

I TIMOTHY 5:1-16
RESPECT IN THE FAMILY!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to I Timothy chapter 5 as we continue our in-depth study of Paul's first letter to his son in the faith, Timothy!

Keep in mind that this letter that Paul has written to Timothy has as its focus how we are to conduct ourselves in the church.

The reason that this was so important was that there were problems in Ephesus, in the church there. And Paul left Timothy behind to help correct those problems, the false teaching, and so on.

This morning the focus is on how we are to treat people. Now some of you may be thinking, *"I don't need to hear this, I know how to treat people!"*

Well, that may be true, but the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write about these things because there was a problem and I guess I can say that there still is a problem. You see, we are no different and what the Holy Spirit was saying back then He is saying to us today!

Some forty years ago, when I was working in the Intensive Care Unit at a hospital in Chicago, they wanted me to teach a class on how we, as employees, can treat our patients, their family members and the staff better.

Keep in mind that I was in my 20's and most of the staff was much older than I was. And this class was some 8 hours long and I had to teach it to several groups of people at several different times.

Not only that, but the hospital spent thousands and thousands of dollars to hire this group to come in and help them fix this problem. It was their program that they sold to the hospital!

Now I asked them why they needed to spend all that money and have these classes and their response was something like this, *“We need to teach people how to talk with their patients, family members, co-workers because they are not doing a good job.”*

I was shocked and I said, *“Didn’t they learn that from their parents when they were young?”*

I guess not and that was the problem!

That was forty years ago, and I don’t think things have gotten much better. We see it in the world, this lack of respect for people and we see it in the church as well. We spend more time on our phones than we do talking to people, and we have lost the art of communication and because of that, when we talk, it is not always nice!

Let me share this with you to show you how our communication skills have suffered recently. This article is from June of 2022, so just over a year ago. We are told,

“Mr. Watson, come here. I want to see you.” Those were the first words ever spoken via telephone. Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the then-newfangled contraption, uttered those words to his assistant, Thomas Watson, in 1876.

Today, Alexander Graham Bell would have been able to simply send a text to Mr. Watson. He may even have shortened the message to something like, “U busy come over,” without adding punctuation. Now that cellphones are ubiquitous [everywhere] and are a primary method of communication, some researchers have become interested in how cellphones affect communication skills.

There is no question that cellphones, particularly smartphones, have drastically changed society as a whole. They affect the way we do business, nurture relationships, check in with children and socialize with friends. . .

It's possible that cellphones have negatively affected speaking and listening communication skills as well. This is because in-person conversations benefit from visual cues, such as body language, facial expressions and gesticulations [movements]. All of these visual cues can allow individuals to add a deeper layer of meaning to their spoken words. . .

But even as cellphones have improved life in certain ways, they can also be detrimental. Since countless people carry out their daily routines with their cellphones close at hand, it's often assumed that if you send a text to a friend or coworker, you'll get an answer right away. The expectation of near-instant results can fuel a lack of patience in other areas of life.

Text-based communication can also lead to misunderstandings. Because auditory and visual conversational cues are lacking in text messages, it can be easier to mistake gentle sarcasm for a rude remark. This may lead to a rise in misunderstandings and hurt feelings. . .

- <https://bit.ly/3LIws7Q>

In other words, people don't know how to talk with people. They have lost the art of communication. They don't know how to treat people with respect and what we will see this morning in our study here in I Timothy chapter 5 is – ***RESPECT IN THE FAMILY!***

Now, in saying that, I am not talking about our birth family but really our ***NEW BIRTH FAMILY***, other Christians!

As you read through the Scriptures, the New Testament, you will see that the Church is described several different ways but the focus here in I Timothy chapter 5 is that – ***THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY!***

And how are we to treat each other?

We don't have to guess or speculate on how we are to treat each other, because Jesus tells us in John 13:34-35. He said, "**A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**"

Did you notice that this is not a suggestion that Jesus is giving to us. It is not, "*If you want to do this that would be great! I realize that maybe that person is not the nicest person but if you can find it in yourself, love them!*" No, this is a commandment that Jesus is giving to us, that we are to love one another!

