

1 Timothy 5

1 Timothy 5
Tape 8196
Pastor Chuck Smith

First Timothy, chapter five.

Timothy is a young man. In the fourth chapter, Paul has told Timothy, don't let any man despise your youth. But as a young man and there in a position of responsibility in the church in Ephesus, to sort of put things into order, Paul now instructs his young son in the faith, Timothy, in just how things are to be run. As he said as you might know how you ought to behave yourself in the house of God. So this is good, practical instruction for the young minister, Timothy.

Rebuke not an elder, Now the elder here is an older man. The *presbuteros* was of course an office of an elder in the church. An office held by the elder men in the church—the *presbuteros*. But here it is referring as it just does in the Greek language, to an older person, to an old man.

Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; Old people do not take well to rebukes from young people. Who do you think you are, you young whippersnapper, you know? I changed your diapers when you were a baby, you know. So there is that certain kind of, what can you tell me? So if they need correction, do so in private, not a public kind of rebuke. But entreat them, come to them as a father, with great respect.

and the younger men as brethren; The younger men, you should treat as brothers, brothers in Christ.

²*The elder women as mothers;* Of course the word, elder here is the word, *presbuteros*, because it's the feminine form of the Greek word. And so the elder women, you are to treat as mothers. The family of God, a beautiful thing—God's family. The older people are as your fathers. The older women are as your mothers, those that are your peers, as brothers.

the younger as sisters, and the women as sisters.

with all purity. That is something that should be emphasized because so many of the churches today are suffering because of the involvement, the unfortunate involvement, many times, of the church leadership with the young women. So you are to treat them as sisters with all purity.

And then Paul goes on to talk about the churches' just taking care of the widows. ³*Honour widows that are widows indeed.* That is, that are truly widows. And he describes and will define what is a widow indeed, in just a moment.

⁴*But if any widow have children or nephews* (grandchildren, the word nephews, there should be grandchildren), *let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.* In other words, the older people, the widows were to be taken care of by their own family, by their children or by their grandchildren. They were first, their responsibility. So Paul is telling them that it really starts with the family, and the church, really should not be trying to care for and maintain those widows that had children or grandchildren that could take care of them.

Now he describes what is a true widow that the church should be concerned with and helped and take care of.

⁵*Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day.* That's what the true widow is that the church should be taking care of. She should be one who is really in need, one who has put her faith and trust in God and one who is a prayer warrior. She is one who continues in supplication or a truly Spiritual woman. If there be such in the church that are in need, they are desolate. They have no family to take care of them. Then it should be the responsibility of seeing that they are being taken care of—the church's obligation and responsibility.

In the early church in Jerusalem, they had a welfare program. They did take care of the widows. A problem did arise over that which was dealt with in the Book of Acts. But it was the duty of the church to take care of the older women, the widows who were widows indeed. Now, there were those who were living it up. The husband died. All right, you know. And they were just starting to live it up, partying and

everything else.

⁶*But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.* It's interesting how that you go to visit some of these convalescent hospitals and how some of these old women try to act pretty sexy you know. They come up and flirt and everything else. You think, man, they're dead while they are still alive. What are they trying to do? Or who are they trying to fool, you know?

Now here is an interesting thing. We come into the definition of death. It is important to realize that Biblically there are two definitions. The one is a definition of physical death and the other is a definition of spiritual death. And so a person can be physically alive, but spiritually dead. And that's what Paul is dealing with here. They may be physically alive, but spiritually dead. They are not living for God. They are living for pleasure. They don't have an interest in God. Their interest is in pleasure. And Paul said if that is a person's case, then they are dead, this is, spiritually dead, while they are still alive, that is physically alive. So there are many people today, physically alive, but spiritually, they are dead.

Now one of the definitions for death is described, "and he gave up the ghost". That is the spirit was separated from the body or the consciousness was separated from the body, as a definition of death in the Bible.

