

1 Timothy 5:1-6:2

Chapter 5

Verses 1-2:

--Paul begins to address Timothy in relation to particular groups. His advice is to keep a familial attitude with everyone—**father, brothers, mothers, sisters**.

--This reality of the family of God does not absolve Timothy of the responsibility to rebuke. It directs it.

--The Greek word for **rebuke** (*epiplesso*) is used only here in the NT and carries the idea of *striking with a blow* or hammering someone with words.

--Timothy must still admonish the flock in God's truth, but in a way that considers them family. Typically, you want to continue a relationship with a father, mother, or sibling.

--What is said of fathers trickles down to brothers and mothers, but **younger women** are given an added instruction—**with all purity**. The sad history of abusive men in the church proves the necessity of this Spirit-inspired warning.

Verses 3-8:

--**(3) Honor widows who are really widows**. This is a clear command. The next few verses will describe *how* Paul imagines that command to be obeyed.

--This section is important for two major reasons:

1) It reveals God's heart for widows (and I would add women in difficult positions, such as single moms).

2) It gives some basic spiritual principles by which we can lovingly give to those in need with knowledge and discernment (**Phil. 1:9**). Love and generosity are not blind.

--God's heart for the widow is a major subject in the Scriptures: **Ex. 22:23; Deut. 10:18; Ps. 68:5; 146:9; Prov. 15:25; Isa. 1:17-18; Jer. 7:6; 22:3-4**.

--God gives stern warnings to those who would abuse widows: **Ex. 22:22; Deut. 24:17; 27:19; Job 24:3, 21; 31:16; Ps. 94:6; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5**.

--The emphasis of caring for widows carried right into the NT: **Acts 6:1-6; 9:36-41**.

James 1:27: Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

--If I could put it like this: *Compassion for widows and orphans, and removing oneself from worldly sins are two of the most basic responses of actual spiritual life*.

--**(4) 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**.

--Widows with children or grandchildren are to be taken care of by their families because that is what pleases God. They are to **learn** how to give this type of love and care. By doing so, they will learn proper Christian duty (**to repay their parents**) and devotion (**for this is good and acceptable before God**).

--Jesus made sure to take care of His mother from the cross. ***Jn. 19:26-27***

--Jesus also rebuked the religious leaders for making up excuses to escape from this basic instinct and clear command of God. ***Mark 7:10-12—Corban***

--The true work of Christ should secure and enrich every practical love in our lives.

--(5) *Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.*

--Now, Paul describes the type of widow it is the church's duty to honor. A true widow is desolate of all family and is in a constant state of looking to God for help. As alone, God alone is her help.

Jeremiah 49:11: *Leave your fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let your widows trust in Me.*

--This is a description of someone very much like Anna in **Lk. 2:36-37**.

--(6) *But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.*

--In contrast, the church is under no obligation to support a widow who is living a self-serving and self-indulgent lifestyle. This is not just sexual pleasure, but basic worldly pleasures.

--In this scenario, the church would become an enabler. ***Sometimes we set up a godly plan for support that includes various levels of accountability, and if people reject it, demanding support on their own terms, we refuse because we are not actually *helping them* we are *enabling them*.***

--(7) *And these things command, that they may be blameless.*

--These *remain* commands for church bodies, teaching elders, widows, and families. We have not reached the expiration date of God's heart regarding these issues.

--(8) *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.*

--I believe this goes for individual households and the household of God! Our houses should take care of our widows, and God's house takes care of His widows.

--Home is where people are to see the most of us, and therefore should see the most of God in us. How can we claim supernatural and immeasurable grace, and be put to shame by the instinctual or cultural familial love of people without God or His Spirit?

Verses 9-10:

--(9) *Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken unto the number.* . . Now we receive a bit of insight into the early church's methodical approach to helping widows. There was a list (***taken into the number*** means some type of *enrollment*) and a stringent series of moral qualifications!

--First, why must she be older than sixty?

1) Paul will explain later that he would rather have younger widows of childbearing age remarry. Sixty would be beyond that point.

2) Practically, this is around the age at which many became widows. As older, they would also be less likely to support themselves.

3) Culturally, dowries would be given at marriage to support the daughter, and a young widow would typically still have that support and return to her father's household with it. At sixty, any dowry would have already been spent in her care.

--So at sixty, without much hope of remarriage, without the strength to support herself, and without a dowry or family to return to, a widow over sixty would be a truly needy case. *Our society, with all its unimaginable wealth, still struggles with supporting its needy elderly!*

--The rest of the qualifications are descriptions of true Christian virtue. Here we have a woman not too proud to serve a husband, children, strangers, saints, sufferers, and the Holy Spirit.

Titus 3:8: This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

--The life of Christ should be evident in her *before* she is brought into a place of regular support. She follows the example of Jesus Christ. ***John 13:2-17***

--The church is always free to offer support in critical or occasional moments of need. What is under consideration here is the continual daily care of widows in the manner a family household would provide, but since it is socially lacking, the family of God steps in.

Verses 11-16:

--Paul is not done with his instructions.

--(11-12) But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith.

--Paul commands Timothy not to accept younger women. Why? For their own good.