And please understand that it does not say that "*You agree with one another!*"

We are not going to agree on all things, but we are to love!

And when people look at the church, when they look at the family of God, they will see this love flow and it will show those around us, it will show the world that we are disciples of Jesus Christ!

Not an easy subject, but it should be!

Why isn't this an easy subject?

Simply, "*Because I am right, and they are wrong and how can I love them when they are not doing what I want them to do?*"

We may laugh at that, but believe me, I have seen that over the years, and it is not pretty.

Thus, this is an important subject – ***RESPECT IN THE FAMILY!***

And I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points. They are,

HOW TO TREAT MEN AND WOMEN – I TIMOTHY 5:1-2

HOW TO TREAT OLDER WIDOWS – I TIMOTHY 5:3-10

HOW TO TREAT YOUNGER WIDOWS – I TIMOTHY 5:11

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in I Timothy chapter 5, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word, and we look at this topic –

RESPECT IN THE FAMILY!

I TIMOTHY 5

VERSES 1-2

As you can see, Paul starts out in this section on ***RESPECT IN THE FAMILY*** by talking about – ***HOW TO TREAT MEN AND WOMEN!***

Paul starts out by speaking of “**an older man**” and the Greek word that is used for “**older**” is ***PRESBUTEROS***.

When people see that they think Paul is speaking of an elder in the church, which it can mean, but in this context, it means someone who is older in age. Usually elders in the church were older in age!

Paul is going to deal with how we are to treat elders, that position in the church, later on in this chapter!

The point here is that we are to respect those that are older.

We see this in Leviticus 19:32, where we are told, “**You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord.**”

Today, in our society there is a lack of respect for the elderly, but in God’s economy, He tells us it is not only right to hear them, but it is wise to listen to them!

We are also told in Proverbs 16:31 that, “**The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, If it is found in the way of righteousness.**”

The idea here is that it is not just having gray hair that makes you wise, but walking in righteousness, allowing God’s Word to flow in you and through you, that does.

The word “**If**” should not be in this verse, it is in italics and it should read, “**The silver-head is a crown of glory, It is found in the way of righteousness.**”

The reason being is that it is seen as a reward for living a righteous life.

And the reality is, we should respect people. We may not agree with them as I have said, but we are to respect them and not make fun of them or mock them or put them down. They were created by God and thus, we should respect them.

But here in I Timothy 5:1 Paul says to Timothy that he should “**not rebuke an older man,**” which sounds strange if you can’t rebuke them if they are sinning.

What do you do, just ignore their sin?

That is not what we are to do and that is not what Paul is saying here.

And again, as you read on you see this played out as we see in I Timothy 5:20 where Paul tells Timothy, “**Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.**”

Keep in mind that the word that Paul uses for “**rebuke**” literally means, “*to strike at.*”

The idea here is to treat them with respect, treat them as you would your own father. Don't lash out at them with violent words.

Yes, there are times when you must rebuke a person, you must correct them but in that process is the idea of exhorting them, building them up, getting them back on track.

Saying things like, "***They are only getting what they deserve!***" does not help and it is not right.

Now you may not like what I have said, that making a statement like that is wrong, it does not show kindness to people.

But let me ask you this. Are you getting what you deserve?

If God did that to you, if He did that to me, if He did that to all of us, we would be in trouble. We don't get what we deserve because we deserve death. And yet, look at the compassion that the Lord had upon us, and we should show that love, that compassion towards others, even if they don't deserve it!

And for the elderly, we are to respect them and not put them down.

In fact, Paul says that we are to "**exhort**" them and the Greek word that Paul uses here is *parakaleo* which means "*one who has been called alongside to help.*"

This word is also used of the Holy Spirit who comes alongside us to help us and that is what we are to do with *older men* in the church, come alongside and help them as you would do your father! And when you have to correct them, do it in the love of Christ!

Then Paul speaks of the *younger men*, and he tells us that we are to treat them as brothers and that may get a little confusing.

