

1 Timothy 5

Read verses 1 – 2

1. The NKJV gives this section the title, “Treatment of Church Members”. Paul begins with a warning not to “rebuke” old men in the church. The NLT uses the phrase, “*never speak harshly*” instead of “rebuke”. The online dictionary defines “rebuke” as “express sharp disapproval or criticism of (someone) because of their behavior or actions”.
2. He says that you should treat them as if he were your own father. When I was growing up I may not have understood the word “rebuke” but I would have understood the concept. I was taught to respect my elders. I viewed my teachers in this same light, I viewed them as a surrogate parent or an extension of my parents. Today, that idea has all but disappeared in the world.
3. Many children do not treat their parents with respect. They would think that “I don’t respect my parents so I won’t respect my elders.” I am not saying it is all children but a significant number.
4. Paul continues the thought about treating older men like your father. He says to treat younger men as your brother and older women as your mother and younger women as your sister. At the foundation of this type of thinking is love and respect.
5. Paul was writing this letter specifically to Timothy but I am sure that he knew his audience would be all believers. Paul knew that Timothy was raised well because Paul personally knew Timothy’s mother and grandmother. In 2 Timothy 1:5 Paul wrote, “*I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.*” Paul knew of their faith which they passed on to Timothy, then they would have also taught Timothy proper manners.
6. Timothy, as the pastor of the church, should honor and respect his members. If we go back to the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20. Verse 12 says, “*Honor*

your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.” Paul reiterated this commandment in Ephesians 6:1-3. He called it the first commandment with a promise. The promise was “, *so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.*” In these verses in 1 Timothy 5, Paul is expanding that commandment to older men and women.

7. The motivation is different than the original commandment. The 10 Commandments were given to point out your sin, Paul is telling Timothy and us to expand the commandment because it is the right thing to do and we should do it out of love.

Read verses 3 – 8

8. In verse 3 through 16, Paul gives special attention to widows. Some widows are able to continue to live their lives even after their husbands pass. They have grieved and have a way to care for themselves or have someone to care for them such as a family member.
9. In Acts 6, the position of deacon was created specifically care for the widows. These deacons allowed the apostles and elders to focus on studying the Word of God, focusing on God and teaching. In our church, the Pastor is encouraged to have a deacon accompanying him to visit widows and other church members. Verse 1 in Acts 6 says, “*In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.*” Hellenistic Jews blended traditional Judaism with Greek culture, this type of Jew was influence by the period when Alexander the Great was in power.
10. In verse 4, Paul says that if the widow has family that is willing to take care of her and feel obligated to “*repay their parents and grandparents*” then by all means allow them to do so because it pleases God.
11. Verse 5 says that special attention should be given to the widows with no family and are alone. He says that more specifically, the widows who do not

have anyone to care for them and put their hope and faith in God and they continue to pray day and night.

12. Providing financial assistance and visitation are a gift from God. In my experience, whether it was visiting the elderly in a nursing home or in their home, I was the one that was blessed when I left. Unfortunately my mindset going in was, “I would rather be home,” but God and the person I was visiting turned it around to “I am glad that I came.”
13. In verse 6, Paul sounds really harsh but it applies to all people. If we are living our lives for our own pleasure then we are not focused on God and others. Remember what Jesus said were the two greatest commandments. Love God and love others.

Clarke said, “It does not indicate *grossly criminal pleasures*; but simply means one who indulges herself in *good eating and drinking*, pampering her body at the expense of her mind.”

Guzik says, “Those who should be legitimately helped by the church must have godly lives. It is appropriate to say, ‘You’re not living a godly life, so you won’t receive financial assistance from the church.’”

14. King Solomon in Ecclesiastes 8:15 said what is paraphrased as “Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you may die.” This is the attitude in widows and us that Paul is preaching against. Solomon also said that “Everything is meaningless under the sun.” In both cases what Solomon was saying that if this life is all there (“*under the sun*”), then life is meaningless or you may as well take pleasure in this life. By the end of Ecclesiastes, Solomon came around and determined in his wisdom that fearing God was the right path.
15. Paul is saying the opposite. He believed it didn’t matter what you went through serving Jesus and giving others is the true route to salvation was the most important thing and anything that he endured it was worth because of what he would experience in Heaven. In Romans 8:18, Paul wrote “*I consider*

that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

16. In verse 7, Paul says that Timothy is to teach what Paul is giving him in this letter so that they will all know the correct way to behave. Paul considered these things almost as important as the Gospel. Just like in the church at Corinth, if everyone knows how to behave then there will be less trouble in the church.
17. In verse 8, Paul says that family is supposed to take care of family. If they don't then this is as bad as having no faith at all. By family, Paul means those in need and the congregation. If they are true followers of Jesus, then love should abound. If they do not love their family enough to take care of them then it is the same as being an unbeliever. What did Jesus say? *“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”*

Read verses 9 – 10

18. Verse 9 is interesting. Paul puts an age limit on widows that are to be taken care of. He says if they are at least 60, then they can be put on a list of those widows to be taken care of. If they are under 60, then there was a good chance they could take care of themselves or a chance of remarrying.
19. He adds an additional stipulation that they must have been faithful to their husband. He is not saying that they cannot have been divorced and then remarried. They had to be faithful to the man that they were married to at the time of their husband's death. Just like the qualifications of being an overseer or deacon as a one woman man, Paul seems to be saying that a widow must be a one man woman which speaks of faithfulness and loyalty.