--He warns that they will **grow wanton**—which means *cast off restraints*.

--For Paul, the danger is that younger women will be determined to marry over serving and obeying the Lord. In doing so, they will cast off godly restraint, loyalty to Christ's commands, and sin before marriage or in marrying outside of the Lord. *How often do we sadly see this?! A young woman serving the Lord who surrenders her fidelity to God to romance a fallen, sinful man. It is idolatry! God bless you, my single sisters in Christ, who refuse to "settle" and serve marriage over God.*

--(13) 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.

--No doubt, Paul had seen the sad outcome of unwise support. With good intention, young widows had been placed in a position of regular support and became idle gossips instead of godly servants.

--(14-15) Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some have already turned aside after Satan.

--The term **bear children** brings us back to **2:15** and the godly design of the woman's place in the home circle. A faithful, busy mom is a good witness!

*Boreham (The Luggage of Life) "The Old Testament records the sage words of an old woman in addressing two younger ones: 'The Lord grant,' said Naomi, 'that ye may find rest, each of you, in the house of her husband!' Who ever heard of a woman finding rest *in the house of her husband*? And yet, and yet--! The restless hearts are not the hearts wives and mothers. . . The mother may have a bent form, a furrowed brow, and worn, thin hands; but her heart found its rest for all that. Naomi was an old woman; she knew the world very well, and her words are worth weighing. Heavy luggage is Christ's strange cure for weary hearts."*

--Even so, Paul, I think sadly, refers to some women who had turned aside from the commands of Christ and began to follow Satan—though I doubt they would have put it like that!

--(16) *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.*

--Personal help should precede organizational help. If you can help, then do it! *Think of the Good Samaritan*

Verses 17-18:

--(17) *Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.*

--Paul now returns to the subject of **elders** or overseers. Paul wanted to make sure true widows were cared for and not those who rejected the faith. Now he wants to make sure godly elders are cared for and deal with those in sin.

--His first admonition is that those **who rule well** are to be honored doubly. What is the double honor Paul is referring to? I don't think it means double their salary. I think Paul is saying they should have the honor of a godly pastor and the honor of material support.

--especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. . . refers to those who labor in preaching and teaching both publicly and privately.

--Now, some take this statement as an inference that there are elders who rule but don't teach. In this case, not all elders are necessarily also pastors. Is Paul inferring that being an elder and being a pastor-teacher are two separate gifts?

--I don't believe so. Many godly individuals disagree, but I think the Scripture clearly makes elders, overseers, and pastors the same role and gifting.

1) We see this clearly by the usage of all three terms in reference to the collective body of elders at Ephesus in **Acts 20:17+28**. (All of them were all three, not just some.)

2) **1 Tim. 3:2** makes it clear that all overseers must also be teachers.

3) If elders don't need to teach and exercise authority, then there is no reason a woman couldn't be an elder as Paul makes clear in **1 Tim. 2:11**.

4) Context is always the deciding factor. Paul is not writing this Scripture to parse the tasks of ruling elders and teaching pastors. That thought is totally foreign to the text. Paul is simply insisting that elders who do a good job should not be neglected materially because good shepherds will keep pastoring and teaching anyway! This becomes clear in the next verse.

--(18) For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

--Paul makes it clear that the honor he is worried hard-working elders might miss out on (especially ones who labor in the Word) is material in nature, as the word **honor** was used in relation to true widows in **5:3**.

--Paul always seemed keen on being clear that pastors who ministered well spiritually were worthy of being supported materially. He wrote about this numerous times: **1 Cor. 9:4-14; 2 Cor. 11:8-9; Gal. 6:6; Phil. 4:16; 2 Thess. 3:8-9; Titus 3:13**. Amazingly, Paul made sure others received their support while actively refusing his own from most fellowships!

--To support his point, Paul quotes from two Scriptures.

--First, **Deut. 25:4**, making the point that God cares about every faithful worker, even the ox!

--Second, Paul remarkably quotes Jesus' words from **Luke 10:7**. In so doing, Paul makes Jesus' words as authoritative as the OT Scriptures, and if he is quoting Luke's gospel (Obviously, Paul knew Luke personally, and Luke's gospel was written about 60AD while this letter was written about 64AD), which is very likely, his reference would invest Luke's writings with the same authority as the OT Scriptures.

--We have the OT, Jesus Christ (also **Mt. 10:10; Lk. 8:3**), and the NT apostles advocating for the material support of qualified, gifted, godly, laboring pastors. Labor is good when the task is noble. Teaching the Word of God is worthy of a lifetime of labor.

Verses 19-22:

--(19) Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses.

--What if an elder were accused of a serious sin? All godly individuals will face slander at some point in their lives. Jesus did. Paul did. So will we.

Amos 5:10: They hate the one who rebukes in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks uprightly.

--Paul wanted to make sure that no unsubstantiated accusations were entertained against an elder. What he does is ratify the biblical precedent of multiple witnesses: **Deut. 19:15; Jn. 8:17; 2 Cor. 13:1; Heb. 10:28**; and especially what Jesus taught in **Mt. 18:15-17**.