I don't know about you, but with my brothers, we would fight, get at each other, but that is not the point that Paul is making here. Treat them as family, with the love of God!

Paul is also speaking of exhorting them, building them up, getting them back on track.

I think Paul, in Galatians 6:1-2 explains beautifully this idea as he says, **“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”**

The idea behind the word **“restore”** is that of setting a broken bone, putting it back in place so it can heal and be even stronger.

An older man or younger man in sin needs to be put back in place and as the healing occurs, his walk should be even stronger!

I hope that makes sense.

Ray Stedman sums it up like this for us. He wrote,

Hidden in that verse is another one of those profound psychological insights so frequently found in Scripture, which says that the way you treat people depends on how you see them.

Paul is suggesting that if Timothy sees every older man in the congregation as a father, then he will treat him with a natural deference [reverence] and respect. How you look at other people is very important. In the world, almost everyone falls into the category of a rival who is trying to get the best of one, or a friend, whom one can use to get ahead.

As Christians, however, we are to have a very different view of other people. Paul tells this young pastor to look at older men as he would look at his own father; to view them as men with some degree of experience, men who have survived crises in their lives, men who have developed a certain degree of understanding and wisdom by virtue of being young a long time.

Further, Paul tells Timothy to view young men as though they were his brothers.

Again, this reminds Timothy that there is a family relationship involved.

Young men are not his rivals, his enemies; they are his brothers. That relationship speaks of openness and honesty with one another, and yet respect and concern for each other.

When a young man sees other young men as brothers, he will treat them as such.

- <https://bit.ly/3PDnrOy>

But why is this such a problem today?

Because the love of many has grown cold! (Matthew 24:12)

Remember what Paul said of the last days or the days we are living in. That time period prior to the Rapture of the Church and the start of the seven-year Tribulation Period.

In II Timothy 3:1-5, from The Amplified Bible, Paul tells us, **“BUT UNDERSTAND this, that in the last days will come (set in) perilous times of great stress and trouble [hard to deal with and hard to bear]. For people will be lovers of self and [utterly] self-centered, lovers of money and aroused by an inordinate [greedy] desire for wealth, proud and arrogant and contemptuous boasters. They will be abusive (blasphemous, scoffing), disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy and profane. [They will be] without natural [human] affection (callous and inhuman), relentless (admitting of no truce or appeasement); [they will be] slanderers (false accusers, troublemakers), intemperate and loose in morals and conduct, uncontrolled and fierce, haters of good. [They will be] treacherous [betrayers], rash, [and] inflated with self-conceit. [They will be] lovers of sensual pleasures and vain amusements more than and rather than lovers of God. For [although] they hold a form of piety (true religion), they deny and reject and are strangers to the power of it [their conduct belies the genuineness of their profession]. Avoid [all] such people [turn away from them].”**

And today, in the days we are living in, there should be a stark contrast between those that know the Lord and those who don't know the Lord. We should be others centered while they are self-centered.

And thus, our love for the brethren should be seen in our care of them, helping them in their walk with the Lord and not condemning them but edifying and encouraging and correcting them in love, as I have said!

As we move into verse 2 of I Timothy chapter 5 the focus is women and how we are to treat them in the church.

He tells us that the older women are to be treated with the respect, the same respect you would show your own mother.

Again, it is not that you can't correct older women, but do it with respect, and with the idea of exhortation.

Let me say this. There is much wisdom with people that are older in the Lord, and we can gain much from them, both men and women.

Right now, in many churches, they are not interested in older teachers or older pastors coming to conferences to teach. They want the younger and I guess hipper pastors and teachers to come and teach them.

But they are missing out on so many valuable lessons. I am not saying that younger pastors are not gifted by God but don't miss out on the wisdom of older teachers, all that they have learned over the years.

Remember when Solomon's son, Rehoboam took over the Kingdom.

Keep in mind that Solomon taxed the people heavily and Jeroboam and the whole congregation of Israel came to Rehoboam and asked if he could lighten the heavy burden upon them and they would serve him faithfully.