Read verses 11 – 16

20. Paul says to not put the younger widows on the support list. Now, since in verse 9, he said older widows are “over sixty”, then these younger widows must be under sixty. Stating that younger woman may have “*sensual desires*” that “*overcome their dedication to Christ*”. Needless to say, I prayed about bringing this up in Sunday School.

21. When we went through 1 Corinthians 7, Paul covered what his opinion of married life. There is no record of Paul ever marrying. Guzik says that “in Paul’s day, Jews considered marriage a duty, to the extent that a man reaching 20 years of age without marrying was considered to be in sin.” In 1 Cor. 7:8-9, we read “*8 Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. 9 But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.*”
22. You have to consider that anything of this world to Paul interfered with his serving the Lord. If Paul had married then he felt that he would have family or marital responsibilities that would prevent him from being as effective of a messenger for Christ. He would have had to divide his time between his wife and the Lord. In Philippians 3:7-8, Paul wrote “*7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ.*”
23. At my son’s wedding, his wife said, “I have spent my entire life planning for today.” My son replied, “I have spent my entire life trying to avoid this day.” Most women think about marriage more than men. This was Paul’s opinion too. He believed that the younger widows at some point would stop grieving and start thinking about marriage as they did when they were younger. There is nothing wrong with that until the desire and focus on getting married draws your focus away from Christ. Paul focuses on the sensual side of married life but there is so much more to being married.
24. These younger widows were to be kept off the support list because for one, being younger allows them the opportunity to remarry. Also, younger woman could work to provide for themselves.
25. Paul says in verse 12 that if they remarry they would bring judgment on themselves. Our wedding vows usually include a statement like, “until death do us part.” The Jewish wedding vows taken from Hosea 2:19-20 say, “*I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice,*

in love and compassion. 20 I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord.” How long? Faithfulness forever. In the 1st century, marriage was a contract between two souls. Ruth’s vows included, “Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.” (Ruth 1:17) Be careful what you pledge.

26. Paul continues in this paragraph with the ills of idle time. I would apply this to all of us but Paul specifies the young widow evidently without children to keep her busy. Holman’s Commentary on this verse says, “Channeling the energies of the individual believer to good works robbed Satan of the chance to infiltrate the heart and thinking of these young women; the church was then free from disgrace before the unbelieving community.”
27. We always say “It is my life, what is it to you how I live it?” When we are part of a church, the world is watching. The world’s response to that question is “Oh, they are part of that Alexandria Baptist Church.” Everything we do in public reflects on our God, our Savior and our church. Again, Paul wanted his focus to be on Jesus, 100% of the time, anything that interfered with that is wrong to Paul. It is a great goal but difficult to accomplish.
28. In verse 14, Paul says, “*So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander.*” My mind goes back to a movie about Babe Ruth. Babe Ruth was dropped off in an orphanage run by nuns. Evidently when they punished him, he had to repeat, “God makes work for idle hands.” That appears to be what Paul is saying for young widows. Get married and you will have someone to take care of you, someone for companionship and maybe give you children the job of running a household will keep you busy.
29. *All of things that Paul lists in these verses lead to Satan or give him a chance to lead you down the path that leads away from serving Christ. As believers, we are by Paul to “do not give the devil a foothold. (Ephesians 4:27).*

30. In verse 16, Paul warns women who are believers that have widows in their care but it applies to anyone taking care of the elderly. This was a different time. Men were providers and women were caregivers. I have known men that have taken care of aging parents which includes widows.
31. Paul gives the reason for these women to take care of the widows as so they do “*not let the church be burdened with them.*” Again, Paul’s mission and one of the missions of the church is to reach the lost. Anything that prevents that from happening is viewed as a burden by Paul. Remember the position of deacon in the church was originally created so that the widows don’t burden the pastors so they could focus on preaching and teaching. Sounds cold but again Paul was raised to serve God and not as a socialite.
32. Holman’s Commentary says, “Paul concluded the section on widows by drawing a line back to the family. Women are not just recipients of welfare; they may also be the deliverers of compassion.” We love because we were loved. I look at Terry and Betty. There is an internal need within Terry to take care of her mother because Betty gave birth to her and raised her as a child. The mothering that Betty gave her as a child is reciprocated by Terry to Betty in her time of need.

