy 3:15 set the framework for the entire letter, “You will know how people must conduct themselves in the household of God. This is the church of the living God, which is the pillar and foundation of the truth.” Everything Paul said for Timothy to tell and teach the church was built around this verse.
 7. Caring for widows sets the Church apart from the world. The Church should be the example to follow when it comes to caring for widows.

Practical application for today:

1. How are you interacting with people within your church family? Is there room for improvement regarding how you speak to those older than you and younger than you? For those of the opposite sex?
2. How is your church caring for widows? Are widows being honored, cared for, and utilized for service? If not, why do you think not? How are you caring for widows within your immediate family?

1 Timothy 5:17–25

The Church should care for its pastors (elders) and the pastors (elders) should care for the Church.

Paul starts out by saying that pastors who do a good job should be honored, respected, and paid well. In verse 17, there is a double honor mentioned by Paul. He doesn't mention this in any other letter. Honor is not only a paycheck for a pastor who does his job well, but a high level of respect. In giving respect, the pastor in a sense, must also earn the respect of his congregation. Paul says in verse 17 "works hard at both preaching and teaching." These two things take work, diligence, and steadfastness on the part of the pastor.

Far too many pastors barely scrape by while their congregants have an abundance. This is not honoring to the work the Lord has called them to do. While pastors should never be in it for the money, they certainly shouldn't go hungry because they are servants of God.

A good pastor is one who is full of goodness and rightness. One who bears fruit. This is not always the way we view leaders in the secular world but it should be how pastors are within the Church.

In verse 20, Paul instructs Timothy in how to deal with pastors who commit sin. This sin is something that must be egregious and inherently dangerous for the church (without knowing specifically what constitutes all sin, it must be taken under consideration through prayer and the Holy Spirit). It must also be

witnessed by two or more witnesses. Why does Paul say the sin must be brought forth publicly?

- 1) It proves a witness to truth
- 2) It sends a strong warning to all against sin

This may seem like God is motivating us to be good through fear (I mean who wants to be publicly rebuked) but He really is modeling grace. If a pastor repents, there is reconciliation. Without repentance, the pastor (or any of us) could continue to sin.

Paul reminds Timothy not to show favoritism or be coerced. He also reminds Timothy not to rush into appointing church leaders for the sake of having positions filled. He also, like a good father would, reminds Timothy again and again to not get caught up in anyone else's sin and to remain pure.

In verse 15, Paul mentions the fact that Timothy has a timid stomach. Maybe Timothy had an underlying medical condition. Maybe he was nervous about the position he has been called to. Maybe he was a person who didn't like conflict and for leaders who don't like conflict, it is hard to do all the things Paul has asked Timothy to do. Or perhaps because water back then was not purified, wine helped purify the water to help with bacterial issues. If this was the case, Timothy may have been trying to remain so pure in all things (don't give yourself to too much wine), that he was putting his health at risk and Paul was giving him permission to help himself.

Verses 24–25 – People sin and some get caught right away while others don't ever seem to get caught. Just like some people do good and always get recognized while others never get recognized. It's the way it works and we should not be wrapped up in it either way. The Gospel should be our focus and judgment and favor are not our decision...that's up to God.

Practical application for today:

- 1) How is your pastor being honored? Do you think he (or she) is being treated fairly and in line with Paul's teaching?
- 2) Is your pastor being honorable to his congregation?
- 3) How hard is it for you to publicly rebuke (or be a part of a team) a leader? What have you learned from witnessing sins of leaders exposed? Has it been a learning experience?