It is a definition of death in medical science today. When a person's EEG monitor goes flat, they say they are brain dead. The brain is no longer functioning. The gray matter is still there but the juice is turned off. There are no impulses. Thus the life support system is removed because they are only being kept breathing by the life support system. The brain is no longer activated. There is a separation of the brain from the body. They are dead. And that's a definition in the Bible. He gave up the ghost or the spirit.

The second definition of death from a Biblical standpoint is the separation of a man's brain from God or consciousness from God. If you are living without a consciousness of God, no awareness of God, no thought of God, no consciousness of God, no concern for God, then from a Biblical standpoint, you are dead, that is spiritually dead. There is a separation between your consciousness and God.

So physical death is the separation of the consciousness from the body. The spiritual death is the separation of the consciousness from God. And of course from a Biblical standpoint, a person who is separated from God is, as the Bible says, twice dead. When you die physically, you're twice dead. You were already in your trespasses and sin. And now you are dead physically—twice dead.

⁷*And these things* (Paul said to Timothy) *give in charge, that they may be blameless.* ⁸*But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house* (household), *he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.* In other words, we do have a certain responsibility to our family, to take care of our family, to take care of the needs of our family. And if we don't do that, we are worse than an infidel. There is a denying of the faith, if we're not willing to take care of the needs of those within our families.

So ⁹*Let not a widow be taken into the number* (That is the number that are cared for by the church, provided for by the church, don't take them into this number who are) *under threescore years old* (sixty years of age), *having been the wife of one man*, That is not divorced and remarried, divorced and remarried, divorced and remarried, but has lived with her husband, who has now died. If she is under sixty years, she is not to be taken in, over sixty years, then she qualifies to be cared for by the church.

But also other qualifications, she needs to be, ¹⁰*Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.* Those were some of the qualifications—good, Godly, women. Now received into the support by the church, there is the indication here that they should then provide some type of service for the church to cover for their taken care of by the church. Either prayer ministries, visiting the sick, or taking some sort of activity in the church, holding and stuffing envelopes, and things of that nature. In other words, there are tasks that they can do to help earn their keep by the church.

¹¹*But the younger widows refuse:* Don't bring them into the fellowship.

for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; Now this doesn't mean that marrying again, is wrong. But it means that a young woman has come. She says, well I'm a widow. I want the church to take care of me. I am going to commit my life totally to serve the Lord. I want to just serve

Him completely. I want to be taken care of by the church, like the older women. They come. They say they are destitute. I need help. Can the church take care of me? I'll be glad to dust the piano and you know, pick up papers or whatever and you know, do what service I can. Then they are taken in by the church and provided for.

Here comes a young gal. She says I've devoted my life to Christ completely. My husband died. I don't have any support. I want to just serve the Lord. Well, Paul is saying after a while, they may see some fellow, be attracted to him. And they go ooh, ooh, you know. Well, I don't want to serve the Lord. I want to get married again, so they break their vow of serving the Lord. That would be the problem, not the fact that they get married again.

So Paul said concerning the younger widows, I will therefore, (verse fourteen), that the younger women marry, and they bear children. They guide the house. And they give no occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. So better off, if they are young and are a widow, to go ahead and get married again and hopefully have a family and all.

So the breaking of the vows, they become wanton against Christ, they will marry, ¹²*Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.* That is, the commitment that they have made to fully follow Jesus Christ.

¹³*And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.* In other they become social gadflies and just are going around, creating all kinds of problems, bearing tales, gossiping and so forth.

¹⁴*I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.* They are better off if they marry and so busy with the kids, they can't get around and create these kinds of problems, you know.

¹⁵*For some (Paul said to Timothy) are already turned aside after Satan.* They have left the faith. They've left the Lord and their commitment to Jesus Christ and they have turned aside to Satan.

¹⁶*If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged;* In other words, if you have in your family, one who has been widowed, then you should take care of them. It shouldn't be the responsibility of the church.

that it (the church) may relieve them that are widows indeed. Those who are truly widows. Those who have no means of support, or no family to take care of them. They are the ones that the church, then should take and accept the responsibility for taking care of them.

