

Exhorting the Saints and Caring for Widows

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[0:00] Let's take our Bibles and turn to 1 Timothy chapter 5.! Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father.

Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters with absolute purity. Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need.

But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn, first of all, to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents.

For this is pleasing to God. The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help.

But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame.

[1:33] If anyone does not provide for his relatives and especially for his immediate family, he is denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over 60, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble, and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. Thus, they bring judgment on themselves because they have broken their first pledge.

Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to.

So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes, and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander.

[2:51] Some have, in fact, already turned away to follow Satan. If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

In your homes, there are different people with different roles and responsibilities.

And those different people relate to one another differently and have different responsibilities depending on the role that they have in your home. The parents have certain responsibilities towards their children and the children to their parents.

The children have responsibilities to one another, siblings to one another. And the husband and wife have responsibilities and roles with respect to one another. And the whole family has responsibility and a role with respect to the family pet, whatever it may be.

And the way you deal with those various roles and responsibilities will vary greatly depending on which person, which responsibility you're fulfilling, which person you're relating to.

[4:05] The husband, for example, will rebuke his children in a way that's very different from the way that he, if they've broken a repeated command, he sternly will rebuke them in a way that's very different in a way that he might gently correct his wife, should she do something that's not quite appropriate, which of course is rare to ever in your homes with perfect wives.

But should she do something, he will correct her very differently than he will his children who need a stern rebuke. The way he speaks to the dog will be different than the way he speaks to the rest of the family.

The way the siblings speak to and relate to one another will be different than how they do so with their parents. And there will be expectations or guidelines, whether they're formally stated or not, that govern those relationships in the home.

The children might be entitled to an allowance, but only upon the completion of certain tasks throughout the week. There might be rules that govern who gets the favorite chair in the living room or family room during family movie night.

My wife's family has a unique set of rules. You've got to learn them, but one is the five minute rule. And that's if you get out of your chair, you can call five minutes and you've got five minutes to get it back or it's fair game.

[5 : 25] There's regulations that guide these different things that you participate in within your families. Maybe you have rules for older children who are done with high school.

They must abide by these rules or they're going to have to find somewhere else to shelter themselves. Should it come to that point? And similarly, within the church, there are different groups of people and there are different roles that they are to fulfill with respect to one another.

The way they interact, the way they fulfill those responsibilities, the way they carry out those guidelines will play an interesting dynamic in the church.

And for Timothy's sake, Paul is going to get into some of the specifics in this section on how these different groups within the church are to relate to one another. He's going to talk about how pastors should relate to their people and different groups within their congregation.

And then he's going to talk about how the church should relate to its widows, how it should provide and care for its widows. And we're going to consider those two sections tonight.

[6 : 32] And that'll take us through verse 16, which has been read for us. If we get through verse 16, we'll be doing well, but I think we will tonight. And then we'll go on from there. He's going to talk about the role of the church with respect to its pastor.

How is the church to care for its pastor? What is their responsibility with respect to their ministers of the gospel? And then there's a section on the roles of slaves and masters as well that we'll consider at the beginning of verse 6.

But for tonight, we want to think about two sets of responsibilities. One, that the pastor to his church, how he relates to them, that's just verses 1 and 2. And we'll be fairly brief there and then give the rest of our time to considering how the church is to relate to the widows that are in its midst. Much of what we say tonight will have to do with women who have lost their husbands. But there are principles here that are applicable to all. Some are widows now and face that reality even tonight.

Others don't know when you'll be confronted with the reality of widowhood. Whether it's you ladies that could one day lose a husband. Or family members of yours that someday might be a widow.

[7 : 50] It's not just an issue that's no big deal. That doesn't deserve space in our Bibles. No, it is a big deal. It's important the well-being of widows and even their souls are at stake.

And so we want to take care to see how the church is to relate to the widows in its midst. But we're going to begin with how pastors should relate to different parts of their congregation.

It's in verses 1 and 2. Young Timothy, do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters with absolute purity.

Here's some practical advice for Timothy and for any pastor, young or old. There will come a time in the ministry, perhaps frequently, when you're going to have to point out someone's sin.

They're going to need to be rebuked. As you fulfill the process that's implied in verse 11 of chapter 4, command and teach these things as you command and teach.

