

1 TIMOTHY

Lesson 6 w/Answers

1 Timothy 5:1-25

In this lesson, Paul provides Timothy instructions regarding how we are to behave as part of the church body. He specifically calls out the behavior and treatment of older men and widows. He also provides some criteria for choosing church elders of the church, and he even provides some personal advice to Timothy himself.

As we read through 1 Timothy Chapter 5, consider that Paul is addressing issues of the day in Ephesus. His instructions to Timothy not only provide us practical teaching, but they also provide us with a look at how society back then was behaving—such that we are able contrast their behavior with how Christ intended the body of the church (made up of Christ’s followers) to behave.

Read 1 Timothy 5:1-25 and consider the following:

1. Focusing on 1 Timothy 5:1-2, list below the specific Ephesian behaviors that Paul is correcting.
 - a. ANSWER: It is clear from these verses that the Ephesians—especially the men—were treating older men harshly and with little, if any, respect. Paul admonishes them that they should instead be treated as fathers. Furthermore, younger men were to be treated as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters. The common theme is that we are to respect one another regardless of age or gender; and clearly, we can see that was not the accepted norm in Ephesus. Paul is bringing this to Timothy’s attention so that he can provide proper instruction to the new believers from the perspective of living a life that honors Christ. When we treat others harshly or with disrespect, we are actually treating one of God’s creations harshly and with disrespect. Paul wanted Timothy, and us, to recognize something new—that all people, not just the men of the city, were to be treated equally and respectfully, with love and patience.
2. In 1 Timothy 5: 2-6 Paul addresses widows. Have you ever considered what it would be like to be a widow or even a widower? I know that several of you who study with us could show all of us a lot about living the life of a widow. Widows, especially in Timothy’s day, had a very tough time. With little means of independent financial support, in need of emotional support, and facing the world seemingly alone, widows were generally pushed aside. Seen as a burden to their family as well as to society, widows struggled just to make it from one day to the next. (The book of Ruth will give you real insight into the plight of the widow.) Paul now addresses the case for the widows in Ephesus, and instructs Timothy and the church regarding how they should be ministering to them. Read the following verses and list the instructions contained therein:
 - a. 1 Timothy 5:3
 - i. ANSWER: We are to ensure we do not overlook widows in need, which also implies we are to help them meet whatever need they may have.
 - b. 1 Timothy 5:4
 - i. ANSWER: However, Paul also tells them that if a widow has immediate family members, they should be the ones to take care of her and help meet her needs. Clearly the family is the primary one responsible for them. Correspondingly, we should not avoid this duty or turn our backs on family members who are widows and are in need.
 - c. 1 Timothy 5:5
 - i. ANSWER: If you are a widow and find yourself in need with no one to care for you or to help you, Paul reminds us that God is to be your source of hope and care. He will be faithful.
 - d. 1 Timothy 5:6
 - i. ANSWER: In this verse, Paul cautions that a widow who is living a hedonistic lifestyle, living solely for pleasure, is "dead even while she lives." (NIV) Clearly, it is not God’s intent for a widow who finds herself wealthy and self-sufficient to use that situation in pursuing a life of pleasure.

3. Paul then gives Timothy instruction regarding how families are to take care of their family members. Paul tells him that anyone who avoids this responsibility is denying the faith and "is worse than an unbeliever." We are to care for our own family first; as such, we are not to turn our backs on someone less fortunate within our family. This, of course, may sometimes not be as easy or as straightforward as it sounds—especially in the case where family members are lazy. The Bible refers to them as "sluggards," and calls them out specifically in scripture. Aside from that issue however, we are directed by Paul and scripture to care for our children, our elders, our spouses, and so on. This is due to the fact that denying that responsibility makes us "worse than an unbeliever," and, frankly, does not reflect Christ living in us. Paul also gives Timothy a list of qualifications for defining which widows are to be placed on a list to be helped. List those qualifications below:
 - a. ANSWER 1: She must be over sixty years old.
 - b. ANSWER 2: She must have been faithful to her husband.
 - c. ANSWER 3: She must be well known for her good deeds.
 4. Then Paul calls out a different set of instructions for widows who are under sixty years of age. These are much different than what we just read. List those below:
 - a. ANSWER 1: They are not to be put on the "widow's list," because they are still young enough that their sensual desires are still strong.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Relatedly, they should re-marry in order to have children and manage the household. In those days, this would preclude having idle time for pursuing sensual things, and being a busy body, according to Paul.
 5. In 1 Timothy 5:17-21, Paul then gives instruction to Timothy about the leaders of the church, i.e., the Elders, who along with many other responsibilities would ultimately be responsible to ensure that the widows are being treated as Paul instructed. Paul then commends the Elders. List each commendation and/or instruction below.
 - a. ANSWER 1: Elders are "worthy of double honor."
 - b. ANSWER 2: Elders are deserving of their wages.
 - c. ANSWER 3: Elders are to be held accountable for their actions, but we are not to "entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses." Gossip, hearsay, and so on are not grounds for entertaining accusations against an elder—or for that matter anyone within the church family.
 - d. ANSWER 4: However, Elders who have actually sinned are to be corrected or reprovved in front of everyone, as examples to others.
 6. Paul then closes this section of 1 Timothy with a charge to Timothy. These specific instructions would also apply to anyone in a leadership position today. List them below, and consider if we are following these within our own local church body.
 - a. ANSWER 1: Do nothing out of favoritism.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Do not be quick to anoint or appoint someone, i.e., "laying on of hands." The last thing we should do is to hastily set apart someone in the church, only to find out later it was the wrong decision.
 - c. ANSWER 3: We are to avoid being drawn into the sins of others. This is something that can easily happen as we find ourselves in counseling sessions with those who are struggling with any number of different sins that can easily draw us in. Sexual immorality, and alcohol and drug abuse are just a few on the top of the list. If we are not careful, we can be drawn into those areas of sin. Satan is a clever liar and can easily deceive us, if we are not vigilantly on guard against him.
 - d. ANSWER 4: Leaders are to take care of themselves, both physically and spiritually. A leader who falls ill cannot lead; so caring for their physical body is as important, and they have simply must take care of themselves. Overwork, stress, and being in contact with those who are sick are all reasons that leaders can easily fall ill. Paul cautions Timothy not to avoid taking care of his physical needs
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Paul's teaching in this lesson is clear: we are responsible for caring for one another, including ourselves, and for respecting our church leaders. All of us should be reflecting the Holy Spirit living within us. When we walk with Christ living in us, we become his hands and feet. This will illuminate our hearts and minds; and it will lead us to do the right things, while avoiding the pitfalls and snares that Satan may place in our path.

Let's commit ourselves to be more aware of the physical and spiritual needs around us, and let's also commit ourselves to respond positively to those needs, in Christ's name.

Have a blessed week!

In Christ,

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