¹⁷*Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour,* Men, who are elders in the church, who are ministering the word, or who are ministering to people, if they are doing a good job, then we should give double honor unto them. Respect.

especially they who labour in the word Those who are in the business of teaching. Those who labor in the Word of God. *and doctrine.* Those that God is using in the Word of God and doctrine.

We had a fellow in our church who was an excellent Bible teacher. He was in his nineties. He was very strong, still. He came up to me one day. He was teaching our adult Sunday School class. He came up to me and, he said, Pastor Chuck, what book would you recommend for me to get to learn Greek? He said, I've decided I'm going to learn Greek, so I can better understand the New Testament. I want to read it in the original languages. So I suggested to him the Greek grammar that I had, when I was in college. So, he studied Greek.

It was interesting that this man loved the Word of God. He loved to teach the Word of God and was an outstanding teacher. He should be afforded double honor, according to Paul's letter here to Timothy. And also should be provided for. In other words, he should be paid for his work of teaching.

¹⁸*For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.* Now this was under the law. They would set the wheat out on a flat floor. Then the oxen would go back and forth over it, pulling a drag. And the drag, of course, would cause the wheat to just spin and tumble and in so doing it would knock the husk off the wheat. Now, when an ox was put to the task of pulling this drag, they weren't to muzzle the

ox. In other words, he's working. If he wants to eat some of that wheat, don't muzzle him. Let him go ahead and eat the wheat that he is treading out, there on the threshing floor. And so it was a part of the law. And so Paul said, that applies to those who are ministering the Word of God. You are not to muzzle them. You are not to withhold from them they that teach the Word or to live by the Word.

And, *The labourer is worthy of his reward*. That (Luke 10:7) came from the words of Jesus. The laborer is worthy of his hire. So they who labor in the Word of God, are worthy of being supported, is what Paul is telling Timothy.

¹⁹*Against an elder* (that is against one of the church leaders) *receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses*. If someone writes me a letter concerning the pastor, and I do get quite a few letters of this nature. Because we have so many Calvary Chapels, people often times will write me with a concern that they have for their pastor. But I do not accept an accusation if there is only one person writing. Paul tells Timothy, don't receive an accusation without two or three witnesses.

Now if you get two or three people that are writing and saying the same thing, then I'll step in. I'll call the pastor or I'll call some of those and I'll say I'd like more information. But, I think that too often you know, someone can get disgruntled and angry at the pastor, because he said something they didn't like. So they sit down. They send off a letter, you know. They have sometimes imagined grievances or many times, it's out of spite. I'll get even with you.

We are living in a very difficult time because of the laws and because of the age in which we live, the whole tenor of society today. Quite often, false accusations and charges are made against the person who is in authority by those who are under them who are dissatisfied with what has happened. They are wanting to get even.

So quite a few of the sexual harassment charges are really unfounded. But a person is angry because, maybe they got laid off and for good cause, but they are angry. They say, I'll get even with him for laying me off. And they will file a sexual harassment charge. And the very fact that they have filed brings that person into question in the minds of so many people. His reputation is often ruined.

We had a member of our church here who was a, well he's still here, he retired as the chief of police in one of the Orange County cities here. And he retired, he said, because he still had a good reputation. He wanted to retire with a good reputation. He said, in so many of the police departments, the chiefs, you know, were getting into all kinds of problems with harassment suits and things of that nature. It had become sort of an almost an epidemic kind of thing. He said, he felt it best to retire while you are still ahead and you still have a good reputation. He was pleased and thrilled that he could retire with his reputation still intact. And this is something very commendable. But it possible and it is tragic that many peoples' reputations have been destroyed because someone was out with vengeance to get even and made false accusation.

So Paul is warning Timothy. Don't receive an accusation against an elder unless there are two or three witnesses.

²⁰*Them that sin* (If you find out that they are at fault.) *rebuke before all, that others also may fear*. Now you can't do that anymore. If we would rebuke, publicly someone who was guilty of sin, we would have all kinds of suits being filed against us. So public disclosure is not always wise in this day and age, in this litigious society. It isn't good.