[8 : 52] There will be people that don't want to learn. And they'll need rebuking. There are people that won't follow those commands. And they'll need to be admonished and brought back into the way. And what Paul is saying here in verse 1 is not, do not rebuke an older man, period, end of the sentence.

Do not rebuke an older man harshly. You must be careful in how you do that rebuking and addressing these things. That's why he also says in 2 Timothy 4 and verse 2, preach the word, be prepared in season and out of season.

Correct. Rebuke. And encourage with great patience and careful instruction. It's not a command to not rebuke, to not be confrontational.

It's to be wise and discerning in the way in which you do it. And so it is the responsibility of ministers to be careful and to understand to whom they are speaking.

And so we receive this direction to be careful. First of all, with older men. Timothy is a young man. And if he's going to be effective in his ministry to men that are older than him, he's going to have to remember to treat them with respect and honor.

[10:03] Remembering the directions given to the Israelites in Leviticus 19:32. Rise in the presence of the aged. Show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord. But he's still going to have to rebuke these.

And so how is he to do that? Where's the balance in showing them respect and yet pointing out some inconsistency in their life? Well, you're to exhort him as if he were your own father. You're not going to disrespectfully talk down to this man who is older and most likely wiser than you. You're going to gently admonish and exhort him where it's needed.

It will flow out of the word as all exhortation to the ministers to give himself to the public reading of the word to exhortation. So out of that word flows exhortation. And so you're not coming to him with your opinion and what the young whippersnapper thinks is best as compared to what the older man who doesn't like his ways.

No, you come with the word. The exhortation comes out of God's word. And so it comes with gentleness. Carefully just watching your thoughts and your words as you approach him.

[11:16] And the same goes for others in the church. Just because they're younger or are women doesn't give the minister free reign to harshly rebuke them either.

The commands here extend to all of these groups to not harshly rebuke them, but exhort as if he were your father, as if an older woman, as if she were your mother, a younger man as if he were your brother.

That command to exhort them carries over to all the rest of these groups. Younger men to be treated as brothers. That is, as equals. You're not to condescend to them just because they're younger.

They too are to be exhorted and admonished. But the way you speak to your brother is different than the way you speak to your dad, isn't it? And you can exhort them accordingly. And neither do you speak to either your dad or your brother in the way that you would an older woman who is to be exhorted as a mother.

I hope that all of you men out there always have treated and always will treat your mothers with the greatest of respect. Honor your father and your mother, and that includes the way that you speak to them.

[12:23] And so, when a minister comes to exhort an older woman, he must do it as he would. Speak to his own mother. And that doesn't mean if you're in the habit of back-talking to your mother, mouthing off to her, that's not how you approach him.

He's assuming a young man that honors his mother with his words. They come gently. And younger women to be treated as sisters, not the way some of you boys torment your sisters.

That's not what he's getting at. Again, he's assuming that you treat your sisters rightly. That you treat them with respect and care and even protect them.

But there'd be a danger for a young minister with young ladies in the congregation. And so, Timothy and any young man in the ministry is to carefully guard himself against any semblance of impropriety.

Younger women can't be ignored. They need exhortation as well. But it must be done with safeguards in place to ensure that it's done in all purity. You see, ministers are to be an example of purity to the flock.

[13:32] That's something we saw in chapter 4. And here is one of those areas where they must be an example. And so, the minister is to treat each group appropriately.

Older men as fathers. Younger men as brothers. Older women as mothers. And younger women as sisters. And you begin to get the idea that a one-size-fits-all mentality doesn't work when ministering to the church.

Because there's all sorts of different people. There's people of different ages. There's people of different genders in the church. There's people of different emotional makeup in the church. There are bruised reeds and smoldering flaxes in the church.

And you can't just break that bruised reed and quench that smoldering flax. They must be approached in gentleness and love and carefulness. If you're going to preach a sermon on sin and doing some serious introspection and thinking about sin.

Of course, pointing to Christ. But you know it's going to cause people to examine themselves. And you know there's somebody in your congregation that struggles with assurance. Then you go to that person even before you're preaching. Say, look, I'm not trying to get you to question the assurance of your salvation.

[14 : 40] And you understand the people that are in your congregation and treat them accordingly. The teaching and rebuking that's done must take into consideration the one who is receiving it.

