

# "TO TIMOTHY, MY TRUE CHILD IN THE FAITH..."

PAUL'S LETTERS TO TIMOTHY



## 1 TIMOTHY 5

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<sup>1</sup> Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, <sup>2</sup> the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.

#### REGARDING WIDOWS

<sup>3</sup> Honor widows who are widows indeed; <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even

#### HOW TO CORRECT VARIOUS PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH

- What would a sharp rebuke be like?
  - Why would a sharp rebuke of an older brother be bad?
  - How would one appeal to an older brother as a father?
- How would you rebuke a younger man as a brother?
- How would you rebuke an older woman as a mother?
- How would you rebuke a younger woman as a sister?
  - What does "in all purity" refer to?

#### REGARDING WIDOWS IN THE CHURCH

- What is included in the term "honor" as Paul uses it here?
  - Looking at v. 9, what was this widow's list all about?
  - Why was this list necessary?
  - Do we have such a list today?
    - Why or why not?
- What restrictions does Paul put on this list?
  - Do not put on the list if a widow has **children** or **grandchildren**
    - Why?
    - What does it mean to practice piety?
    - What does it mean to "make some return to their parents"?
  - The definition of a "widow indeed"
    - Left **alone**

while she lives. <sup>7</sup> Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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, <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married, <sup>12</sup> thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> There-

- Has **fixed** her **hope** on God
- Continues in **entreaties** and **prayers** night and day
- “Wanton pleasure” in the Greek is someone who delights in luxury. Why would this be important as a stipulation for supporting such a widow?
- Why would Paul want Timothy to “prescribe” these things regarding widows?
  - What does Paul say about Christians who might refuse to help their elderly poor?
  - How would this look to unbelievers?
- More restrictions for widows who should be on the list...
  - Not less than **60** (why?)
  - Having been the **wife** of one **man** (explain this)
  - Having a **reputation** for good works
  - Brought up **children** (what about childless women?)
  - Has shown **hospitality**
  - Has **washed** the saints **feet** (explain)
  - Assisted those in **distress** (explain)
  - **Devoted** herself to every good work
- Why should younger widows not be placed on the list?
  - What do you suppose this pledge is that is mentioned here that a marriage would “set aside”?
  - What else might be the danger of a younger widow being supported by the church and not busy with family obligations?
    - Is this a real danger?
  - What kind of problem might this create for the church?

fore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; <sup>15</sup> for some have already turned aside to follow Satan. <sup>16</sup> 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.

#### REGARDING ELDERS

<sup>17</sup> The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. <sup>18</sup> For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." <sup>19</sup> Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. <sup>20</sup> Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning. <sup>21</sup> I solemnly

- So what is Paul's judgment regarding what should younger widows should do?
- What had already happened with some women in the church?
- And what about women in the church who had widows dependent on them for support? Should the church take the burden off the family to support such widows?
- Why?

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#### BUT WHAT ABOUT ELDERS IN THE CHURCH?

- Are these elders simply older men, or are they leaders in the church?
  - What does "double honor" mean?
    - What would be the first honor?
    - What would be the second honor?
  - What were elders of the church generally to be found doing in the early church?
    - Why would this be useful or even necessary?
    - 1 Cor. 9:13,14 — "Do you not know that those who **perform** sacred services eat the **food** of the **temple**, and those who **attend** regularly to the altar have their **share** from the altar? So also the **Lord** directed those who **proclaim** the **gospel** to get their **living** from the gospel."
    - Is support of an elder an requirement of God's pattern for the church or an option? (consider 1 Cor. 9)
- Why must Timothy be careful regarding an accusation against an elder?
  - What if the accusation turns out to be true?
  - Must it be public? (why?)

charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality. <sup>22</sup> Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.

<sup>23</sup> No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

<sup>24</sup> The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment; for others, their sins follow after. <sup>25</sup> Likewise also, deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.

- Why would Paul need to charge Timothy to maintain these principles without bias?
  - What would the temptation be?
- What does it mean to “lay hands upon anyone too hastily”?
  - What could happen?
  - Is there any responsibility to those who might appoint elders?

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#### **KEEP FREE FROM SIN**

- It is likely that the last phrase of v. 22 has closer relation to v. 23 than it does to the first part of v. 22. Perhaps there were some Christians in the churches that believed in asceticism. They would look very pious on first appraisal, but their insistence on forbidding foods and wine would be damaging to the church. And perhaps these who believed in asceticism.
  - Why do you suppose Timothy drank only water?
  - Why would that be a health problem in Ephesus?
- What does Paul mean in vv. 24 and 25 about some sins going before men before judgement and some after?
  - And the good deeds?