

## ***Second Baptist Church of Doylestown***

### ***1 Timothy Chapter 5***

***5/27/15***

#### ***Bible Study Notes***

##### **Responsibilities toward Believers - Verses 1-8**

<sup>1</sup>Do not rebuke an older man, but appeal to him as if he were your father. Treat the younger men as your brothers, <sup>2</sup>the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, with all purity. <sup>3</sup>Show respect for widows who really are all alone. <sup>4</sup>But if a widow has children or grandchildren, they should learn first to carry out their religious duties toward their own family and in this way repay their parents and grandparents, because that is what pleases God. <sup>5</sup>A widow who is all alone, with no one to take care of her, has placed her hope in God and continues to pray and ask him for his help night and day. <sup>6</sup>But a widow who gives herself to pleasure has already died, even though she lives. <sup>7</sup>Give them these instructions, so that no one will find fault with them. <sup>8</sup>But if any do not take care of their relatives, especially the members of their own family, they have denied the faith and are worse than an unbeliever.

**5:2** Men in the ministry can avoid improper attitudes toward women by treating them as family members. If men see women as fellow members in God's family, they will protect them and help them grow spiritually.

**5:3** Paul wanted Christian families to be as self-supporting as possible. He insisted that children and grandchildren take care of the widows in their families (5:4); he suggested that younger widows remarry and start new families (5:14); he ordered the church not to support lazy members who refused to work (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Nevertheless, when necessary, the believers pooled their resources (Acts 2:44-47); they gave generously to help disaster-ridden churches (1 Corinthians 16:1-4); they took care of a large number of widows (Acts 6:1-6). The church has always had limited resources and has always had to balance financial responsibility with generosity. It only makes sense for members to work as hard as they can and to be as independent as possible, so they can adequately care for themselves and for less fortunate members. When church members are both responsible and generous, everyone's needs will be met.

**5:3-5** Because there were no pensions, no social security, no life insurance, and few honorable jobs for women, widows were usually unable to support themselves. The

responsibility for caring for the helpless naturally falls first on their families—the people whose lives are most closely linked with theirs. Paul stresses the importance of families caring for the needs of widows and not leaving it for the church. The church can then care for those widows who have no families. A widow who had no children or other family members to support her was doomed to poverty. From the beginning, the church took care of its widows, who in turn gave valuable service to the church. The church should support those who have no families and should also help the elderly, young, disabled, ill, or poverty-stricken with their emotional and spiritual needs. Often families who are caring for their own helpless members have heavy burdens. They may need extra money, a listening ear, a helping hand, or a word of encouragement. Interestingly, those who are helped often turn around and help others, turning the church into more of a caring community. Don't wait for people to ask. Take the initiative and look for ways to serve them.

**5:8** Healthy homes remain the best possible training environment for children. When it comes to caring for relatives and honoring parents, children take most of their cues by watching how Mom and Dad honor the grandparents. If our children see the way we, as parents, care for our parents, they will understand the importance of such honor for us in the future. Healthy, practical honor becomes a priceless gift that one generation gives to another. Disrespect and lack of care provide harmful examples that will eventually turn on us. The warning in the verse is ominous indeed.

### **Verses 9-16**

**<sup>9</sup> Do not add any widow to the list of widows unless she is over sixty years of age. In addition, she must have been married only once<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>10</sup> and have a reputation for good deeds: a woman who brought up her children well, received strangers in her home, performed humble duties for other Christians, helped people in trouble, and devoted herself to doing good. <sup>11</sup> But do not include younger widows in the list; because when their desires make them want to marry, they turn away from Christ, <sup>12</sup> and so become guilty of breaking their earlier promise to him. <sup>13</sup> They also learn to waste their time in going around from house to house; but even worse, they learn to be gossips and busybodies, talking of things they should not. <sup>14</sup> So I would prefer that the younger widows get married, have children, and take care of their homes, so as to give our enemies no chance of speaking evil of us. <sup>15</sup> For some widows have already turned away to follow Satan. <sup>16</sup> But if any Christian woman has widows in her family, she must take care of them and not put the burden on the church, so that it may take care of the widows who are all alone.**

**5:9-16** Apparently some older widows had been "put on the list of widows," meaning that they had taken a vow committing themselves to work for the church in exchange for financial support. Paul lists a few qualifications for these church workers: These widows should be at least 60 years old, should have been faithful to their husbands, and should be well known for their kind deeds. Younger widows should not be included in this group because they might desire to marry again and thus have to break their pledge (5:11-12). Three out of four wives today eventually are widowed, and many of the older women in our churches have lost their husbands. Does your church provide an avenue of service for these women? Could you help match their gifts and abilities with your church's needs? Often their maturity and wisdom can be of great service in the church.