Read verses 17 – 18

33. In these verses Paul gets back to church leadership. He seems to write like I do. He should have handled this in the Chapter 3 with overseers and deacons. Regardless, he puts the elders at the top of the church. He says, “*the elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor. . . for preaching and teaching.*” Guzik says, “Some think the church should not support pastors and staff, and that the paid ministry is an abomination — they say that the church instead should be using the money to support the needy. This is an attractive way of thinking; but it isn’t Biblical.”
34. Over the years, the functions of the overseer, deacon and elder have been blended, altered to become pastor and deacon in our church. Our saints of old have defined what we call a pastor to be an overseer and an elder. We blend some of the functions of an elder and deacon together and call them deacons.

We give the pastor more responsibility for preaching and teaching, as we being responsible for pastoral care. The deacons are responsible for spiritual leadership and decision making functions within the church. The pastor is the only paid person in church leadership.

35. Paul says that the elder or in our case the pastor should be paid. He uses an Old Testament reference from Deuteronomy 25:4 and a reference from Jesus from Luke 10:7 to justify paying them. The reference in Deuteronomy refers to letting an ox eat while threshing the grain. It says, “If he is going to do the work then let him eat.” The reference from Jesus says, “*the worker deserves his wages.*” Here Jesus knew it would not be long before He would die. He was sending His disciples out as messengers of the Gospel message. He was advising them that they should be paid or taken care of for their preaching and teaching.

Read verses 19 – 21

36. These verses cover when the pastor or deacons are caught sinning. In verse 19, Paul says that the number of witnesses has to be 2 or 3 that bring the accusations before church leadership. In Matthew 18:15-19, Jesus teaches His disciples how to deal with church and the number of witnesses is also 2 or 3. Church leaders are more open to criticism and gossip, so before action occurs, the accusations must be verified by more than one person. So much damage can be done in a church with false accusations and gossip.
37. Verse 20 says that those church leaders that are found guilty of sinning should be “*reprimanded in front of the whole church; this will serve as a strong warning to others.*”(NLT) It sounds a bit worse than “*He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*” (John 8:7) On the other extreme, Holman says, “According to John Calvin, in the Middle Ages the church protected its corrupt bishops against accusation by demanding that 72 witnesses be brought forth to confirm any accusation against a bishop. This is an extreme example of corrupt leaders protecting other corrupt leaders.”
38. In verse 21, as Timothy’s mentor and superior, Paul charges Timothy to follow all of these teachings in this letter without favoritism or partiality. I understand

promising before God and Jesus but Paul adds in “the elect angels”. White says that “We are safe in saying that *the elect angels* are identical with ‘the angels which kept their own principality’ (Jude 1:6), ‘that did not sin’ (2 Pet. 2:4).” 2 Peter 2:4 says, “*For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in chains of darkness to be held for judgment.*” Jude 1:6 says, “*And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.*” Just as God does not show favoritism then neither should Timothy. (Romans 2:11)

Read verses 22 – 25

39. Paul finishes this chapter by giving Timothy some miscellaneous advice. In verse 22, he tells Timothy not to be too eager to give approval to someone else’s ministry. Most translations say “*the laying on of hands*” of others. The NLT says, “*Never be in a hurry about appointing a church leader.*”
40. Over this past year we have seen where our actions as Christians can impact the way that others view Jesus and God. Similarly, if Timothy quickly gives approval to someone that has an improper Gospel or does not live right, then it would reflect on Timothy and the church but ultimately on Jesus and God.
41. In verse 23, Paul tells Timothy to drink a little wine from time to time, instead of just drinking water. In the first century, the water quality was poor at best. There was no way to treat the water, so Paul was recommending that Timothy drink some wine which was much cleaner than water. Remember what Jesus’ first miracle was. Fortunately we do not have this problem today unless we travel to another country like Mexico.
42. Paul finishes this chapter by telling Timothy that “You can’t judge a book by its cover.” He says that some people’s sin is obvious. You can look at them and know that they are sinning and how they are sinning. But then there are others that are good at hiding their sin.
43. In verse 25, Paul says that the same thing applies to their good deeds. When I look at our church, I can see that something has happened but I don’t know

who did it. People serve the Lord in numerous ways without ever being recognized for what they have done. When someone would praise Pastor Mickey McManus for something that he did, his response would be, “No need to thank me, my blessings will be in Heaven.”

44. When I read, “*And the good deeds done in secret will someday come to light*”, my mind goes to “Storing up treasures in Heaven” (Matthew 6:19-21). Google AI says, “To “seek treasures in heaven” means to prioritize spiritual values, God's kingdom, and eternal good works over temporary earthly wealth.”