

I TIMOTHY 5:1-16

In Chapter 4 Paul has been exhorting Timothy on how to respond to apostate teachers and present a good testimony as a servant of the Lord.

Keeping in mind the overall theme of the Book of knowing how to behave one's self in the household of faith Paul now gives instructions on how to minister to and behave himself toward other members of the Christian family.

Notice in verses 1 - 2 Timothy is instructed concerning his behavior with other members of the church.

V. 1 - He is instructed not to rebuke an elder. The person referred to is not a pastor but an older brother in the Lord. Timothy was not to be disrespectful in his dealings with older believers.

Oftentimes young pastors make the mistake of being closed-minded to and curt in their dealings with older believers. They spend their time with younger believers and listen to their advice. This is the example Rehoboam followed and it divided the Kingdom of Israel. It will do the same thing in a local church.

Timothy was to treat an older brother as if he were his father.

V. 1 - He was to exhort the younger men as if they were his brothers. He wasn't suppose to display a domineering attitude as a master would command his slaves but he was to show himself as one of them in subservience to Christ.

V. 2 - Timothy was to treat an older woman as if she were his mother. That meant with dignity and respect.

V. 2 - Timothy was to treat a younger woman as if she were his sister. This would rule out any kind of behavior that would lead to indiscretion and immorality.

Pastors need to keep in mind God has called them to feed the flock not to fool around with the sheep.

Notice in verses 3 - 16 Timothy is instructed in regards to widows who make up the membership of the church.

V. 3-10 - gives specific instructions in regard to the older widows.

V. 3 - Timothy was to honor those widows who were widows indeed or were desolate. This not only carries the idea of respect, but also of financial assistance.

V. 4 - Paul refers to a second class of widows - those with children or other kin such as grandchildren. "Nephews" means descendants. These widows were to be helped by their relatives and not by the church.

V. 5 - Paul describes a widow whom the church should help. She is one desolate of others to help her and must constantly look to God for her daily provision.

V. 6,7 - Paul gives a contrast to those godly and desolate widow and makes a distinction between them and those widows who lived for pleasure. Those living in pleasure were "dead" while they lived. This means they were either unsaved or separated from serving God in a backslidden condition. Notice those whom the church was to help needed to be blameless.

V. 8 - Paul points out the seriousness of not providing for one's own relatives. Failure to do so is a denial of the Christian faith which teaches that true believers are to love and to care for one another.

Keep in mind in those days there were no such things as social security, nursing home, pensions and retirement plans.

A believer who failed to care for his own not only denied the faith... but was worse than an infidel or unbeliever because many unbelievers showed loving care for their own relatives. For a believer to do less was to bring reproach upon the name of the Lord.

V. 9,10 - Paul gives Timothy other requirements for older widows to be relieved by the church.

They were to be widows indeed or desolate of support. Here he states she has to be 60 years old and not a divorced woman.

The words "taken into the number" means enrolled and intimates that the early churches had a list of widows who qualified for church support.

In addition widows on the list had to have a good testimony as demonstrated in various ways.

V. 11-16 - gives specific instructions in regard to the younger widows.

We have seen two classes of widows mentioned. Those older widows with relatives who were responsible for their care and older widows who had no means of support for whom the church was responsible.

Now Paul instructs Timothy concerning those widows below 60 years.

V. 11 - Timothy was to refuse support for the younger widows for the reasons that Paul gave.

First of all they may be attracted to men and even marry an unbeliever which would be wanton against Christ. To do so would be to have this condemnation of judgment that they had cast off or forsaken their original beliefs.

The judgment would be - that they had thrown spiritual principles to the wind in order to get a man.

Let me interject here some spiritual principles. Believers are not to marry unbelievers for this reason. A Christian has no business dating an unbeliever (II Cor. 6:14-17) Woman in Eden.

V.13 - Paul gives Timothy another reason to refuse church support for younger widows. For the church to assume financial responsibility for younger widows might encourage them to be idle and involved in sinful practices such as gossiping and getting involved in the affairs of others.

Someone has well-said there is a close connection between idleness and sinful behavior.

Busybodies - signifies those who meddle in the affairs of others. A lot of things that people do is none of your business and mine.

V.14 - Paul states a general principle for the younger widows. They were to remarry and thus avoid occasions

where the devil could use people to speak reproachfully against them as a Christian.

V.15 - Thus seem to indicate that some of the young widows had put themselves in situations that brought reproach upon their testimonies and upon the name of the Lord.

V.16 - Paul reiterates the responsibility of believers to care for widows in their families so the church could relieve those who were desolate.

Notice Paul did not instruct Timothy as to how these widows were to be relieved. This leaves the matter of what is done up to a local assembly. Anyway we can help our widows without encouraging them to do wrong seems in order.

ARE YOU SHOWING PROPER RESPECT FOR OTHERS IN THE FAMILY OF GOD?

You can show disrespect...

I. FOR THE OLDER PEOPLE IN A LOCAL CHURCH

By saying things to them that you shouldn't.
By excluding them in various ways.

II. FOR THE YOUNGER MEN AND WOMEN IN A LOCAL CHURCH

By taking unlawful liberties with them that can lead to sin.

III. FOR WIDOWS IN A LOCAL CHURCH

By failing to take part in relieving them who have needs.