There are things that are particular to those that are younger, to those that are older, to those that are men and those that are women. And the minister must teach accordingly. I believe these instructions give us ground for instructing our children differently than we do our adults. Without compromising the importance of worshiping together. It's why we have age appropriate Sunday school classes and Wednesday night classes. So that we can teach our children as you would a child.

In simple language where these things are clear. And even try to make our preaching accessible somewhat to the youngest of children. And notice one other thing. That these are comparative terms.

It's younger. It's older. It's not just young and old. What to me as an older man might be to Pastor Bob, a younger man. And it's comparative.

[15 : 42] And so these instructions aren't just for a young minister like Timothy. But all ministers are to be careful in their exhortation of the saints. It's part of how a minister should fulfill his duties to his congregation.

Paul's given Timothy lots of stuff to give the people at Ephesus. Command and teach all of these things. Well, here's how you do it. You do it carefully. You admonish carefully when you find them straying from these things.

According to their age and gender and other situations that they are in. But secondly, we want to consider the role of the church with respect to its widows.

To those that have lost their husbands. And the issue of dealing with widows in the church was not unique to the Ephesians. The reason we've seen this, that deacons were added as an office in the church, was because of the need to rightly distribute the food to the widows in Jerusalem.

You can read about it in Acts chapter 6. They dealt with this issue in Jerusalem. Other churches had as well. And the deacons were tasked with that work.

[16 : 49] And young Timothy needs some direction. He's likely not dealt with this issue firsthand before. And it needed to be taken care of especially for the widow's sake.

Some of them perhaps had been neglected. Some who had not been properly instructed, we're told in verse 15, have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.

It's terrible for a widow. And the faults there would ultimately have rested with her. But it indicates there was some deficiency in the way the church was caring for and instructing widows.

And so these directions come to us today to guard against these things. We want to first of all see that there are widows for whom we should care as a church.

For whom we should provide as a church. And Paul tells us who they are. And the first thing to note when we consider that is that widows should be honored.

[17 : 45] They should be cared for. Notice verse 3. Give proper recognition. That's simply the word honor. Same word as an honor your father and your mother. Honor widows who are widows indeed.

Honor true widows. A widow is of course one who has lost her husband. And part of the honor shown to them will be ensuring that they are adequately provided for physically.

We'll see tonight that that provision should come from their families. And when that is not possible, the church is to provide. Given that they meet certain guidelines that are laid out for us here.

And one who meets those guidelines is a widow indeed. The NIV's translation is very unhelpful here.

Where it says widows who are really in need. That's not. It says widows who are really widows. Who are true widows. And what it means by true widows is those who fit these guidelines. All widows are in great need.

[18 : 46] And I think that blurs that distinction. A widow who is a widow indeed is one who fits these qualifications for receiving help from the church. But for the widow, there's great comfort here.

You are to be honored. You are to be cared for and provided for. Your position, though perhaps lowly and despised in the eyes of society, is to be esteemed in the church and in your families.

The fact that God has left directions regarding your welfare is evidence that His word, His promise is true. He promised. Deuteronomy 10, 18.

He defends the cause of the fatherless and widow. And when you read 1 Timothy 5, you see that it's true. He's made provision for them. Psalm 146 and verse 9.

The Lord watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and widow. And He does. He uses their families to do it. He uses their churches to do it and other means as well.

[19:51] And so as we look at these qualifications and so forth tonight, take comfort that God cares and provides for women who have lost their husbands.

Through their families and through the church for those that have no family. The widows in this day were to be enrolled and put on a list.

You see it in verse 9. No widow. One who fit the qualifications. One who is a widow indeed. It's to be put on the list. You see it in verse 9. No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is in the qualifications.

And then verse 11. As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. It appears that there were enough widows in the early church that was actually an enrollment of those who should be cared for by the church.

And I think what is in view here is full provision for these who were without. They had no other means. As we'll see, they have no family to care for them. There was no social security back then.

[20:54] There was no life insurance back then. None of these things by which widows can draw support in our day and age. No retirement funds. And so it fell to the families. And if not the families, then to the church.

