

September 10, 2017

“Caring for the Aged”**Focal Passage: 1 Timothy 5:1-16 (NASB)**

Cross References: Genesis 3:1-4; Leviticus 19:32; Proverbs 16:31; Romans 6:11-14, 23; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 4:4; 5:17; Galatians 2:20; James 1:26-27; 2:14-20; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 3:16-18; 4:19-21; Revelation 12:10

Lesson Idea: As believers we must learn to care for our families and not expect the church to do it for us.

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

Sept 3 Ezekiel 16-17	Sept 4 Ezekiel 18-20
Sept 5 Ezekiel 21-22	Sept 6 Ezekiel 23-24
Sept 7 Ezekiel 25-27	Sept 8 Ezekiel 28-30
Sept 9 Ezekiel 31-33	Sept 10 Ezekiel 34-36

Background:

Paul gives Timothy instructions on how to treat the men and women in the church, but gives special attention to the truly needy widows. Too often we allow the world’s way of thinking to creep into our lives. Many in our society have a victim’s mentality—but Paul advised those most needy in his society, widows, to be about the work of the Lord. Others in our society have a handout mindset—but Paul maintained that families ought to take care of one another and let the church only burden itself with caring for those who had no one else. What is your mindset today?

1 Timothy 5:1-16

Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, 2 the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.

3 Honor widows who are widows indeed; 4 but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God. 5 Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day. 6 But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives. 7 Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach. 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.

9 A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man, 10 having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work. 11 But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married, 12 thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge. 13 At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention. 14 Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; 15 for some have already turned aside to follow Satan. 16 If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, she must assist them and the church must not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.

DISCUSSION:

- v 1. How did Paul advise Timothy to treat the men in his church? Why? (see Leviticus 19:32; Proverbs 16:31)

NOTE: from David Guzik, *1 Timothy 5:*

Do not rebuke: The ancient Greek verb for rebuke is not the normal word for “rebuke” in the New Testament. This is the only place this word is used, and it means literally “to strike at.” Timothy was told not to lash out at older men, but to treat them with respect – as he would treat the younger men with respect as brothers.

The command is not that Timothy must never rebuke older men, but that he was not to strike at people with an overly harsh rebuke. Apart from this particularly severe word, in general rebuke is an important duty of a pastor. It is the simple, clear, presentation that someone is wrong, either in their conduct or thinking. Its main goal is not encouragement as much as to clearly confront someone with their wrong behavior or thinking. In another letter to a pastor, Paul made the importance of rebuking clear: *Rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.* (Titus 2:15)

In 1 Timothy 5:20 – this very chapter – Timothy is told there are times when not only an elder should be rebuked, but times when he should be rebuked publicly. Therefore, in this verse Timothy was not told to never rebuke, but to never rebuke too harshly. No one likes to

be rebuked; but the wise person uses the rebuke as a valuable means to growth.

- V 2. How was Timothy supposed to treat the women? Why? What does it mean to treat them “in all purity?”
- V 3-4. How do you “honor widows?” How was Timothy to know who was a “widow indeed?” (see James 1:26-27)
- V 4. What did Paul teach about widows who had family? What does it mean to “practice piety” in your family? Why should children and grandchildren “make some return” to their parents? What does that even mean, and why is it “acceptable” to God?
- V 5. What should the life of a “widow indeed” look like and revolve around?

NOTE: from Guzik:

Honor widows: In the days the New Testament was written, there was no social assistance system from the government. In that day there was one especially vulnerable class – elderly widows, who were without means of support from husbands or grown children, and without means to adequately support themselves. These are those who are really widows.

The principles revealed here are extremely relevant today, when many look to the church as a place where the poor and needy should be able to come for financial help. **Who are really widows:** Those who were really widows were to receive honor – which in this context means financial support, yet given in a dignified and honorable way. This passage describes a “real” widow as one who is left alone; she has no one else to support her.

Trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day: Those who should be legitimately helped by the church should serve the church in some way. In this case, the widows would be given the job of praying for the church.

- V 6. Why would he consider someone who devotes themselves to pleasure as “dead even while she lives?” (see Romans 6:11-14, 23; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20)
- V 7-8. Why was Timothy supposed to “prescribe” these things? How does Paul describe those who

won’t care for their own families? (see James 2:14-20; 1 John 3:16-18; 4:19-21)

- V 9-10. How does Paul describe the type of widow the church should care for? What kind of acts should she be known for? What does it mean to “wash the saints’ feet?”
- V 11-12. Why were younger widows not to be put on the list? What pledge did they apparently make before being cared for exclusively by the church, and why would they incur condemnation for breaking it?
- V 13. What does it mean to “learn to be idle?” Though Paul noted it to be a problem for younger widows in his day, how does that describe much of our society today?
- What other temptations also face people who are idle? In what ways has our society embraced “talking about things not proper to mention” (think about areas such as entertainment, social media, conversation, etc.)?
- V 14-15. What was Paul’s reasoning for desiring the younger widows to remarry? What enemy is he referring to, and what kind of reproach does he bring? (see Genesis 3:1-4; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 4:4; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:10)
- V 15. Why would people turn aside to follow Satan?
- V 16. Even though women did not have many rights or employment opportunities, what did Paul say believers should do for any relatives who were widows? Why did he not want the church to be burdened? What lesson should we learn from that?

APPLICATION:

- ✓ Who are you responsible before God to care for? How well do you do that?
- ✓ What commitments do you need to make to guard your conversations, social media, entertainment choices; so that you aren’t participating in *talking about things not proper to mention*?
- ✓ How should the church determine which needs to help care for, and which ones not to?

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