

# 1 Timothy 5

## Verse by Verse

# Command These Things

Introduction

Dealing with  
People  
5:1-2

Mainly on  
Widows  
5:3-16

Mainly on  
Elders  
5:17-25

Conclusions

St. Paul, imprisoned, ends the letter to the Ephesians, and hands it over to Tychicus. Wood engraving, 1886, Gustave Dore (Wikimedia Commons)





# Introduction

## Previously in 1 Timothy

- In **1 Timothy 4** we got a number of personal insights that Paul shared with his younger friend.
- These were things that would all help to make a healthy minister as well as a healthy ministry.
- Paul began with a warning - about those who will depart from the faith, opting for the "teachings of demons" instead.
- He then reminded Timothy of the things that make a good servant of Jesus Christ.
- He encouraged him to lead by example and to make sure he puts his gifts to good use.

What's in  
1 Timothy 5?

Paul's  
Purpose in  
1 Timothy 5

Key Verse

# What's in 1 Timothy 5?

- Paul begins this chapter with a few good general principles for dealing with people in the church.
- He then moves on to **widows** - those who are really in need - and give guidelines for their care.
- His final section is on **elders**. While the word could mean simply *older men*, Paul seems to mean *elders* of the *overseer* or *pastor* type.

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# Paul's Purpose in 1 Timothy 5

By giving Timothy instructions regarding people in the church, we can discern at least **two reasons** this would be important.

**1. Church Unity:** If Timothy was not careful in how he treated the members of the Ephesian congregation, it could lead to division.

- Some might complain of unfair treatment.
- Others might be offended by Timothy, and then go against his authority.

**2. Church Reputation:** When people are treated disrespectfully, or unity becomes a problem, it can easily lead to rumors, accusations and a bad reputation with those outside the church.

- We can't prevent false accusations, but we should prevent real ones, the kind that stick. These kind deeply affect public opinion.

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## **1 Timothy 5:21**

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality.

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St. Paul, imprisoned, ends the letter to the Ephesians, and hands it over to Tychicus. Wood engraving, 1886, Gustave Dore (Wikimedia Commons)







## Dealing with People 5:1-2

- Timothy is in charge, but that authority is not tyrannical.
- Paul mentions four different groups in these two short verses. They are:
  1. Older men
  2. Younger men
  3. Older women
  4. Younger women
- The key principle is to think of others in the church as family members - which they are in Christ.
- This will allow for a certain generosity and respect to permeate Timothy's attitude toward them.

From John  
Stott





John Stott (1921 - 2011)

I find here good biblical warrant for a recognition in the congregation of the generation gap. True, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. Yet it seems to me artificial in the West when students breeze up to me and hail me by my Christian name, even though I am old enough to be their great-grandfather! The Asian and African cultures are wiser, since they encourage young people to address the older generation as 'uncle' and 'auntie'.

- John Stott , in *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus: The Life of the Local Church*



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## Mainly on Widows 5:3-16

- In a society without pensions and social security for older women, widows would be among the most vulnerable.
- At the same time, the church needed to save its resources for godly widows that truly had no other means of support.
- **5:4, 8** These verses remind us that family members need to provide for their own needy relatives.
- It's interesting to see this section in light of what we often see today, when some people see the church as a source of all kinds of handouts.

Qualificaitons

Luke  
2:36-38

James 1:27



# Qualifications for Support

- Age: Not under 60.
- A "woman of one man." See also 3:2, 12
- Devoted to good works, which would include:
  - Raising children
  - Showing hospitality
  - Serving the saints (washing their feet)
  - Caring for the afflicted

**Younger  
Widows**

**From  
Tony Evans**

**From  
Chuck  
Smith**

# Younger Widows

- The caution here is that a younger woman might desire marriage over commitment to Christ.
- Paul therefore encourages younger widows to feel free to remarry - but of course he would mean to another Christian.
- This would give them productive and useful family responsibilities - which is a wonderful deterrent to other temptations.

**An Order of  
Widows?**

**1 Corinthians  
7:39-40**



# An Order of Widows?

- Some Bible teachers believe there was an Order of Widows in the early church at this time. They would qualify in part by taking a vow of sorts not to remarry.
- The idea is that these women would be committed to serving others on behalf of the church and, in turn, supported by church funds.
- The language here, particularly regarding younger widows, fits that idea well.

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# 1 Corinthians 7:39-40

39 A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. 40 Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

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God calls parents, and especially husbands, to provide for their families. Men are to reflect the fatherhood of God. A man who will not take care of his wife and children lies about what God is like. Believing men should also care for widows in their families because God is “a champion of widows” (Ps 68:5). Believing men and women with widows in their families share this responsibility (1 Tim 5:16).



