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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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## 1 Timothy 5.

(2013)

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## 1 Timothy 5.

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### Topics.

- Honour widows who are truly widows.
- Let a widow be enrolled if she is sixty-years of age.
- Refuse to enrol younger widows.
- Some have strayed after satan.
- Let elders be considered worthy of double honour.
- You shall not muzzle an ox.
- On the evidence of two or three witnesses.
- Rebuke those who sin in the presence of all.
- Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands.
- Drink little wine for the sake of your stomach.

**The Previous Chapter:** in the previous chapter Paul told Timothy some will depart from the faith and that he should have nothing to do with fables, but rather devote himself to godliness and public reading of Scripture, teaching and exhortation so that he would not be neglecting the gift given to him by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on him.

**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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### Older and Younger Men and Older and Younger Women.

1 Timothy 5:1-2 ----- <sup>1</sup>Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father. Treat younger men like brothers, <sup>2</sup>older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity.

Every faithful brother and sister in Christ whether young or old, male or female should see themselves as belonging to a local and global family and treat others in this family as we would treat our own brother and sisters and our mothers and fathers. The underlying thought in these verses is to treat each other with respect, integrity, wholesomeness and purity.

### Honour widows who are Truly Widows.

1 Timothy 5:3-5 ----- <sup>3</sup>Honour widows who are truly widows. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.

The words, "Honour widows who are truly widows" (v3, 5) refers to a woman with no children or family to look after her that is why Paul says "She has set her hope on God and prays day and night (v5) because her only hope for help is God and by extension the church there were no government pension plans in the days of the early church. Godliness in the following verse, "If a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to the parents" in this context is about the adult children financially supporting their aging parents it's about returning the good the parent has given of their lives to support their children and the children now being adults supporting their aged parents which Paul says is pleasing to God.

The principle is that if a widow had children to support her then they should do so rather than rely on the church. This is because most church funds are not endless and therefore Paul wants to make sure that what money there is it goes to those who have absolutely no one to help them (see verse 16).

### **Widow who are Self-Indulgent.**

1 Timothy 5:6-8 ----- <sup>6</sup>but she who is self-indulgent (Liveth in pleasure in KJV) is dead even while she lives. <sup>7</sup>Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. <sup>8</sup>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.

**Indulgent:** carries the idea of living for self, the idea here is that the church should not be expected to support a woman who is pleasure-seeking, self-indulgent, wasteful and solely lives for herself.

Pauls statement, "Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach" (v7) means command brothers and sisters in the church not to rebuke an older man, to treat younger men and woman like brothers and sisters and treat older women and men like mothers and fathers. To care for the widow with no support, but not the one who has children to support her and refuse to support a woman who lives for pleasure and self.

The words, "As well" refer to everything else Paul has taught Timothy to do in the previous chapters of this letter and the words, "that they may be without reproach" (v7) means if the church does these things so those outside the Kingdom of God will not be able to bring any criticism or railing accusation against the church or the Christian faith. Pauls concludes by saying, "If anyone does not provide for their own families they have not only denied the faith, but are worse than an unbeliever (v8). This shows that the concept of a family in God's sight is of a bonded group of people who care and support each other through thick and thin. This is also why the Kingdom of Christ is also called the family of Christ.

**NOTE:** as we look at many churches circumstances and the circumstances of many brothers and sisters in the family of the Lord Jesus Christ it becomes very clear that not all churches nor all brothers' and sisters are in a position to perfectly fulfil these commandments of Paul. Therefore the following three things should be noted: -

1. Though these commandments of Paul would certainly reflect God's will and heart's desire they are nevertheless commandments of Pau and not, "Thus saith the LORD."
2. Though they are not "Thus saith the LORD" they should be the aim and goal of the church and of every brother and sister in Christ to attain to them as closely as their circumstances permit.
3. Should a church or brother and sister though circumstances beyond their control not be able to perform these godly duties they should not feel condemned by God or the Lord since we are judged by the compassion, desire and willingness of our heart to do the right thing and not by the fact that we do not have the means to perform it.

### **Let a Widow be Enrolled if she is Sixty-Years of Age.**

1 Timothy 5:9-10 ----- <sup>9</sup>Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband <sup>10</sup>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.