**5:15** "Turned away to follow Satan" refers to the immoral conduct that identified these women with their pagan neighbors.

#### **Verses 17-24**

<sup>17</sup> The elders who do good work as leaders should be considered worthy of receiving double pay, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. <sup>18</sup> For the scripture says, "Do not muzzle an ox when you are using it to thresh grain" and "Workers should be given their pay." <sup>19</sup> Do not listen to an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or more witnesses. <sup>20</sup> Rebuke publicly all those who commit sins, so that the rest may be afraid. <sup>21</sup> In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the holy angels I solemnly call upon you to obey these instructions without showing any prejudice or favor to anyone in anything you do. <sup>22</sup> Be in no hurry to lay hands on people to dedicate them to the Lord's service. Take no part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure. <sup>23</sup> Do not drink water only, but take a little wine to help your digestion, since you are sick so often. <sup>24</sup> The sins of some people are plain to see, and their sins go ahead of them to judgment; but the sins of others are seen only later. <sup>25</sup> In the same way good deeds are plainly seen, and even those that are not so plain cannot be hidden.

**5:17** Preaching and teaching are closely related. Preaching is proclaiming the Word of God and confronting listeners with the truth of Scripture. Teaching is explaining the truth in Scripture, helping learners understand difficult passages, and helping them apply God's Word to daily life. Paul says that these "elders who direct the affairs of the church well" are worthy of double honor. Unfortunately, however, we often take them for granted by not providing adequately for their needs or by subjecting them to heavy criticism. Think of how you can honor your leaders who work hard at preaching and teaching.

**5:17-18** Faithful church leaders should be supported and appreciated. Too often they are targets for criticism because the congregation has unrealistic expectations. How do you treat your church leaders? Do you enjoy finding fault, or do you show your appreciation? Do they receive enough financial support to allow them to live without worry and to provide for the needs of their families? Jesus and Paul emphasized the importance of supporting those who lead and teach us (see Galatians 6:6 and the notes on Luke 10:7 and 1 Corinthians 9:4-10). Our ministers deserve to know that we are giving to them cheerfully, gratefully, and generously.

**5:19-21** Church leaders are not exempt from sin, faults, and mistakes. But they are often criticized for the wrong reasons—minor imperfections, failure to meet someone's expectations, personality clashes. Thus, Paul said that accusations should not even be heard unless two or three witnesses confirm them. Sometimes church leaders should be confronted about their behavior, and sometimes they should be rebuked. But all rebuking must be done fairly and lovingly and for the purpose of restoration.

**5:21** Church leadership is a heavy responsibility. As difficult as it might be, Timothy was not to waver on any of Paul's instructions (and particularly the instructions about rebuking elders). Any needed discipline or rebuke must be administered without regard to Timothy's personal inclinations or favoritism. Likewise, leadership in the church today must be handled with maturity, faithfulness, godliness, and lack of favoritism. The health of a body of believers is far more important than playing favorites with someone who is not meeting the standards set forth here.

**5:22, 24-25** Paul says that a church should never be in a hurry about choosing its leaders, especially the pastor, because major problems or sins might be overlooked. It is a serious responsibility to choose church leaders. They must have strong faith and be morally upright, having the qualities described in 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. Not everyone who wants to be a church leader is eligible. Be certain of an applicant's qualifications before asking him or her to take a leadership position.

**5:23** It is unclear why Paul gave this advice to Timothy. Perhaps contaminated water had led to Timothy's indigestion, and so he should stop drinking only water. Whatever the reason, this statement is not an invitation to overindulgence or alcoholism.