And what is in view here is full provision for them. Taking the widow on, as it were, as a dependent of the church and providing for them. And for that to happen, certain qualifications had to be met. Now, we don't have a formal list like that. The situation in our day is very different than the situation in Paul's day. To find a widow that has no family and no other source of provision is rare compared to what it was in Paul's day.

And so we don't have a list. Should the need arise, here are the guidelines for us to have such a list. That's not to say that even though we don't have a list like that, that the church is not to be involved in caring for the widows in its presence.

Though we may not provide fully for a widow and take them on as a dependent, as the church did in this day, there will be occasions that arise where we can assist in their provision.

[22:04] And these guidelines, with the exclusion of one of them, I think will apply. And so a widow indeed is one who has been left alone. We see it in verse 5.

The widow who is a widow indeed and left alone. That is without family. No family to care for. And that becomes clear again in verse 16. She is the one the church is to provide for.

She is not only without husband, but is without children or grandchildren who are of an age that they can support her. She is without other family that can support her.

We'll talk more about the family's responsibility when we get to the second category. There's widows that the church should provide for and widows that they do not provide for. But there's more.

She's not just without family. She is also a godly woman. She's one who loves the Lord. She's one who has hoped in God in verse 5.

[23:01] Left all alone, she puts her hope in God. Knowing that God has promised to care for the fatherless and the widow. She trusts in this God.

She has nowhere else to turn. And so she doesn't abandon hope. She trusts in the Lord, the Savior of all men, especially those who believe. And because she has hoped in God, then she continues night and day in prayer to Him.

And requests in prayer. You see that in verse 5. Anna was such a widow. She's waiting the coming Messiah and she's daily in the temple and she's praying night and day. She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying.

She was such a widow. She's a godly woman. She hopes in God. She continues in prayer. She doesn't live for pleasure or for herself. Verse 6. The widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.

She does not seek first to indulge herself and live a life of pleasure and luxury beyond the bounds of what is proper. Her concern is for Christ and His kingdom. The godly widow, one commentator

says, trusts in God and seeks first His kingdom.

[24:08] This widow, in verse 6, lives only for herself. And the widow who's only concerned for herself is dead even though she may be physically alive. She's headed towards or is already following Satan.

And as we look at these marks of a widow worthy of the support of the church, you see these are things that we should all be characterized by. Godliness. Hope in God. Continuing in prayer.

Not living for ourselves. She was a woman, verse 9, who was faithful to her husband. A one-man woman. Same requirement that was made of elders and deacons in chapter 3.

I don't believe this means that she can only be married once to receive support from the church.

Otherwise, Paul's direction here for younger widows to remarry doesn't make any sense. What if a younger widow remarried and then she was widowed again?

Is that a disqualifier from being supported by the church? No. Here the NIV's translation is helpful. Or their interpretation that it's a woman who is faithful to her husband.

[25:12] She has a reputation for and excels in all kinds of good works in verse 10. A woman who hopes in God and isn't concerned first about her own well-being and pleasure will be one who serves.

And is known for her good works. She has this reputation because she has earned it by excelling in these things. Many things. She's brought up her children. She's raised her children faithfully and perhaps has been involved in helping other children, even orphans.

She has showed hospitality. Her home has been a place that's open to those in need of food and a place to rest. She's like the Shunammite woman who had a room prepared for Elisha whenever he passed through that region.

Eager and willing to give to those in need. She served the saints. When saints did come through the door of her house, she was known for not being above washing their dirty feet. Serving them in every way with all godliness and propriety.

She's followed the example of our Lord in seeking to serve and not to be served. She's helped the afflicted. She's given to those in distress, those hard pressed, those who are discouraged.

[26:25] She is given help and now she is in need of such help. And Matthew Henry says those who would find mercy when they are in distress must show mercy when they are in prosperity.

And now comes a requirement for being enrolled on this list. Formally to be supported, taken on as a dependent of the church. She is to be pledged to Christ and to no other.

And here is where I think this requirement would not be for us since we don't have such a list of one who is a full dependent of the church. But this woman, and we'll see that it's someone who is older, who is over the age of 60, is willing to be betrothed to Christ, to be married to Christ.

And you see that in verses 11 and 12 when it talks about the danger of a younger widow breaking such a pledge. As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, their dedication to Christ, their commitment to him as a widow, they want to marry.