We actually were named in a suit from a pastor up in Washington, who counseled a lady. She felt that the counsel was bad and that he had, you know, revealed to the church, things that he had come to know about her through the counsel. So she sued him. She sued us and everything else because his church's name is Calvary Chapel. Go back to granddaddy, you know, and sue him too. It's one of those kinds of societies. Now, I didn't really know this guy. I didn't know the woman ever. I never heard of her or anything else, until I got filed with a suit on the crazy thing. Thank the Lord, it's been settled the last week or something, out part of it. But it's not a wise thing.

Now, first of all in a church of this size, it wouldn't be wise anyhow, despite, you know, whatever legal problems might exist. It wouldn't be wise to publicly expose someone's sin. It's just not wise. A lot of people may not even know about it. They may not even know about the person. It just wouldn't be wise. There are too many sinners. We would have to quote too much. You know, it would be like a lurid

magazine or something. Come and hear all the dirt, you know. So, it just isn't a wise thing. In a smaller kind of an assembly, I suppose that was a place for that at one time, but I really don't believe in the public rebuke of individuals in the church today, especially a church of this size.

²¹*I charge thee before God*, This is a heavy duty charge! It isn't just, I charge you before man or just, I charge you. Now, earlier on, he just said, I charge you. Now, that's you know, I'm Paul, an apostle, and he is charging him to this. But now, man, I charge you before God!

If that's that not enough *and the Lord Jesus Christ*,

And if that's not enough *and the elect angels*, I mean this is heavy, heavy, heavy, duty, kind of charge. It's extremely important!

And what is it? *that thou observe these things without* (without partiality) *preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality*. The business of showing respect of person. Preferential treatment, because of their wealth or their office that they hold or other things by which, we are prone to show special kind of treatment. This is to be across the board. You are not to show special, preferential treatment. You are not to show partiality.

I think that this is a very important warning of Paul to Timothy. If fact, it has to be. I charge you before God, before the Lord Jesus Christ, and the holy angels, you don't do this! Guard against this!

Because every man in God's eyes is equal. God is no respecter of persons. Over and over and over, you will find that repeated in the Scripture. That God is no respecter of persons. And if I as a minister of God, a servant of God, become a respecter of person, then I'm not truly representing God. I'm not a faithful Minister or representative of God. So we need to realize that everyone is of equal importance to God and in the eyes of God. God loves us all equally. God doesn't have His favorites. Many times we're prone to think of people as God's favorites, because it seems that God is using them maybe in a more prominent, visible, position. But that doesn't mean that God loves them more. God is no respecter of person. Sometimes we feel like we are further away God than others. But we are, all of us, equally close. All we have to do is call. He is there!

So Paul warns Timothy about this danger. And it is a very common and prevalent danger within the church.

James wrote about it too (James 2:2-9). He said if a fellow comes in and he wearing expensive clothes, he has a diamond pinkie, you know, and all of this kind of stuff, you are prone to say, ooh, it's so nice to have you here today. Sit down here in the front, you know, and all.

But if some guy comes in and smells of the disinfectant from the homeless mission, he's in rags. You think, oh man, sit over there in the corner, you know. You shunt the one aside.

He said, you are respecting person. That's not good because that poor person with a smell of the disinfectant is just as important to God as the one who has the fancy clothes and drives the sports car, you know. God is no respecter of person!

We have to guard against that because it's so easy to fall into that kind of a trap of, oh! He's the mayor of the town and he's come to church! Wow! Let's be in special behavior because the mayor is here today, you know. You say, God, You see that the mayor has come! Who's he, you know. You're more important or just as important as the mayor or anybody else, in God's eyes.

Men may sit on thrones and exercise their authority over others and want people to come and bow and all to them, but not God. He doesn't honor or respect the person, because of their position. Everyone, everyone of you, as we stand before God, we stand on the same level. None are exalted above the other. God sees us all the same. And you are important to God!

