

## I Timothy 5, Sermon #2

I Timothy 5

We began a series last time dealing with the different groups of people in the local church.

- First in verses 1-2, we got the general overriding principle of how to treat each other – we are to treat each other **like family**.
- Now in verse 3, we begin to deal with the widows within the congregation.

Specifically vs. 3-10 – older widows

Vs. 11-16 – younger widows

The instruction given in the Word of God is very practical. It uses a whole lot of common sense and is not moved by feelings.

Christians are known to be tenderhearted, sometimes to the point of being gullible.

There are a lot of people today who have their hands out to us. We need to be very careful.

The early church took care of widows, but they didn't do it in some haphazard, sentimental way. The deacons were to make an investigation to see who were truly needy.

I Timothy is a manual for church conduct – it teaches us how to deal with needy people.

I have entitled today's message "Taking Care of Our Own" – Part 1

I Timothy 5:3

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word

I Timothy 5:3-10

Let us pray. / You may be seated.

## “Taking Care of Our Own” (Part 1)

The word “widow” occurs eight times in this passage

The whole passage is permeated with it.

This passage begins with these words “honor widows that are widows indeed” and ends with them – vs. 16

Now, what does that mean?

- The whole point of this passage is to establish which widows may be given regular financial support and physical help from the church?

The church cannot support all widows who ask for assistance.

God gives the criteria for determining what widows the church should support

This whole passage revolves around establishing what widows are **widows indeed**, or what I would say, widows in need.

The first point that is made in verse 3 is that the church is to provide material help to widows.

Vs. 3 says, “Honor widows” – this means more than just respect.

- The word has reference to material help.
- It encompasses meeting needs, including financial ones.

Let me show you another place in this same chapter where it’s used.

Look at verse 17 – double what? Honor

Do you know what he’s talking about? vs. 18

This refers to material goods.

The elder who labors is to be taken care of.

Honoring widows is talking about helping widows.

Look at vs. 9

- Take and enroll these qualified widows
- Literally, put their name on the list.

Evidently, the church had a roster of names – where ladies were given a stipend out of the church – they were watched over and cared for.

From the beginning of its ministry, the church had a concern for believing widows.

Can you think of a passage in the New Testament where this was going on?

- Acts 6 – the church at Jerusalem and there was a division because some of the widows were being overlooked.

Acts 6:1

Acts 9:39 – Dorcas

God's special care for the widows is a recurring theme in the Bible – people who take advantage of widows, God will deal with severely.

It was only right that the local church show compassion to these women who were in need.

★However, the church must be careful not to waste its resources on people who really are not in need.

Whether we like to admit it or not, there are people that milk local churches or family members, while they themselves refuse to work or use their own resources wisely.

As long as they can get handouts, why bother to go to work?

II Thessalonians 3:10, “. . . if any would not work, neither should he eat.”

“Widow” describes a woman whose husband is dead.

- This word could also mean "bereft," "robbed," "having suffered loss," or "left alone."
- The word does not speak of how a woman was left alone, it merely describes the situation.
- It is broad enough to encompass those who lost their husbands through death, desertion, divorce, or imprisonment.

The responsibility of the church thus extends to all qualifying women who really have a need – vs. 3

Let's establish now a first principle of benevolent help/good will or charity.

- Who do we help with funds and physical labors? Those who are of true necessity – truly deserted.

Folks, we should apply that in our church to any need that is under consideration:

- Is this truly a necessity?
- Is this person truly bereft of all possible means?

Now, God gives us four considerations that we must take into account so that we can determine true necessity.

God listed qualifications a widow must meet if she is to be regularly supported by the church.

### **First, the family consideration**

In vs. 4-8 – we have the family consideration.

- Vs. 4 – the word “nephews” could refer to grandchildren or to any relative.
- Let them be responsible.
- Any relatives are responsible for care first.

Keep in mind we are dealing with people who are going to be provided for out of the church funds.

Before a church would commit itself, we need to see if there are any family members who should be doing this.

Oftentimes, the church steps in and covers the relatives' responsibility – I've had requests and I ask – and then I call

The investigation should determine whether the widow in question has children.

- Why aren't they supporting her?
- Does she have grandchildren? They have a responsibility toward her.

★This was God's method, and it is still God's method.

Widows with **children or grandchildren** are to receive support from them, not the church. The family has the primary responsibility for its own.

★Why is it necessary that you and I take care of our relatives? ★ **KEY**

Well, there are three reasons in this text.

**#1** – We need to learn to show our piety at home – first – vs. 4

- First means chiefly.

What is this **piety**?

If a son or daughter is going to call himself a Christian, he has to show himself Godly in this first realm of responsibility.

A widow's relatives must **first learn to practice their faith, their reverence to God, their piety – in regards to their own family.**

Godliness begins in one's own family.

Taking care of the family demonstrates godliness.

**Secondly, in vs. 4** – We need to **requite** our parents – to repay our debt to our parents – the need has reversed. It is repayment – we are giving back to our parents.

For some of us, that means we will put diapers on our parents.

Believers are commanded **to make repayment to their ancestors** (progeny)

We owe a debt to those who brought us into the world, clothed us, fed us, housed us, supported us, and loved and nurtured us.

Honor thy father and thy mother.