Tony Evans, Bible Teacher  
and Commentator



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Chuck Smith (1927-2013),  
founding pastor of the  
Calvary Chapel Movement

Nowadays we tend to delegate taking care of the elderly to the government. When that isn't an option, we look to churches and charities to take responsibility.

In this chapter Paul had much to say about taking care of those who are in need, especially widows, but his central point is that it is the role of a family to take care of their own. Thus, the one who neglects to do so is worse than an unbeliever.

If we believe in Jesus Christ, it should be shown tangibly, as we help our own.



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Qualificaitons

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## Luke 2:36-38

- *When Jesus was brought to the temple as a baby, one of those that saw him was Anna, an example of a godly widow.*

36 And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, 37 and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. 38 And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.



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# James 1:27

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.



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# Mainly on Elders 5:17-25

## Our Key Verse

Notice how seriously Paul says this. See also v. 7.

## 1 Timothy 5:21

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality.

- **5:17 Double honor** In this context "**honor**" means to provide support or sustenance. The same was true above in v.3 regarding widows.
- **5:19-20** Accusations against elders should not be taken lightly, but when elders are guilty of genuine, persistent sin, it needs to be called out.
- Paul called out **Cephas (Peter)** for refusing to eat with Gentiles in Antioch. He tells about it in **Galatians 2**.
- **5:24-25** These verses remind us that our ability to assess a person's character is always imperfect. God will judge.

Luke as  
Scripture

Laying on  
of Hands

A Little  
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# Luke as Scripture

2 Peter  
3:15-16

- In **5:18**, Paul quotes two other verses.

**Deuteronomy 25:4** *You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.* (Also **1 Cor. 9:9-10**)

**Luke 10:7** *And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for **the laborer deserves his wages**. Do not go from house to house.* (Similar parallel in **Matt. 10:10**)

- **Luke** would have been written by this time.



## 2 Peter 3:15-16

15 And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, **as they do the other Scriptures.**

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# Laying on of Hands

Acts 13:2-3

**5: 22** *Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure.*

- In context, this means publicly dedicating a person for a specific ministry.
- Jesus also did this at times when healing people.
- The general thought here is that it is easier and more uplifting to ordain someone than to "unordain" them.
- Therefore, it is wiser to exercise caution up front.
- This goes along with allowing time for elders and deacons to be tested first.



# Acts 13:2-3

2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then after fasting and praying **they laid their hands on them** and sent them off.

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# A Little Wine?

Ephesians  
5:17-19

- **5:23** (No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.)
- Regarding overseers in **3:3** ... *not a drunkard* ...
- Regarding deacons in **3:8** ... *not addicted to much wine* ...
- The Bible draws a sharp line between *consuming alcohol*, which is allowed, and *abusing alcohol*, which is not - and is condemned in the strongest terms.
- What about other drugs that offer *a high* and also have addictive properties?
- It would seem these would be off limits for the same reason.



# Ephesians 5:17-19

17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,

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# Conclusions

- Paul began this chapter with a few good general principles for dealing with people in the church.
- The main point is that we treat other Christians as family.
- He then moves on to **widows** - those who are really in need - and give guidelines for their care.
- Families should take care of their needy members first.
- His final section is on **elders**, as in **overseers**. They need to be treated with respect, paid if possible, but held to the same standards as everyone else.
- We should not appoint anyone to such a leadership role too quickly.

From John  
Stott

From  
Warren  
Wiersbe

Key Verse

A Final  
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John Stott (1921 - 2011)

Conscientious elders should receive both respect and remuneration, both honour and an honorarium.

Paul took it for granted that the pastorate was a stipendiary ministry. As in Old Testament days the priests were supported 'so that they could devote themselves to the Law of the LORD', so in New Testament days pastors should be supported so that they can devote themselves to the work of the gospel.

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Warren Wiersbe  
(1929 - 2019),  
pastor and Bible  
teacher.

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!)



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# A Final Prayer

Dear Father in Heaven,

- Thank you for this godly wisdom and clear instruction that we have from the pen of Paul.
- As a church we truly desire to have compassion on those in need, and at the same time be wise in our distribution of the resources you have given to us.
- And let us always be ready to honor those who are deserving of honor. Give your church pastors and teachers who will work hard in preaching and teaching.
- Make us a church that multiplies disciples who will multiply disciples themselves.
- In Christ, Amen



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