**Enrolled:** means to put a person on the church enrolment list for financial support.

For many today the words, "Wash the feet of the saints" (v10) would sound extremely over the top and chauvinistic, but, during the early church era men and women walked on muddy roads and worked all day in dusty or muddy fields. They did not have concrete paths and roads as we do today so to wash a person's feet

before they came into the house was common practice and to do it for another person was not only an act of kindness, but I would expect a way of expressing friendship and how much you respected that person much like we hug each other today to show our affection toward a friend. Basically what Paul is saying could be summed up in the words let a widow be enrolled (meaning supported) if she is over sixty (because they shouldn't be expected to work) and if she has shown herself to be kind and caring toward others.

The words, "Having been the wife of one husband" (v9) obviously does not apply to a woman who was divorced prior to her conversion and remarried, a sister in Christ whose husband cheated on her or was abusive and they divorce and she remarried, a sister whose husband died and she remarried etc. The contrast to the type of woman Paul has in mind would be a married woman who has affairs, is promiscuous and unfaithful.

**NOTE:** it must always be kept in mind when reading any rule or law of the Bible that the Ten Commandments the highest laws God has given to mankind are under the Mercy Seat of God, so if God's most treasured and eternal laws are placed under mercy how much more should all other rules and laws be clothed with the same grace and mercy. Thus the reason brothers and sisters in Christ are told to live by the Spirit of the law and not the Letter of it since the Spirit of the Law is love because each of the Ten Commandments regarding mankind protects the innocent from harm and hurt (i.e. thou shalt not murder, steal, commit adultery etc.).

### **Refuse to Enrol Younger Widows.**

1 Timothy 5:11-13 ---- <sup>11</sup>But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry <sup>12</sup>and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. <sup>13</sup>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.

**Enrol:** means to put a person on the church enrolment list for financial support.

The words, "Desire to marry" (v11) in this context is most likely an expression that the early writers used to refer to women who desired to sleep around with different bed partners rather than make a commitment to marry, since in verse fourteen Paul's says, "He desires that younger woman marry" (v14) so clearly he cannot be condemning young woman who desire to commit themselves to a marriage relationship added to that to condemn a woman for desiring to marry would be going against the Scriptures teaching.

I suspect the types of women Paul has in mind that the church should not financially support are young women who sacrifice their faith in the Lord so they can live a promiscuous lifestyle and who are lazy and therefore spend much time gossiping and saying things that are not fitting for a woman to be saying (In the colloquial language of Paul's era they would be called 'loose woman.'

### **Let Younger Widows Marry.**

1 Timothy 5:14-15 ---- <sup>14</sup>So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. <sup>15</sup>For some have already strayed after Satan (Satanas).

Once again to many today this may sound chauvinistic, but it must be remembered during Paul's era it was very difficult for a woman to work and support herself so naturally it was better for younger women to marry, raise a family and live a life that gives no-one occasion to speak badly of them, this is most likely in contrast to the promiscuous women Paul was speaking of in the previous verses.

I suspect the saying, "A woman's place in the Kitchen" originated from these verses and others like them, but it must be remembered Paul is simply giving the best advice for young women of his era. I doubt very much that Paul would want his words to be legalistically used as a battering rod to condemn young women who today are tremendously gifted and who chose a path that allows her to develop her gift or talent while remaining in the faith and giving no place for anyone

to speak badly of her. Women of Paul's era never had these opportunities. Nevertheless, if they do have a husband, faithfulness to him must not be broken and if they have children their duties to love and care for them must be the highest priority.

**Give the adversary no occasion for slander:** the word adversary means to be contrary or to oppose and refers to any person who speaks contrary to or opposes another. In the following verse, "Give the adversary no occasion for slander" (V14) it means don't give anyone any reason to speak badly of you or of God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.

**Some have strayed after satan:** the word satan in the following verse "Some younger women have already strayed after satan" (v15) in this context refers to the sinful pleasures of the world, (primarily sleeping around with different bed partners). The word satan in the original Hebrew and Greek language does not have a capital 'S' and simply means one who opposes another in purpose or act.