Caring for a mother in the time of her need is but a small return for all she has done.

Dillon Living Center – How long have you been here? – Couple of days – My kids put me here. My children, grandchildren – never visit. Quite frankly – many people are abandoned!

The third reason we are to take care of our family members – in vs. 4 is “This is good and acceptable to God.”

There is only one other place in the New Testament to use this particular phrase, I Timothy 2:3.

- Praying for lost people.

The Bible is saying we need to take care of our parents, seeing that their needs are met.

That is acceptable to God at the same level as praying for the salvation of lost people.

**This is acceptable in the sight of God.**

The phrase carries a heavy responsibility, since it makes it obvious that this is a matter of priority for every child of God.

★ No one can ever question what God requires in this area.

In our family, there is someone – aunt – with no immediate family.

- Do you and I have a responsibility before God for the family member? We do.

This is the first demonstration of our faith in God.

- This is acceptable to God for us to do this and God will provide for us to do this.

It is very easy for us to forget that in a day when our government provides so much for people.

This passage does not say anything about the government providing for people.

- We must never think – well, the government will provide for my grandma or my parents and wash our hands of the responsibility.
- It is our responsibility to make sure they are provided for.

They may have a pension or Social Security – but we must make sure their needs are really met.

The first criterion for determining true necessity is whether she has family.

So, first of all, family takes care of family – First Principle.

What if her relatives won't take care of her?

Well, the Bible deals with that – it's in vs. 8 – and we will get to that.

**A Second Principle** under this family consideration is in vs. 5

- She is to be what? Desolate – she's all alone, she's mono, by herself.

God returns to the term **widow indeed** to further define **who** is such – no family

The way this is written indicates a permanent state of being forsaken and she is without personal resources.

Obviously, she is one who has no supporting family and she cannot support herself.

**A Third Principle is that a widow be a Godly believer.**

- She must be one who **has fixed her trust on God – She has and is trusting in God.**

- This demonstrates the genuineness of her faith.

The specific contents of her trust include God's promises to care for widows.

- She looks to God for her help and thus obeys the command of Jeremiah 49:11.
- She trusts that God will provide her needs as He did for the widow of Zarephath in I Kings 17:8-16 – Elijah – handful of meal, little oil in the cruse, eat one more time and then die.
- Only to such women does the church have a responsibility.

The church may choose to help non-Christian widows but the church is obligated by heaven's command to help believing ones.

Now this widow is "a widow indeed" – a real widow.

- She is "desolate" she has no one and no resources; she is a believer and
- She is also a faithful woman who prays – vs. 5

A woman who is really desolate is a woman who is only trusting in God because that's all she has to trust in.

And I want to say that God uses us to help answer such prayers.

He makes it clear that when we find a widow like this we are to help her.

This widow is a Godly believer because she continues in petitioning the Lord night and day.

She is requesting, pleading to the Lord for personal needs.

Such praying shows her total dependence on God to supply her needs.

We have a wonderful example of this in Luke 2 – she was 84 years old

- Does anyone know her name? Anna
- She lived in the Temple – the Bible says, she served God with fastings and prayers night and day



That's the kind of woman that is being mentioned here

- Does this lady cast herself entirely on God?
- Is she truly dependent on God?

Anna is a model for the Godly widows who receive care from the Church.

The church could not care for *all* the widows in the city, but it should care for believers who have a **faithful testimony**.

We sometimes do not feel a sense of responsibility like we ought to – an urgent sense of responsibility.

1st principle – help comes to those who are really in need, true necessity

2<sup>nd</sup> principle – are there family members who can provide? Are there any family members that can help?

These two principles – we can take and apply these two principles in many situations of need.

We must view one another as family members – that spirit is in our church.

It is a sad commentary on our society that the number of desolate people in need of support is rising.

The disintegration of the family not only creates more cases, but destroys the network of family support they depend on.

The loss of that support will increase the burden on the church in the years ahead.

Churches will have to look honestly and carefully at how much money they are spending on activities that have no Biblical mandate because such activities burn money that is then not available for widows indeed!

## **Taking Care of Our Own**

We have many principles and lessons to come on this subject.

## **Let Us Stand for Closing Invitation**

How do these principles apply to Christians today?

- Certainly we must honor our parents and grandparents and seek to provide for them if they have needs.

Not every Christian family is able to take in another member, and not every widow wants to live with her children.

Where there is sickness or handicap, professional care is necessary, and perhaps this cannot be given in a home.

Each family must decide what God's will is in the matter, and no decision is easy.

The important thing is that believers show love and concern and do all they can to help each other.

Folks, we are learning in I Timothy 5 about God's insurance program for the needy.

But you have to be a believer to be enrolled in it.

Are you saved? Are you sure?

God provides – even for our sin problem – shed blood of Jesus on . . . .

The supreme example of loving care for the widows in one's family can be seen in our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the cross, nearing death, He nevertheless arranged the care of His widowed mother.

John 19:26-27, relates the story . . .

That shows the importance of the issue of caring for widows.

- Jesus spoke from the cross and arranged for the care of His widowed mother.
- Nothing so clearly reveals the heart of God as that.
- While bearing the burden of the world's sins, Jesus' mind was concerned with the care of one widow.

"Honor thy father and thy mother" is still in the Bible (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3).