

1 Timothy
D.) The Church and its ministry to its self
1. 5:1-16 Ministry to the elderly and needy
5:1-16
“We are family”

I. Introduction

II. Vs. 1-2 Friends, Foes or Family?

III. Vs. 3-16 Proper benevolence

I. Introduction

Paul established the way in which Timothy was to correct believers while pastoring in the established church in Ephesus, now moves to some of the things he needed to address. I wonder if Timothy wrote Paul a laundry list of “*What do I do about this problem*” type of questions. While in the Transkei area of South Africa the student’s favorite time was after our teaching through the book of Ephesians when they could just fire away questions at me. I got the sense that they didn’t get much opportunity to ask practical questions with regards to difficult subjects. What may be difficult in our culture and time may not be difficult for another culture and another time but one thing is for certain, when we allow the Word of God to transform our hearts God will direct us in the proper application of truth.

II. Vs. 1-2 Friends, Foes or Family?

Vs. 1-2 First Paul tells Timothy general words about how to address folks. This is a very profound truth for pastors as it suggests that, “***The way you treat people depends entirely on how you see them!***” In our society we tend to look at folks as either “***friends***” or “***foes***”. That’s because the world system in which we live tends to look at people as ***objects*** that are there to either help us get ahead of others, “***friends***” or keep us from

getting ahead, “*foes*”. *But Paul’s view of humanity is not a competition but rather a journey* and because of the difference we are to view folks in the church as “*FAMILY*”.

- **Older men**: Are fathers who have more experience, those who have dealt with and survived more crises in their lives, who have developed a greater degree of understanding and wisdom that comes from life. This view would generate communication that was kind, humble and respectful which always has a better opportunity of being received.
- **Younger men**: Are brothers, they are not our rivals, our competitors! They are instead those that we are journeying through life with. We have their backs and they ours. They know all our faults and we theirs as we share the same battles and through Christ will gain the same victories. Because of this view there ought to be an openness in our communication and a compassion in our speech, as we also struggle in the same areas.
- **Older women**: Are mothers, we are to give them the kind of respect and care you would give your own mother. Men we need to view these precious saints not as “old ladies” but as “mothers” who have devoted their lives to making sure our bellies were fed, our shoes were tied and our hearts were warmed!
- **Younger women**: Are sisters therefore we are to treat them with all purity! Treat them with love, protect them from harm keep your intentions pure, Paul says. I have noticed that in our society that sometimes this goes the other way as well so single gals these single men are your brothers. In Solomon’s book dedicated to romantic love in a marriage is a three time repeated phrase to the “*Daughters of Jerusalem*” that says to “*Not stir up nor awaken love until it pleases*”.

Translation: Ladies do not artificially stimulate romantic involvement, don't work at being sexy to lure men because that's not what you want men to value you only as being sexy. There is a place for that and it's called marriage!

III. Vs. 3-16 Proper benevolence

Vs. 3-16 Paul can now address the specific problem of benevolence and how to properly treat the "widows" of the fellowship. The first controversy that came up within the Church dealt with the distribution of food as the Greek speaking Jews felt that the Hebrew speaking Jews were getting a greater portion. At this time almost everyone married and most women were entirely dependent upon their husbands to financially provide for them. When a woman found herself without her husband she was in a grave situation fiscally. The church established a fund to care for those widows that meant the specific requirements to be placed in the churches care as Paul lists **five qualifications** they must meet.

1. Vs. 3-4 **Real widows**: They had to be women who had no family to help them. If they had children or grandchildren, then the responsibility to care for their mother or grandmother fell upon the family not the church. That is one of the problems I see in our Westernized society as many families are not caring for their own members and are instead relying upon society, the government or the church to care for its members. Today, our society has life insurance, independent income and pensions as widows have the opportunity to continue to have their needs meet. But in the rare cases where they have none of the above available widows are not to be the primary financial responsibility of the Church. Widows in the Church who had families are not to be put on the benevolence fund.

2. Vs. 5-7 **Spiritual characteristics**: At the top of this list was their commitment to intercessory prayer day and night. In contrast Paul says that if a widow is only living for worldly pleasure she is dead while she lives, in other words she is missing out on what true living is. These older widows are to be fulfilling their calling by being other centered being a blessing to all. They are to live in such a manner that no accusation could stand because of their character.
3. Vs.9-10 **Physical characteristics**: We are going to come back to verse 8 in a moment but in verses 9 and 10 Paul lists **three physical characteristics**:
 - A. **Vs. 9a At least 60 years old**: This is an interesting requirement as most folks only lived to their 60's which suggests that this was to be a select few that were willing to dedicate what short time they had left to full time ministry. I suppose today Paul would bump that age requirement up some as women live longer but the general idea here is that this wasn't to be a long term ministry but a short term ministry.
 - B. **Vs. 9b A one man woman**: This is the same word used for an elder and deacon and refers to their devotion to their husbands while they were living. We know this because Paul speaks in verse 14 of the younger women marrying and clearly he would not be disqualifying them for future consideration if their husbands were to pass away at a later date. She must have not been a lady who was involved in multiple relationships outside of marriage or inside of marriage but was devoted to her marriage.
 - C. **Vs. 10 A woman of good reputation**: She needed to have good references where folks could look at **four areas where she had excelled** such as:

- Brought up here children well
- Shown hospitality as she opened up her home to others
- Washed the feet of the saints. In those days they wore sandals and when someone came into your house you would bring out a wash tub and mother would often perform this humble task to do whatever it took to make someone feel welcome.
- She had also been involved in relieving the afflicted, or cared for the sick and burdened.
- Generally this 60 year old lady had committed her Christian life to being a blessing, in every way possible.

4. Vs. 11-13 **Not young widows**: Paul points out several things that would disqualify widows. It is clear that Paul viewed this injunction to older widows as a fulltime ministry opportunity not something to fill the time up with until they found a man to remarry. The problem these younger widows had, according to Paul, was a sense of entitlement where they got on the payroll and it stunted their spiritual dependency upon the Lord. Their lack of maturity would cause a misuse of time which would lead to going from house to house wasting time becoming busybodies and gossips. Today I suppose we would say that *some* younger single women without children just love drama and get all caught up in other peoples' business.
5. Vs. 14-15 **Learn to be home makers**: The home has always been the foundation of society. This is not to say that women shouldn't work outside of the home but that their primary work in the home has been a great blessing to societies. Our country has for far too long suffered from absentee father but now many children have become latch-key children because their mothers have abandoned them as they chase after materialism.

Vs. 8, 16 We left this verse until now as to deal with whose responsibility it is to care for all those who do not meet the Biblical understanding of widowhood. This responsibility is to be primarily met by their relatives as they are to “*relieve them*” and Paul continues to say, “*and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows*”. In verse 8 Paul said that to not do so was tantamount to “*denying the faith*” and that they “*worse than unbelievers*”. It was a shocking and disgraceful thing not to meet the needs of your parents in biblical times. You could not hold public office if your parents had emotional and physical needs that you were unwilling to step up and meet. No family action better reveals true Christian character than Christian children visiting and caring for their elderly parents. It is a wonderful ministry to go into some of these nursing homes where these precious saints because of health reasons now live as Mike and Trudy do to provide a church service. I’m blessed to spend weekly time with my children and grandchildren and we love to have them over and just spend time together it is something that my children didn’t have the opportunity to do with their grandparents.