And listen to what we are told in I Kings 12:6-13, **“Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, and he said, ‘How do you advise me to answer these people?’ And they spoke to him, saying, ‘If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.’ But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. And he said to them, ‘What advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, “Lighten the yoke which your father put on us”?’ Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, ‘Thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, saying, “Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter on us” - thus you shall say to them: “My little finger shall be thicker than my father’s waist! And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!”’ So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had directed, saying, ‘Come back to me the third day.’ Then the king answered the people roughly, and rejected the advice which the elders had given him.”**

And the Kingdom was divided because he did not listen to the words from the elders.

There was the Southern Kingdom of Judah with two tribes, Judah and Benjamin. And then there were the ten Northern Tribes of Israel!

So be careful in the counsel that you get, bring it in the light of God's Word, seek His direction as well, listen to the counsel of older men and women.

Now, as we minister to younger women, we are to treat them as sisters, not pulling their hair, but loving them as sisters.

And Paul's point is, "**with all purity.**"

Don't put yourself in a situation where you are ministering to a young woman and in doing so it deteriorates into a sexual relationship.

I don't encourage men to counsel, minister to young women by themselves, it opens the door for trouble.

You can come with the purist of motives, but it can turn the other way.

If you are going to minister to a younger woman or a woman for that matter, men, I would encourage you to bring your wife with you and work together.

In fact, I truly would encourage men to minister to men and women to women.

Don't give the Devil any opportunity to cause you to stumble!

Ray Stedman sums it up like this for us. He wrote,

Paul tells Timothy to treat the older women as mothers. I remember various older women who were like mothers to me as a young man. As a result, I learned to treat them with great respect for the wisdom and love they manifested to me. . .

Paul then tells Timothy that a young pastor should treat younger women as sisters - with love, with interest and concern, but certainly without any attempts at sexual involvement.

That is why Paul adds the words, "in all purity."

A young pastor is to be pure in his intentions, his attitudes and his dealings with the younger women in a congregation.

There would be nothing wrong with Timothy developing a romantic relationship that might eventually lead to marriage with a young woman in the congregation, but Paul is simply reminding him that the normal relationship of a young pastor to young women is that of a brother who is helping them, seeking to understand them and know them.

There is a wise word in the Song of Solomon that many of the present generation would do well to remember.

The Song of Solomon is the one book of the Bible that is dedicated to romantic love, the love between a husband and a wife. In the midst of the beautiful language of the book there is an admonition given by the bride to her female companions: three times it says, “I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem . . . that you not stir up nor awaken love until it please” (Song 2:7, 3:5, 8:4), i.e., do not artificially stimulate romantic involvement; do not work at it, do not develop it; it will come in time all on its own.

In the meantime, relate to one another as brothers and sisters. That gives an opportunity to really learn who people are, without the blindness that accompanies sexual arousal. Proceed with all purity in this area, Paul warns Timothy.

- <https://bit.ly/3PDnrOy>

So – ***HOW TO TREAT MEN AND WOMEN*** - Paul is telling Timothy to be gentle and respectful when it comes to correcting the behavior of the older saints and instead of rebuking them, he was to exhort (encourage) them toward godly living and to treat the younger saints as brothers and sisters. Love them!

As we read on, we will see Paul tell Timothy – ***HOW TO TREAT OLDER WIDOWS!***

Now, we might not think this was a big issue, but it was big then and it needed to be dealt with in a godly manner, as we will see.

VERSES 3-10

Now Paul speaks about widows and how we are to treat them, care for them and he begins with – ***HOW TO TREAT OLDER WIDOWS!***

This was a big concern for women back then. If their husband died and they did not have any family who would be willing to care for them, they would be in trouble.

How would they survive in that culture since they couldn't work, especially if they were older?

Paul starts out by saying, "**Honor widows who are really widows.**"

The word "**honor**" in the Greek means "*to support and sustain.*" We get our English word "***Honorarium***" from that Greek word and the idea then is a gift of money.

So this was a gift of money to help support these widows so that they could survive.

Remember that in Paul's day there were no governmental programs that took care of the elderly. That meant these elderly widows were especially vulnerable.