They bring judgment on themselves because they have broken their first pledge. It seems that the church would not accept just any widow who said they were willing to serve.

[27:41] They had to have a track record of such. And then would make a pledge to be married to Christ. Since there is not that need in our day, at least in our church, in this situation, there's not a need for a woman to be pledged to marry Christ and then never to marry again.

But the principle holds. If the church is to occasionally support a widow who is in need, it would be expected that she is a selfless, godly woman, glad to give herself to acts of service in serving the church and the advancement of the kingdom, should the occasion arise.

And so one of the restrictions to be enrolled on this list of those that are devoted to Christ in a service not to marry again was that they be over 60, less likely to be desirous of being remarried past the years of childbearing when that desire and pull is no longer as strong as it once was.

They're also less likely to succumb to sins that plague younger women. And so they're willing and able to devote themselves wholly to Christ in a service. One commentator sums it up this way.

In short, the widow to be put on this list is an elderly, faithful, and godly Christian for whom the church should regularly and faithfully care and to whom the church could entrust, if the need arises, tasks she has already performed, things in which she has proven herself to be faithful.

[29:12] So the church is to care for such widows, women who are godly, there to provide for them and watch over them, provided they have no family to care for them.

But then a second group, widows for whom their families are to care for them and for whom the church is not required to provide.

Of course, those who are ungodly. Verse 6, those who live for themselves are not to be supported by the church. Younger widows should not be put on the list, Paul says.

This formal enrollment of those who are dependents of the church. Their need is great. Younger widows. They may have children who are in need of support themselves.

They're not able to support their widowed mother at this point. They have great need, but they're not to be on the list of those the church supports. Instead, Paul says, it would be better for them to marry.

[30:11] And in verses 11 and 12, he talks about a legitimate desire to be married. Nothing wrong with that desire. It's good. It's a God-given desire. It's something that should be pursued. And that's why a younger widow should not be placed on the list.

If she was, go back to Paul's day. Here's a young woman who's been widowed. Perhaps she has children. She says, I'm going to devote the rest of my life to the church. And she makes this pledge to be Christ's and His alone and to marry no other and to give herself.

And then she does that. She begins serving. And the church is supporting her. And then comes that pull, that desire to be remarried. But she's made this pledge to be married to Christ alone.

And that's what I think verses 11 and 12 are talking about. Here comes a man that's interested in marrying her. She wants to be married. And so he says, don't put younger widows on the list for when their sensual desires, it's not necessarily a negative thing.

Their desire to be married, overcome their dedication to Christ, that pledge that they made. They want to marry. Thus, they bring judgment on themselves because they break that first pledge. They have to break that promise to be married to Christ.

[31:16] And so better for them not to be taken on by the church to make that pledge to Christ in the first place. Or she may soon regret it and want to marry. Better, Paul says, to not do that.

And so she's free to marry. That's why I think the desire to be married is not bad. To be remarried. Paul says, I counsel younger women, widows, to marry. And so when she feels that desire to marry, she's free to do so.

Again, these things in some ways unique to that early situation in the church, but the situation could arise in our day. The other reason a younger widow should not be put on the list is because they are more prone and in greater danger of falling into particular sins.

Those of idleness, laziness, gossiping, being a busybody. Again, you picture a young widow who's been taken on by the church. She's supported by the church now.

And so she has perhaps a lot of time on her hands. And maybe she goes to different homes, visiting different ones, to be of service to them. And the temptation is to just sit and chat and fill her ears with things that are going on in that family.

[32:30] And then to pass on the little tidbits to the next family that she visits. And there's this great temptation. And for all of you young ladies, not just widows, all you young ladies that aren't married.

Perhaps you don't have a lot of responsibilities now. Your parents take care of you. They provide for you. And you've got school and maybe that's it. And that leaves you with a lot of time to talk on the phone and to text message and to instant message and to chat and to communicate in all sorts of ways that your parents couldn't have fathomed when they were your age.

Some of them like the phone. I think they had back then. But here's all this time on your hands. And Paul says that young women in particular are going to be prone to the sin of gossip.

Busy body. And you get a little juicy tidbit about your friend over here. And then so you text message your friend over here and you pass it on. It's a great danger, not just for widows, I think, but for any young lady to fall into these sins.