In this context the word satan refers to the sinful pleasures of this world. Clearly the younger women mentioned in this verse have chosen to forsake their faith so that they can have the freedom to sleep around with different bed partners which is contrary to the ways of God. This is the reason Paul says, "They have turned aside after satan, meaning they have turned after the sinful pleasures of the world to indulge in sensual gratifications which is a lifestyle that is opposed to the ways of God.

**NOTE:** from a heavenly view there are only two kingdoms on earth the kingdom of the world (sometimes called the kingdom of man and the kingdom of darkness) and the Kingdom of God (also called the Kingdom of light, the church and the body of Christ). The word satan is sometimes used as a symbolic name for the kingdom of the world. This is because the word satan in its full meaning encompasses everything that is opposed to God and His Kingdom including man's selfishness, pride, ego, greed and lust etc., thus the reason it is such a perfect word to use when speaking of things opposed to God and his Kingdom.

The words, "Strayed after satan" (v15) in this context refers to young single women doing the things mentioned in (v11-13) which are: -

- Being lazy and going about from house to house gossiping.
- Being busybodies and saying things that are not fitting for woman to speak of.
- Allowing sensual passions to draw them away from Christ.
- Being indulgent and wasting money on excessive luxury.
- Sleeping around with different bed partners.

**Let the Church Not be Burdened.**

1 Timothy 5:16 ----- <sup>16</sup>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 really widows.

Paul realises the church has limited finances and help available and therefore does not want to burden the body of Christ unnecessarily. This is the reason he says, if a Christian woman has family members who are on their own she is to look after them so that the church can use its resources to care for those who do not have family members to care for them. (See notes following 1 Timothy 5:3-5).

**Let Elders be Considered Worthy of Double Honour.**

1 Timothy 5:17-18 ---- <sup>17</sup>Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching. <sup>18</sup>For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The labourer deserves his wages."

**Elders:** refers to those who have the oversight of the church and to those who serve the Lord in preaching and teaching.

They are deserving of double honour and being paid a wage, so that they are free to spend as much of their time as possible serving the Lord in caring for the church or in preaching and teaching the word of God so that brothers and sisters in Christ would be encouraged and grow in the faith and others would be added to the family of the Lord.

**You shall not muzzle an ox:** oxen were used to crush grain they were strapped to rods that kept them walking in a circle over the grain so that their hoofs would crush it, as they laboured in their work they were left unmuzzled (if their masters weren't greedy for gain) so that they could freely eat the grain. Paul in these verses is likening those who serve the Lord as an overseer, preacher or teacher of his word to oxen. In the same way that oxen were supported by their work so to should those who faithfully labour for the Lord as the oxen did for their masters.

**Worthy of double honour:** the statement, "Elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour" (v17), does not mean that they should be exalted above those they oversee, but that they should be highly respected, appreciated and valued neither does it mean that they are worthy of double wages as some religious leaders teach today. Throughout my many years in Christianity I have heard ministers of churches compare themselves to the C.E.O. of mega million dollar worldly companies who have the oversight of their workers and because of this identification these ministers believe their wages should be on an equal par to the C.E.O., but this attitude is not only a gross offense to the Lord and the Christian faith, but also shows that the heart is full of self-importance and greedy for gain.

To serve the Lord as an overseer, preacher or teacher is an honour and privilege since the work they are doing is reconciling sinners to God through the Lord Jesus Christ and saving them to eternal life, there is no other work on earth that can even be compared to such a privilege.

**NOTE:** having said that I should point out that most ministers do consider it a privilege to serve Christ, some are faithfully serving the Lord on a wage that allows them to support their families and live without stress others are on very low incomes while many have no income at all.

#### **On the Evidence of Two or Three Witnesses.**

1 Timothy 5:19 ----- <sup>19</sup>Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

Rumours and gossip, especially against those in leadership rapidly spreads like a cancer does through the human body destroying everything it comes in contact with. If you think this is not a true statement just look at how many magazines are in the shops full of gossip and deceptive lies about the rich and famous and Hollywood movie stars. Rumours, gossip and innuendos is a billion dollar industry, thus the reason Paul says, never believe a negative report or an accusation about someone serving the Lord until it is supported by at least two or three others.

The following Scriptures show that this principle should be applied to all types of accusations and rumours whether they are against an elder or a brother and sister in Christ and by extension also applied to rumours and charges made against those outside the Kingdom of God.

