



The Responsibility of Honor [I Timothy 5:1-16]

LIVE with a plan to bless all generations [1-2]

- [1] Older men - respect and encourage
- [2] Younger men - build community
- [3] Older women - engage their wisdom
- [4] Younger women - guide/protect them

[Gk. *hagneia*] *sinlessness* [I Timothy 4:12]

LOVE people in all seasons of life [7]

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Ephesians 3:20-21

LEAD with respect, compassion, and humility [5-16]

- [1] Description: Widows in need are truly widows indeed [3,5-6]
- [2] Reality: If our Faith Doesn't Work at Home it doesn't Work [4,8, and 16]
- [3] Getting on the List: [9-15]
 - [a] Qualifications: Not just able to receive charity, but able to engage in ministry. - Begg [9-10]
 - [b] Exclusions: - Younger widows [under 60] Why? a) Realistic desire to get married again
b) Premature retirement may become gateway to bad habits. - Begg [11-15]

I Timothy 5:1-2 Do not rebuke an older man [father] but encourage him [Leviticus 19:32] as you would a father, younger men as brothers, ² older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity. [I Timothy 4:12]

I Timothy 5:3 ³ Honor widows who are truly [indeed] widows.

I Timothy 5:4 [FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY] But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God. [behavior based on righteousness and gratitude]

I Timothy 5:5 [TRUE WIDOW] She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God [no earthly hope] and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, . . . [See Anna Luke 2:36-37]

I Timothy 5:6 [SELF-INDULGENT WIDOW] . . . but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. [Ephesians 2:1-3a]

I Timothy 5:7 [SHARE THESE TRUTHS] Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. [and teach - I Tim 4:11]

I Timothy 5:8 [FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY] But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. [Titus 1:16]

I Timothy 5:9-10 [RESUME' OF A TRUE WIDOW] Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, ¹⁰ and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.

I Timothy 5:11-15 [THE EXPECTATIONS OF YOUNG WIDOWS] But refuse to enroll younger widows [under sixty years of age], for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry ¹² and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. ¹³ Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. ¹⁴ So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. ¹⁵ For some have already strayed after Satan.

I Timothy 5:16 [FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY] If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows.

Discussion Questions

1. Time for a Bible Drill! Read I Timothy 5:1-2, Leviticus 19:32, Philippians 2:3, I Timothy 4:12, and 1 Peter 2:17 What are some practical insights from these verses that can give us guidance on how to treat all generations in the church?
2. Read I Timothy 5:4-16 [guidelines of ministering to the different types of widows in the church]. What are the characteristics of a true widow? Whose responsibility is it to care for her? How can she be utilized in the ministry of the church?
3. All through this text we see the biblical responsibility of families to care for their parents and grandparents. How have you seen your call in this area play out in your life?
4. Read James 1:27. Please pray for unity in the church between all generations and for the people who minister to the true widows in the church and the families that care for their parents and grandparents.

Notes Page 1

I TIMOTHY 5:1-2 [Self-awareness] Do not [sharply] rebuke an older man but [rather] encourage [appeal to] him as you would a father, younger men as brothers,² older women as mothers [tenderness], younger women as sisters, in all purity.

Through Jesus Christ we have been adopted as sons and daughters of God, so the church is the family of God. This family mind-set transforms how we think about and respond to fellow believers.
- Tony Evans

[1] "Paul recommended an "appeal," using the familiar word parakaleō [3870], "to exhort, comfort, instruct, encourage, advocate." Rather than take an older man by the shoulders and shake him—rather than treat him harshly—Paul expected Timothy to address an elder as he should address his own father: with due dignity, respect, and high honor." . . . [firm is acceptable; labrasive is forbidden] - Swindoll, Insights on 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus]

[1-2] "As with an article of clothing, the church has its seams, created naturally by age differences, gender differences, economic differences and so on. These seams, where and when these various groups come together, there are often visible signs of stress.

It falls to the Christian leader to cross all these lines from time to time in order to minister effectively. But crossing these lines requires sensitivity and care." (Towner, NICNT) (2b)

father [older man -ESV] ... brothers ... mothers ... sisters.

- Ancient Mediterranean cultures respected elders; some others also advised treating elders like parents and peers like siblings.
- Some of these elders fill leadership roles (see vv. 17 - 25; 4:14);
- Many Diaspora synagogues also granted an honored person the title of "father" or "mother" of the synagogue.
- Jewish tradition stressed humbly giving and receiving correction;
- Correction should be done publicly only if private attempts failed. [CBSB]

Leviticus 19:32 - "You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the Lord.

The exhortation to honor the old is still needed today. In a culture that worships youthfulness, we need to be reminded that "gray hair is a glorious crown" (Prov 16:31). Godly older men and women have experience, maturity, and wisdom that young people can ignore—but only to their own peril. Make time for the aged. -Tony Evans

[2] The rapport a man cultivates w/ his sister is unlike any other relationship. He remains mindful of her femininity, yet w/out the slightest hint of sexuality. This seasoned minister expected Timothy - and all who follow in his steps - to cultivate this same innocent rapport w/ women. (Swindoll)

Notes Page 2

“Paul didn’t choose his analogies haphazardly. His references to family do more than illustrate how a pastor should interact with various members of his congregation. He purposely avoided using terms from business or government, because the church is neither. Many business practices can be useful in church operations, but the people in congregations are not personnel. A corporate mentality is lethal in the church. Similarly, all churches need orderly government, but the members of God’s family are not subjects. Church members share a common Father, look to Christ as the eldest brother, and live in a household with extended family, as it were. Therefore, we should regard one another as brothers and sisters, some older and some younger, but family nonetheless.” [Swindoll]

“A cursory review of Paul’s teaching might appear harsh, but only if you read his words in isolation. All of his writings concerning women should be read through the lens of Galatians 3:28, which says, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” While Paul sometimes addressed specific groups, he nevertheless held all people to the same standard of righteousness.” [Swindoll]

I TIMOTHY 5:3 [HONOR] Honor widows who are truly widows.