Solomon says, where there are many words, transgression is unavoidable. Unavoidable means that you can't avoid it. And so the more words you speak, the greater danger you have of falling into sin.

[33:47] Guard against these things. And so a younger widow then in danger, perhaps, of these things not to be on the list. And there's great danger for those who would break a pledge to Christ.

They incur judgment. Some would fall into sin and unrepented of and follow down that path. They begin to follow Satan. And they give Satan, they give the enemy an occasion to blaspheme, to

slander in verse 14.

They give outsiders a chance to look. Look at that church. It's full of these widows. But they're not godly. They're going around. They're gossips. And it gives occasion for slander. And so Paul says she must be at least 60 to go on such a list.

And so what's the solution? Should younger widows be left uncared for? No, we've seen their need is great. Paul counsels.

He says that they should remarry. So get married. Have children. Take care of your household. Be busy doing the things in verse 10.

[34 : 54] Serving. Showing hospitality. Taking care of children. And in doing this, you remove that opportunity for slander. Or you're so busy, caught up in service and good deeds that there's not occasion for gossip and these other things.

And no occasion for the enemy to get a foothold. Satan has plenty of opportunities. You don't need to give him more. And so, younger widows.

Not to be on the list of those fully supported by the church then. But the other thing is, those with a family who can care for them are not to go on this list of those permanently and fully provided for by the church.

If she has family that is able to provide support, it is their duty to do so. We see it in verses 4, verses 7 and 8, and again in verse 16.

Notice verse 4 again with me. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn, first of all, to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family. And so, repairing their parents and grandparents.

[35 : 57] For this is pleasing to God. If a widow has children or grandchildren, and it's likely that if she's over 60, she will.

Who are able to care for her and provide for her, then they must, Paul says, learn to live out their godliness. Godliness. We've learned that we should train for godliness. And that word godliness is the verb form of it here in verse 4.

They should be godly toward their mother, toward their grandmother, who is now a widow. One of the ways they demonstrate their godliness, one of the ways they follow Christ, is by honoring their mother, who has lost her husband.

And so caring for them and providing for them. Supporting them in their older age. Kids, it might seem like a long way off, but one day you're going to have to think about how to best care and provide for your parents when they are older.

Some of you here now are doing that for your aged parents. My parents are now taking care of my grandparents and my mom's mom, who is now a widow.

[37 : 04] And I'm learning by watching my parents saying, one day I will have to do that for my parents. It's part of honoring them. And Paul says here that it's our duty.

It's part of living out your godliness to care for them in need. It's coming, kids. It's part of honoring your parents. And so be ready one day. And you who are in the midst of doing it, don't grow weary in well-doing.

This is part of your Christian walk. It's part of what God calls you to. Be encouraged in that work. That you are doing what is pleasing in God's sight. At the end of verse 4, for this is pleasing to God. Honoring to God what you do for your parents. For other family members you have that may be widowed or in some other need. And again, in our day, this may not require full financial support like it would have back then.

We do have things like Social Security and retirement and life insurance. And I'm not going to get into... Anyway, we could go down a lot of roads there. But you are expected to care for and to provide for them.

[38 : 10] And it's, again, not just no big deal. Timothy, verse 7, you must teach these things. Give them these instructions so that they may be irreproachable. Not open to blame in this part of their life. Because if somebody doesn't care for their relatives.

Especially their own family. Verse 8. Then they have denied the faith. It's like with anything. If God requires us to live a certain way. And we are living contrary to it.

Then we can't claim to be a follower of Christ. And so it is true in this area. One of the things God requires is that we care for our families and provide for them.

And if we don't, then we are worse than an unbeliever. We've denied the faith. James 1.27. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this.

To look after orphans and widows. In their distress. And to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. And if you renounce these duties. You renounce your faith.

[39 : 13] We are to be followers of God in every area. Including providing for family and need. Even unbelievers do this. Paul said they take care of their own.

They watch out for their families. And if you don't. You're worse even than pagans. That know how to do this and fulfill this. And so may God keep us and preserve us from such a judgment being leveled against us.

That we have denied the faith and are worse than an unbeliever. Nowhere to care for widows and our family. I want to draw some concluding principles out of this.