So we should never give a person the feeling that they are not important. No matter who they are, we should never give to them the feeling, well I don't matter. They're really not interested in me. I'm not important. But we should let everyone feel as they come that they are important to God by our giving the same kind of treatment to them, that we would if the Secretary of State should come and sit at the church. We shouldn't show special favoritism. Do nothing by partiality.

And then the warning, ²²*Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure*. When a person wants to be appointed to an office within the church, they would lay hands on

that person, and pray for them as they fulfilled the office within the church. If they are to take the office of an elder, or an overseer within the church, hands would be laid upon them. They would pray over them, in setting them in the office. So lay hands on no man suddenly. That is, you shouldn't promote a novice into a position of Spiritual authority. And this often times is done.

We hear, sometimes, of famous Hollywood personalities, who maybe have accepted Jesus Christ. And we destroy them so readily by wanting to get them up immediately and share their testimony. Oh my, you know, he is in Hollywood. Look at that, you know. And I can remember many times when noted people had received Jesus Christ, how that the church really destroyed them by trying to raise them up too quickly. To get them out on the circuit, giving their testimony, because they'll draw crowds. Everybody will come to hear them, because they were famous. And now they are Christian! And by being lifted up too quickly, they weren't able to handle it. So many who made profession of faith, later on modified, or turned from that profession of faith because they were raised up too quickly.

So Paul is warning Timothy about elevating a person within the position of the church leadership within the church, too quickly. Give them time to mature. Give them time to develop and to grow.

Now here Paul is giving Timothy all of these instructions towards, concerning these weighty spiritual issues in the church, but just a little personal touch, now Timothy. ²³*Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.* I hear you've been sick, Timothy, throwing up a lot and all. So, drink water anymore.

You know, go down to Mexico, watch for that water, you know. Down in Mexico they say, if you go to the United States, watch out for the water, you know. It's just that water has different amoebae in it, here than it does down there. Thus, we're not used to their amoebas. They are not used to ours. So when you travel, water is one of the things that you have to watch.

Now, let me say that this Scripture has been abused by a lot of people. Take a little wine for your stomach's sake. Well, this is for my stomach's sake, man.

It is quite obvious that he's not referring to wine as a beverage. But he is referring to wine as a medicine, for medical purposes. Don't drink the water there in Ephesus, it's bad. But take a little wine, get over this stomach problem, that you have.

Here's daddy, Paul, just talking to his boy. He hears that he's got this intestinal problem, so just as a father to a son, in the middle of all of this, heavy-duty, spiritual stuff, he gets very practical.

I love that about Christianity, it's practical. Our heads aren't so much in the heavens, that we can't just take care of practical matters. My toenails need cutting, you know. There are just practical things that need to be done. You have to, you know, you just can't live up there in some ethereal, walk around in the heavenly. You know, I'm so Spiritual, you know, I don't do things people normally do. That's not so!

²⁴*Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment;* In other words, their sins are open. You see them. When the judgment comes, you recognize, well, God's allowed that to happen. They were living in sin and you can see the hand of God in bringing the judgment upon their lives.

and some men they follow after. That is, the judgment comes later. You may think that you're getting by with your sin now, because nothing has happened. There are a lot of people that have that attitude, if God didn't like what I was doing, why didn't He stop me? If he didn't like what I was doing, then why didn't he judge me?

Paul said with some, God does judge now. And others, the judgment will come later. Often times it's better now than later.

If God judges you now, many times you will be corrected, and you'll stop it because you realize that God is not pleased. If we would judge ourselves, Paul said to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 11:31), then we would not be judged of God. If your judgment later, it'll then be before the Lord and there'll be no opportunity to repent or change at that point.

²⁵*Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.* So of man's evil or man's good works, are made manifest. Some we receive the reward for now. Others we receive the reward for later. He ends the fifth chapter.

So one more chapter and we move into 2nd Timothy. But next week, 1 Timothy, chapter six.

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