[3] “The early church, following the pattern of the Jewish nation before them, was committed to caring for those women who had lost their husbands (Dt 24:17,19-21; Ps 68:5; Is 1:17; Ac 6:1-6; 9:36-41; Jms 1:27).” [CSB Life Connections Study Bible]

“The basic thought of the word 'widow' is that of loneliness. The word comes from an adjective meaning 'bereft' and speaks of her resultant loneliness as having been bereft of her husband.” (Heibert, I Timothy)

Defining a widow in the first century: Judaic description for a woman who has fallen through the social safety net (or has been marginalized: she has no husband or family, unprotected, and poor (Wagener, Die Ordnung des “Houses Gottes”)

The Jewish synagogues gave careful attention to the care of their widows, and the early church followed that custom (Ac 6:1). This was due to the fact that in the culture of those days, a widow could not ordinarily find any employment and so would need financial support. Today, with insurance income, social security, and job opportunities, the situation is very different. But each church should still see to it that no widow in its congregation is left destitute. Christian love demands this, and it is especially appropriate in view of the NT concept that all believers are one in Christ, fellow members of the family of God. We should care for each other. [EBC]

Notes Page 3

I TIMOTHY 5:4 [RESPONSIBILITIES OF WIDOWS WITH FAMILIES]

⁴ But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God.

Children have an obligation to practice godliness toward their parents for the investment they made in their lives. No widow should be in want who has believing children.

- Tony Evans

[4] The case is different with a widow who has "children or grandchildren." In that case, they are to take care of her. "To put their religion into practice by caring for their own family" is literally "to show piety toward one's own household." In so doing they would be "repaying" those who brought them up. This is "pleasing" to God.

I TIMOTHY 5:5-6 [DESCRIPTION OF TRUE WIDOWS] ⁵ She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, ⁶ but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives.

[5] Definition of the true [godly] widow . . .

[a] [STATUS] left all alone

[b] [HOPE] sets her hope on God

[c] [PRAYER] continues in supplications and prayer . . .

[6] Definition of self-indulgent widow [merry widow - Begg]

[a] [STATUS] Given to wanton pleasure

[b] Pursues her own pleasure while pursuing sin/prostitution instead of trusting in God? (Swindoll)

Notes Page 4

I TIMOTHY 5:7 [CHURCH CALLED TO SERVE] ⁷ Command these things as well [links to previous chapters], so that they may be without reproach. [See also 4:11]

Greek insight: reproach [anepiléptos] Here the person (accuser) trying to seize someone's character by unjustified censure is shown to be groundless, i.e. when the matter is understood in its full context.

[7] These words reference the whole church in their responsibility to the widows of the church (Timothy must teach these expectations)

I TIMOTHY 5:8 ⁸ But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

[8] Verses 4 and 8 are both about supporting your family both with physical and spiritual provision (focus on the source of provision)

God calls parents, and especially husbands, to provide for their families. Men are to reflect the fatherhood of God. A man who will not take care of his wife and children lies about what God is like. Believing men (and women) should also care for widows in their extended families because God is "a champion of widows" (Ps 68:5 - *Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.*). [Tony Evans]

I TIMOTHY 5:9-10 [ACCEPTED FOR ENROLLMENT]

Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, ¹⁰ and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.

[9-10] Three criteria for widows that the church cares for:

[1] age, [age 60 or over]

[2] marital fidelity,

[3] reputation for good works [visible outworking of faith]:

[a] cared for her children,

[b] showed hospitality [mission],

[c] washed the feet of the saints [humble service],

[d] cared for the afflicted [compassion] .

All these point to a visible outworking of faith. (Towner, NICNT)

Support text for Office of "Widow" in the church? - mentioned by Ignaius, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian

Notes Page 5

I TIMOTHY 5:11-13 [YOUNGER WIDOWS REFUSED ENROLLMENT]

¹¹ But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry ¹² and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. [pledge - vow not to marry again] ¹³ Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. [behavioral issues]

Regarding the widows under sixty years of age, Paul instructs Timothy not to put them on the official list. Most of them will become restless against the limitations of Christian widowhood and will want to marry. If they do, they incur "judgment", because they will have broken "their first pledge", i.e., the solemn promise to be devoted only to Christ that they made when they joined the list of widows. [EBC]

I TIMOTHY 5:14-16 [PROPOSED PATH FORWARD]

[14-15] Younger widows should remarry

¹⁴ So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. ¹⁵ For some have already strayed after Satan.

[16a] Believing female relatives should take care of widows they are related to :

^{16a} If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them.

[16b] Result: Churches only responsibility is to care of true widows:

^{16b} Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows.

Concluding Thought: The church is ready to relieve needs - when a family member refuses to care for their widow mother. Then the congregation will step in and meet the peculiar need that is there. The congregation will be commended and the disobedient believer will be condemned. As long as there are children and grandchildren there to take care of a widow that is their responsibility. [Alister Begg]