One is that the church must always be careful to fulfill James 1.27. To look after orphans and widows in their distress. The church must always be careful to fulfill this.

May God make us faithful to exercise our godliness by looking after orphans and widows in distress. If we're not doing this, we're failing in our mission. And pray that God would give us.

[40 : 14] Pray especially to give our deacons help to identify and fulfill opportunities for benevolence. Is it part of your regular thinking as a Christian, as a member of Christ's church, to be seeking ways to help those who are in need?

To live out James 1.27. But not only is the church to fulfill this, it is to do it with great discernment. And that's why there's guidelines. It's set down here. That's why there's these instructions that are given to the church. That it might know how to direct us in these things. Matthew Henry says, charity misplaced.

And when he talks about charities, he's talking about benevolence, kindness, ministry to widows, orphans, others in need. Charity misplaced is a great hindrance to true charity.

There should be a prudence in the choice of the objects of charity. That it may not be thrown away upon those who are not properly so. That there may be more for those who are real objects of charity.

[41 : 18] That's why our deacons have guidelines. Not so specific for widows, but generally for how they distribute our benevolence funds. Because we must exercise discernment in these things.

If we're to exercise such careful caution in aiding those who are so clearly needy, widows, then we should be wise in aiding all who have need. And another note about providing for one's own family. It's clearly in the context of providing for widows within your family. But he doesn't just say in verse 8, he doesn't just say if children and grandchildren don't provide for the widows in their family.

He says if anyone doesn't provide for their relatives, especially their immediate family, then he's worse than an unbeliever. And so if you don't have any widows in your family, don't think that verse 8 doesn't apply to you.

This is teaching for those who don't have a husband any longer. And need care. But where there is a husband and a father, it is his duty to provide for and care for his family.

[42 : 24] And so you husbands and dads, be faithful in that. It's despicable. A denial of one's faith. A father provides only for himself. And blows his paycheck on his own pleasure.

And neglects his family. There's other ways to not provide for your family. And pursuing your career. Yes, you're putting bread on the table and there's a roof over your head, but you're only concerned about yourself. Pursuing that career so much and chasing those things down so much that your family is neglected and not provided for.

That is not caring for your family. Ministers run a great danger of this. Like it's so caught up in the ministry. And it's God's work. And so how can you argue with that?

They're doing the work of the ministry. And this has happened where ministers have neglected their families. And their families have crumbled because they didn't fulfill this command.

May God keep us from such. May He make us men who are faithful to provide for our families. And when there is not a man present, may we be faithful to take up the slack in our families for widows and orphans.

[43 : 26] May God keep us from such. I think there's great comfort here tonight for a widow or for anyone who is in need. That our help comes from the Lord.

That Christ is your strength. I trust tonight that our hope is in God. These widows Paul speaks of, they hope in God. Verse 5.

Puts her hope in God. God who has provided His Son for us that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor so that you through His poverty might become rich.

And so whether you have an abundance in this life or have nothing at all, you have Christ. And so you are rich. You have an abundance. And God has and is providing faithfully for you.

He will use the church to provide for you. You use your family to provide for you, but your hope must not be in those things, but rather in the Lord who made heaven and earth. He made you. He knows you. He loves you.

[44 : 23] He sustains you. He keeps you. And He will not fail you. He will not forsake you. God has promised it. And right here in 1 Timothy 5 is evidence of that. He's given allowance for your provision.

He's made provision for your provision. And He will not abandon His people. So may God help us as a church to understand our various roles, our relationships to one another, and to fulfill them according to His Word may make us faithful to care for widows indeed.

My Father, we pray that You would make us faithful to those that You place in our midst to see to it that they are provided for. We pray that You would forgive us for our lack of love for You.

If we loved Christ as we ought, would we not love His saints as we ought? We pray that You would give us grace to reach out to those around us in love as individuals and as a church, to see those who are in need and to help those who are suffering.

We pray that You would give us grace. We pray that You would bless those in our midst that have lost their husbands. Be their help. Be their strength, their provision. Be their hope. Sustain them each day.

[45 : 38] We pray that You would be faithful to them. We know that You will be. We ask that they might find great help and comfort in it. So come and do us good as the people of God. Make us to be faithful to Your Word, we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.