What would happen or should have happened is that the younger members of these families were expected to care for their elderly mothers and grandmothers if they were widows.

But they truly had nothing. Let me show you what I mean. In Mark 12:41-44 we are told, **“Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.’”**

They had nothing because they could not work!

Then in Acts 6:1-6 we see a problem in the early church regarding the care of widows. We are told, **“Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.”**

Now, some 30 years later, it is still a problem in the church, how to care for widows, and Paul is going to lay out some guidelines for the church to follow.

And here’s the thing. As you look at both the Old Testament and the New Testament, God provided care for the weak, the disadvantaged, and that included widows!

In Deuteronomy chapter 14, we are told, **“You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. . . . and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.”** Deuteronomy 14:22, 29.

This was kind of a welfare system. You go through your field once and whatever is left in the field was for the poor, the widows and so on, to come in and gather what they could for themselves.

Now, if you took advantage of the less fortunate, if you exploited their poverty for your gain, God has these words to say to you in Malachi 3:5 where we are told, **“And I will come near you for judgment; I will be a swift witness Against sorcerers, Against adulterers, Against perjurers, Against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, And against those who turn away an alien - Because they do not fear Me,’ Says the Lord of hosts.”**

Thus, since Paul understood the heart of God for the less fortunate, he shows us the church’s responsibility in the care for the widows who were in their church.

From what we can gather from first century Jewish culture, widows were usually poor, as I have said, and it was the responsibility of the local synagogues to provide for them, but they were still very poor.

What is interesting today is that many feel that the church is a welfare program, and they are to give to anyone and everyone who asks for something. That is not true!

Yes, we are to help, but there are guidelines as Paul is going to show us.

And keep in mind what Paul just said about these widows and who we are to care for. He said, **“Honor widows who are really widows.”** I Timothy 5:3.

There are some who were just trying to take advantage of the system and Paul's point is that you are not to help them. And he is, like I have said, going to lay down some guidelines to follow in regard to who are really widows.

If you are a widow and you have family to support you, then the church is not to help out. It is the family's responsibility to care for them.

Some might say, ***"But it will be a hardship for us if we do!"***

So you think it is better to put the burden on the church because you don't want to obey God?

In Matthew 15:3-6 we are told, **"He answered and said to them, 'Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God' - then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.'"**

In other words, they got out of caring for their parents by saying all that we would have given to them, we have now dedicated to the Temple, to God.

Now don't think the Temple or God ever saw that money, but they were just looking to get out of caring for their parents and that was wrong in God's eyes, just as not caring for a widow in your own family is wrong.

So that is the first qualification of supporting a widow, they don't have any family to help them out.

Besides not having any family to help her out, what other qualifications are there?

We don't have to guess, Paul tells us!

First of all, she trusts in God, she is not only saved, but her faith is strong. Because of this strong foundation she intercedes before God for the people with prayers and supplications all day long, even into the night.

In Luke 2:36-38 we see an example of a widow who did these very things. We are told, **“Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.”**

Anna was a widow for some 84 years and instead of complaining, she has been serving in the Temple with prayer all day long, for 84 years!

You see, the church did not support widows just because they were widows and they did not support widows so they could go out and party, but to serve the Lord, to serve the church.

Today, I am sorry to say, people want handouts, and if you mention work, they are offended.

That is not how it was in the early church, including for widows as we see here.

And then these words by Paul in I Timothy 5:6, **“But she who lives in pleasure [indulgence] is dead while she lives.”**

What is that all about?

First of all, the word that Paul uses for **“pleasure,”** *SPATALAO* (spat-al-ah’o) in the Greek, speaks of sensual pleasure.

If they are not living appropriate lives, godly lives, then the church has every right not to support them.

Paul said in Romans 8:6, “**For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.**”

I don't believe this person that Paul is speaking of here in I Timothy is necessarily saved or if she is then she is living in a backslidden condition. Thus, to support her would just be condoning her sin, her lifestyle.

Keep in mind that Timothy was to teach these truths so that all would be aware of them, no one would have an excuse.