Jesus said: -

- If an offending brother does not listen to you, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses (Matthew 18:16).

To the church at Corinth Paul said: -

- Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses (2 Corinthians 13:1)

Paul's focus in this chapter is elders so naturally that is who he is applying the principle to, but he would not for one moment think that anyone would assume the principle is limited to elders only.

## Rebuke those who Sin in the Presence of All.

1 Timothy 5:20 ----- 20 As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.

In Timothy verse one Paul said, "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father (1 Tim. 5:1) this refers to the way in which an accused elder should be treated in private conversations and counselling (i.e., with the feelings due to a father), but if he is proven guilty and not only refuses to take notice of the advice given in private council, but also continues in his wicked ways and the case has become public then there needs to be a public expression of disapproval and condemnation of that persons behaviour.

Paul in the previous verses said elders are worthy of double honour and that no one should believe an accusation against an elder unless it is support by witnesses and now to show that elders are not to be favoured if they are proven unworthy he adds this rule to the previous ones regarding elders. Should a minister or elder be found guilty of notorious crimes and gross enormities that are evident and known to all and bring great scandal to the Christian faith and dishonour the Lord, then it should be publically made known to all that this behaviour is unacceptable to the church

A good example of this is the Catholic Church covering up the wicked behaviour of priests who continued to abuse children. Under this rule of Paul's these priests should have been rebuked in public so that it was made clear to everyone (including those outside God's Kingdom) that this type of wicked behaviour is not acceptable to the House of God. Added to this they should have been withdrawn from their office of ministry and put out of the church in a public manner so that the good testimony of the Lord and the Christian faith would be upheld.

**I personally think:** priests, elders and religious ministers who so grossly and wickedly behave should be held up not only before the church, but to the entire world and put out of their ministries so that God is honoured and Christ good name upheld and the reputation of the Christian faith is restored in contrast to the Catholic church covering the wickedness of their priest up and thereby cause the world to despise the Christian faith and by implication God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason those in leadership are to be treated in this manner is because they are representing the Lord on earth and have enormous influence over others and therefore must set a good example for the following two reasons: -

1. So that others in leadership may take notice and be kept from committing the same offence.
2. So that the good reputation of the Lord and the Christian faith is upheld.

**NOTICE:** the key word is 'persist' (v20) if after being counselled in private by two or three faithful witnesses the brother or sister in Christ (especially an elder) continues in their offensive and corrupt behaviour such as adultery, being a drunkard or sleeping around with many bed partners, obtaining through force or threats things to satisfy one's own selfish greed, charging excessive amounts of money for their service or product to increase their own profit and oppressing others for their own greedy gain and such like things that are against the law of love and the law of justice (what is fair and right) and therefore bring a bad testimony against God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

These people (especially those in leadership) are to be put out of the church to protect vulnerable brothers and sisters from falling into the same temptations and to up hold the good name of the Lord and the reputation of the Christian faith (Matt 18:15-17).

## Do nothing from Partiality.

1 Timothy 5:21 ----- 21 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality.

**Partiality:** means bias, prejudice, preference it carries the idea of showing favouritism. Here Paul is saying that it does not matter whether a person is the leader of a great congregation, a brilliant evangelist, enormously gifted preacher or teacher of the Bible they should be judge and treated in the same way as any other brother and sister in Christ is regardless of whether they are noble or lowly, rich or poor, gifted or lacking all should be treated in the same manner.

The rules Paul says to keep without prejudging and without showing favouritism are in reference to all the things he has taught Timothy in this letter, but showing favouritism in matters of judgment is against the law of justice and therefore against God. It is grossly wrong and sinful to show favouritism in any matter of judgment since to do so is to blatantly deny justice. Whether a person is a gifted preacher or minister of a great church, or brother or sister in Christ or a person who is outside of God's Kingdom all should not only be treated in the same manner, but also shown the same fairness when it comes to judgment.

### **Do not be Hasty in the Laying on of Hands.**

1 Timothy 5:22 ----- <sup>22</sup>Do not be hasty (Suddenly in KJV) in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure.