--Accusations against an elder are to be brought to *the elders* (Timothy is the one *receiving* or rejecting these accusations) and investigated.

--(This biblical instruction does not exempt criminal activity from being brought to the proper civil authority. Crimes like child abuse or rape should be reported.)

--If the accusations are proven to be true, then what?

--(20) Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest may also fear.

--The obvious response is not hiding the sin to protect the person, church, or organization. Public rebuke is required.

--The only question in this verse is who does ***in the presence of all*** refer to? All the church or all the other elders? The language could support either view, but the context only allows one—all the church. Why? Because at this point in the process, all the elders have already weighed, investigated, and decided on the issue.

--Also, in **1:19-20**, Paul already gave an example of rebuke in the presence of all by publicly naming Hymenaeus and Alexander and using their sin as a warning to the church.

--Why is public rebuke of elders necessary?

1) Because the position of an elder is public by nature, and blamelessness is their primary requirement. Trust broken must be acknowledged. Any pastor who is publicly put into a position of trust before a congregation must also be publicly removed.

2) Public rebuke proves where the rest of the church leadership stands in relation to sin or false doctrine.

--The public rebuke of a fellow elder in sin will either end up being a witness of holy ***fear*** that builds trust in the rest of the church leadership, or a proof of hidden sin and the lack of true pastoral character and oversight.

--These situations either make or break church leadership. Which makes Paul's next warning so fitting!

-(21) I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.

--Paul gives Timothy a solemn charge in this process of rebuking church leaders! Timothy is to remember that he is acting in the view of all of heaven!

--The danger here for so much of the church is to think about people and not God. We have all seen the sad reality of church leadership dealing with sinful situations in ***prejudice*** (inclination before/despite the facts) or ***partiality*** (favoritism or cronyism).

--Judging now what God will judge later will never "hurt the ministry". The public rebuke of sinning elders *is* ministry pleasing to God!

--I want to add two applicational warnings here:

1) Because church leadership has acted with prejudice and partiality in many of these situations, hurt people try to set up a system to remove the biblical authority God gives to elders to deal with these types of situations.

--Unfortunately, removing elders from the process becomes an even more unbiblical structure. Clearly, God has designed His church so that the elders (who should meet the highest godly qualifications of anyone in the church) are called to deal with the sin and public rebuke of other elders. *Otherwise, you have ungodly, unspiritual, and even unsaved "boards" dealing with godly/ungodly elders!*

2) If you attend a church where elders have proven they are not trustworthy to deal with another sinning elder—leave the church. God will deal with the rest.

--(22) *Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.*

--Paul, wise in the Holy Spirit, heads off the next danger in these situations. When an elder is rebuked and removed, the temptation is to make hasty replacements!

--All elders need to meet the qualifications of **3:1-7** and the testing of those qualifications as is referenced in **3:10**. We cannot rashly place untested men into leadership. We must not put our hands on anyone before we can clearly see God's hand on them.

--What if we do? Then we become complicit in their ministry. Ordination, or the laying on of hands, initiates a bond of mutual accountability. *Easy and untested ordination from churches, universities, and the internet is a major problem in the church and a major factor in the pervasiveness of sinful elders.*

--We want to remain pure from partaking in other people's sins.

Verse 23:

--*No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.*

--How in the world does this fit in? I think it is proof of the naturalness of this letter. Paul is thinking about impurity, then thinks of Timothy's infirmities, and adds this personal exhortation.

--Timothy was apparently an abstainer from wine and needed an apostolic injunction to freely drink **a little wine** for medicinal reasons—not personal liberty or enjoyment.

Verses 24-25:

--Paul is returning to the issues of rebuking and ordaining elders. He knows these are difficult situations, and no one knows everything about another human.

--He is either comforting Timothy in the process and saying you cannot always see all the sin or all the fruit in another life, or he is looking toward the end of it all, where Christ makes everything right.

--I think this is another of those "both and" situations. No sin shall be hidden, and neither shall a single good work! All our "secret lives" will be brought into the light, and we will either be judged or rewarded accordingly.

Chapter 6

Verses 6:1-2:

--(1) *Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed.*

--This is not Paul's endorsement of slavery. He clearly condemned slave traders in **1:10** and spoke clearly in numerous other passages.

--First, Paul seems to be thinking of slaves with unsaved masters.

--With this command, Paul is simply acknowledging the reality people lived in. Timothy needed to know how to speak to those who were going to be slaves all their lives!

--What hope? What purpose? What meaning could they have in slavery? Paul makes it clear that their lives could still be a witness to the name and doctrine of Jesus Christ.

--We cannot fight sin with sin. Christ didn't. God's name, God's teaching, and God's glory are on the line. Our freedom is not. It is secure in Christ Jesus.

--(2) *And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved.* -

--Second, Paul addresses slaves and believing masters. In this scenario, as in Philemon, Paul insists on old societal relationships (master/slave) being regulated by new principles. Those of new ties in the family of God (***because they are brethren***) and those of new love in Spirit (***believers and beloved***).

--If those new creation principles were lived out, he didn't need to say anything else. The situation would resolve itself properly.

--*Teach and exhort these things.*