And Paul hits them hard here telling them that if they don't provide for their family, if they rely on the church or the state to help them when they can work, they could provide, then they are worse than an unbeliever!

Ouch, that had to hurt.

Make no mistake about it, this is a scathing judgment against those who would not provide for their family.

Why?

Because with almost all of the pagans in the Roman times, they did care for their parents. Thus, to do less than an unbeliever they were denying their own faith, they were acting worse than someone who had no faith!

The thing is, what went on back then is still going on today and the church is not responsible to provide the financial needs of everyone, only those who are truly in need, have faith in God, have no other family to support them and they are serving the Lord in the church!

I like the way that Warren Wiersbe sums this up for us. He wrote,

It has been my experience in three different pastorates that godly widows are “spiritual powerhouses” in the church. They are the backbone of the prayer meetings. They give themselves to visitation, and they swell the ranks of teachers in the Sunday School.

It has also been my experience that, if a widow is not godly, she can be a great problem to the church. She will demand attention, complain about what the younger people do, and often “hang on the telephone” and gossip. (Of course, it is not really “gossip.” She only wants her friends to be able to “pray more intelligently” about these matters!) Paul made it clear (1 Tim. 5:7) that church-helped widows must be “blameless” - irreproachable.

- Warren Wiersbe

In I Timothy 5:9 we see this term “**the number**” and what this is showing us is that the churches kept a roll or list of names of those widows who were being cared for by the church.

What that tells me is that this was an official ministry of the church.

And Paul is very specific here, he says that no widow should be enrolled into “**the number**” who is under sixty years of age.

Why this stipulation of supporting those widows who were 60 years old or older?

Because if they were younger, they could support themselves, they could get remarried.

Also, these older women are mature, not easily driven by desire, and could serve the Lord faithfully as their life has shown.

She also needs to be a “**one woman man**” or that she was faithful in her marriage.

That would mean if she divorced her husband, as a Christian, for unbiblical reasons, she was not to be put on the list of widows that were supported.

But it doesn't apply to those widows whose husband divorced them for unbiblical reasons and maybe she then remarried a second time and her second husband died leaving her a widow.

We also see that she did many good works in her life, she had a good reputation in raising her children if she had children, caring for strangers, being a servant by washing the feet of the brethren, caring for those who are hurting and was diligent in her service to others and the Lord!

Now don't get the idea that these qualities are only for widows, they are for all women to practice – a heart of a servant.

So that is – ***HOW TO TREAT OLDER WIDOWS!***

But what happens to younger women whose husbands died? How were they to be cared for?

That is what Paul is going to tell Timothy next – ***HOW TO TREAT YOUNGER WIDOWS!***

VERSES 11-16

Why does Paul say that these younger widows should not be supported by the church?

The reason being is that they generally could provide for themselves and could remarry.

In fact, it seems like Paul is pretty harsh on them. When he speaks of these younger widows, he speaks of them like this, that they may “**grow wanton.**”

What does Paul mean by that?

This Greek word means “***to feel the impulse of sexual desire.***”

The point is this. It was generally believed back then that when a person turned sixty sexual desires began to wane. So these older women have made that transition from the younger child-bearing years to the older years of mentoring and training the younger women in the church. To use the resources that they have, the wisdom that they have learned over the years, to help the younger women!

And for the younger widows, they were still in those years of childbearing and so on. Please understand that Paul did not condemn young widows for wanting to get married, only observing that many unmarried women are so hungry for marriage and companionship that they don't conduct themselves in a godly way in regard to relationships. They don't make wise decisions.

What was the big deal if the church did support these younger women?

First of all, Paul is saying that younger widows can support themselves, they can get married again, as I have said.

And the problem for some was that they committed their lives to the Lord but their desire for marriage overshadowed their love for the Lord and they compromised their faith and placed themselves in situations that were bad.

Not that marriage was wrong or is wrong, but if you are so desperate for a relationship, if you are not satisfied with the Lord, it is a dangerous path to be on.

In I Corinthians 7:34-35 Paul speaks of someone who is single and someone who is married. He says, “**There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world - how she may please her husband. And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.**”

You see, if you are single, you can serve the Lord wholly with your life but if you are married, you also have your family to care for. It is not wrong; it is just the reality of the situation!