These words of Paul have the following two applications: -

1. **Laying hands on others:** in the book of Acts the purpose of laying on of hands was to impart a gift or to give a person authority to minister in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul earlier in this letter to Timothy said, "Do not appoint a recent convert to a position of authority, or he may become puffed up with conceit" (1 Tim 3:6). Now in this verse Paul is simply saying the same thing (i.e., don't appoint a person to a position of authority to quickly) (especially a new convert) because there is a danger they may become puffed up with pride and feel superior to those they have the authority over or fall into some other temptation and thereby bring a bad testimony to God, the name of Christ and the Christian faith.
2. **Taking part in the sins of others:** if we laying hands on a novice to quickly and they fall into pride or some other sin then we by association in appointing that person to that position of honour are in this sense a partaker of their sin since we were the ones who laid hands on them far too soon and gave them that high honour of authority, or it could simply mean "Don't fellowship with others who live a lifestyle of sin" (both applications can apply).

### **Drink little Wine for the Sake of your Stomach.**

1 Timothy 5:23 ----- <sup>23</sup>(No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.)

**Wine:** from Strong's Concordance means to effervesce, wine as fermented and by implication intoxication (banqueting or winebibber) and the English dictionary says it is an intoxicating beverage of alcohol. During the era of the early church it is most certain that wine was purer than much of the water they had to drink, since they did not have water filters as we do today, added to this the wines at this time would not of had the additives many of our wines have today thus the reason Paul would say, "Use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments." The key word here is 'little' i.e., not excess.

**NOTE:** the Bible does not ban drinking alcohol altogether, but it does give many warning of drinking to excess, this of course is for many obvious reasons, people (especially the young) do things that they wouldn't do if they were sober, and regret it the next day, others get violent and some drive while still under its deceptive influence and thereby cause accidents and injuries that haunt their conscience for the rest of their life. This is the reason (there are many others) the Bible gives many strong warnings against drinking to excess, but to have a drink of wine over a romantic dinner is not a sin nor is drinking a beer after a hard days work, but to drink an excess of it is foolish and can lead to all sorts of sins and troubles.



## Sins of some are Noticeable, while Others Appear Later.

1 Timothy 5:24-25 ---- <sup>24</sup>The sins of some men are conspicuous (visible), going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later. <sup>25</sup>So also good works are conspicuous, and even those that are not cannot remain hidden.

The word judgement in the following statement, "Some men sins go before them to judgment" (v24) in this context does not refer to the last and future judgment of the Great Day of Judgment, but to human judgment in relationship to laying hands on men and appointing them into the ministry. Though the statement, "Some men's sins are visible" (v24) assumes a general form it is to be taken in context with the general subject of Paul's discourse in this chapter which is introducing men (elders) to the ministry. The meaning here is that when Timothy appoints men to the ministry there should be no doubt about their character.

This is because there are some men whose character is not clearly understood since they appear different on the outside from who they really are on the inside, meaning they live a life of hypocrisy and pretence and there are others whose sins and errors are so private that they may not be known to anyone. This is the reason Paul says do not be too hasty in laying hands on a person to appoint them into the ministry before taking the time to test and observe their character over time so that should they have hidden sins (i.e., pride, ego, greed and a lack of integrity etc.), they are given time to be manifested as they go about their duties and service.

Paul no-doubt is giving Timothy this advice for the following three reasons: -

1. Because there is a temptation to promote certain men into the ministry because they are talented with secular gifts (i.e. accounting skills, brilliant skills in oratory and public speaking, have administration skills or are in positions of importance in the community and such like things), but if the church knows nothing about them except that they confess to believe in Christ, to appoint these men to ministry without being tested over time would be extremely foolish.
2. There are other men who confess Christ and have a genuine zeal and passion for the Lord but whose lives are only partially reformed and whose minds are still influenced by the collective mind of the world obviously to appoint these men to ministry without being tested over time would also be extremely risky.
3. There are other men whose faith devotion, commitment, goodness and faithfulness that those in the church have the fullest knowledge of and whose usefulness in the church is well known obviously to appoint these men to the ministry is going to be a great blessing to the church and the Kingdom of God and therefore there need be no hesitation in introducing them to the ministry.

**Good works cannot be hidden:** (v25) the majority of good works are clearly visible, but even those that are not will be revealed to all such is the glory and beauty of good works those who perform them are not only storing up treasures in heaven and eternal rewards, but are fully pleasing to the Lord.

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End.