And then, in verse 13 of I Timothy chapter 5, Paul says, “**And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.**”

And if you think about this, this not only goes for young widows, but for anyone who has too much time on their hands.

What is the problem?

Here it is. They gossip, they are busybodies, they talk behind people’s backs – they spend their time talking about other people’s lives when they truly need to get a life of their own!

This is not a good thing, and it can truly cause problems.

Then Paul said, “**Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.**” I Timothy 5:14.

In other words, they are so busy that they don’t have time to get into trouble!

Warren Wiersbe gives us this insight. He wrote,

The result of all this is a good testimony that silences the accusers.

Satan (the adversary) is always alert to an opportunity to invade and destroy a Christian home.

The word “opportunity” is a military term that means “a base of operations.” A Christian wife who is not doing her job at home gives Satan a beachhead for his operations, and the results are tragic.

While there are times when a Christian wife and mother may have to work outside the home, it must not destroy her ministry in the home. The wife who works simply to get luxuries may discover too late that she has lost some necessities. It may be all right to have what money can buy if you do not lose what money cannot buy.

- Warren Wiersbe

Listen again to what Paul wrote here in I Timothy 5:16, as he closes this section. He wrote, **“If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them [give aid to them], and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.”**

In other words, Paul is telling them that families need to care for each other, take care of the widows in their family and not to place that burden on the church because then it will be harder for them to care for the widows who are truly in need.

This is the third time Paul dealt with this subject in this chapter; do you think he is trying to make a point?

You bet he is!

Look at what he said, **“But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God. Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day . . . 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 . . . If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.”** I Timothy 5:4-5, 8, 16.

It is something we need to heed as a church and as individuals.

As we have seen this morning, we are to have – ***RESPECT IN THE FAMILY OF GOD!***

I know some of you may not see this as important but let me say this. Jesus thought it was so important that on the night before He was crucified for our sins, He prayed to God the Father for our unity!

In John 17:20-26 we are told, **“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”**

This unity is based on the truth and Jesus just got done telling us that His Word is truth.

Thus, as the Scriptures teach, Jesus is the One who unites us all together into the family of God and without Him there is no unity!

You see, our unity with believers is linked to the way the church represents Jesus to the world!

If you are struggling loving a brother or sister in the Lord, then you need to do a heart check because the problem is not them, it is you. Sorry, but it is true. We are to love each other as Jesus and the Father love each other and that love we then have for each other will be a witness to the world of our faith!

How we treat people, what we say about people, what we say to people shows where we are in our walk with the Lord.

You see, if our vertical axis or our relationship with the Lord is off, then our horizontal axis will also be off and that is our relationship with the brethren, with people.

Paul, in Philippians 2:1-4 wrote, **“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”**

May our love for the brethren abound more and more as we draw closer and closer to the Lord. May we have – ***RESPECT IN THE FAMILY OF GOD!***

Let me close with some of the lyrics to this song – *I'll Keep Your Secrets*. It goes like this,

*I'll keep your secrets
I'll hold your ground
And when the darkness starts to fall
I'll be around there waiting
When dreams are fading
And friends are distant and few
Know at that moment I'll be there with you*

*I'll be around
When there's no reason left to carry on
And every dream you've ever had is gone
And the dark is deep and black without a sound
And every star has been dragged to the ground
Know at that moment I will be around
Know at that moment I will be around*

- Trans-Siberian Orchestra – I'll Keep Your Secrets

Do you know, are you aware of what your brothers and sisters are going through? Do you know, are you aware of what the person seated next to you is going through?

Do you realize that they may be in a very dark, depressing point in their life, and they just need someone who will come alongside them and pray for them, care for them, reach out to them, be a friend to them!

Show that you care and get to know your brothers and sisters in the Lord so you can pray for them, help them and let them know you love them and care for them, that you will be around for them!

And I will close with this, I promise. Solomon said in Proverbs 17:17, “**A friend loves at all times, And a brother is born for adversity.**”