

THE LAWS OF LEADERSHIP

1 Timothy 5:1-16

LAW #11 A Good Leader Treats People with Respect and Meets Legitimate Needs

A good leader treats people with respect and then is involved in meeting legitimate needs.

As we turn to chapters 5 and 6 of this wonderful little epistle that Paul is writing to Timothy, we now turn to some of the domestic policies. We're going to be talking today on how to handle the benevolences and the distribution of funds to assist those who have legitimate needs.

Make no mistake about it, James 1:27 says:

“Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”

We're going to be seeing 8 commands in this passage.

And the first one is right here in verse 1 and it's a negative command.

V.1 *“Do not rebuke an older man, but entreat him as a father; younger men as brothers.”*

Command #1: *Don't rebuke an older man.*

Remember in 1 Kings chapter 12 Solomon's son, Rehoboam took over and when he takes over the administration, this is what we read:

1Kings 12:1 *“Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all the Israelites had gone there to make him king.”*

And the people, with Jeroboam, who came back up from Egypt went to Rehoboam and they said this:

1Kings 12:4 *“Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you.”*

Rehoboam answered, v.5 *“Go away for three days and then come back to me. So the people went away.”*

Now get this, here comes the key thought:

1Kings 12:6 *“So King Rehoboam consulted the elders [or the older folks] and he said: “How would you advise me to answer these people?”*

1Kings 12:7 *They replied, “If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants.”*

1Kings 12:8-9 *“But Rehoboam rejected the advice [of] the elders...and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, Lighten the yoke your father put on us’?”*

1Kings 12:10-11 **And they said:**

“My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge with scorpions.”

The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given to him by the elders, he followed the advice of the young men.

And the kingdom divided!

And so the command here is very important and that is, *entreat or respect the older man as a father.*

Paul became a father image to Timothy because Timothy really never knew his dad. He was raised by his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois throughout his whole life. And so Paul kind of became that father image. Now he's saying, you *treat the older men like fathers.*

“And the younger men as brothers.” Treat them as brothers

Paul deals with the opposite sex in verse 2.

V. 2 *“older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all (with absolute) purity.”*

**Timothy, treat the older women like your mother, Eunice.
Treat the younger women with purity.**

Verse 3 sets the stage for the rest of the passage.

V. 3 *“Be showing respect to widows who really are widows;”*

Command #2: *“Be showing respect.”*

**Now remember, law of leadership #11 is, A good leader
treats people with respect and meets legitimate needs.**

**Now with that thought in mind he says,
*“treat the widows with respect.”***

**When you start thinking about the word *“widow”* you come
up with some of the neatest ladies in the Biblical record.**

**Remember Naomi who with her husband and two sons
because of an economic crisis fled down to the land of Moab
and then during that horrible time down there, her two sons
met Moabit women, got married, to Ruth and Orpah.**

And then all of a sudden all three of those men died. Naomi just went through triple trouble. And then things improved economically back in Bethlehem and so she decides she's going home. And so she told the two girls to go find some husbands and settle down, but Ruth just wouldn't have anything to do with it. Orpah stayed and Ruth went with her back to Bethlehem.

And Ruth is another fabulous illustration of a widow lady who came back with Naomi and was wonderfully provided for by Boaz. She became part of the 26th generation before Jesus Christ. Amazing how God can do some wonderful things.

You know, the Old Testament speaks very clearly about the responsibility that we have for widows. I'll just take one passage to show you that. In Deut. 24:17-21 we read these words: *"When you're harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, don't go back and get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat the olives from your trees, don't go over the branches a second time."*

Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow. When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow.”

The early church was just barely formed when the first major crisis in the church is over the widows, the Jewish widows were getting the meals on wheels on a regular basis and the Greek widows weren't getting theirs.

That created a controversy that led to seven men being appointed to take care of this responsibility to minister to these widow ladies.

Let's go to verse 4.

V. 4 “but if a widow is having children or grandchildren, let them be learning first to show piety to their own household and to make a return to those who brought them up; for this is acceptable in the sight of God.”

Command #3: *Let them, that is, the children or the grandchildren, be learning first to show piety in their own household and to make a return to those who brought them up. Stay with it. Be there to provide.*

You have a God-honoring responsibility to take care of your aging parents and family. That is your responsibility, not the federal government's. We need to recognize that biblically this is the way God designed it.

Now notice verse 5. This is crucial.

V. 5 *“Now the one who is a widow [and the key phrase is the next one] and has been left completely alone [there's your key phrase] has set her hope on God and is continuing in her petitions and prayers night and day.”*

Now, you have a widow lady who doesn't have any family. She has been left completely alone.

Let's look at Anna in Luke 2:36-37:

“And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with a husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. And she never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.”

It's difficult for you and me to relate to that because we have family. We have people that we can turn to that's a source of refuge.

When Prince Albert died, Queen Victoria, through tears, made a statement that was so sad, “*Now there's no one left to call me Victoria.*” You know, that's the sad, sad part when you're left alone.

We have a widow lady that has a legitimate need. She's been left completely alone. Now that's one case scenario.

Verse 6 is the opposite case scenario:

V. 6 “*But the one who is living luxuriously is dead while she is living.*”

Now here you have another widow lady that has been provided for to the point that it's ridiculous. She has more than she really needs and now that he's gone, she's really living it up. And that's a woman with botched-up priorities

I was reading an account where this widow lady says, “My husband didn’t leave a bit of insurance.” And the other lady who was looking at her said, “Well why do you have *that* gorgeous diamond ring on your hand now?”

“Well, he left a thousand dollars for a casket and five thousand dollars for a stone. *This is the stone.*”

The word “*living luxuriously*” comes from James 5:5:

“*You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter [day of judgment].*”

Verse 7. “*And these things be commanding in order that they may be above reproach.*” That’s Command #4

What does “*these things*” refer to?

Everything that’s been said in verses 1-6.

Now here comes the key verse, verse 8.

V. 8 “*But if a certain one is not caring for the needs of his own people, and especially the members of his family, he has repudiated the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*”

There's your principle.

A good leader treats people with respect and meets legitimate needs.

His argument is, it is our responsibility to care for the members of our families first and foremost.

That word “*caring*” means to think ahead.

It means to provide by seeing needs in advance.

And the Scripture speaks over and over again how we're supposed to do that.

Isaiah 58:10-11 *“If you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always. He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.”*

Let's look at Matt. 25:34-40 when the king comes back and he rewards those: He says, “*I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited me in; naked, and*

you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me”

And the followers say, “*When did we do all that?*”

And he said, “*When you did unto the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me.*”

That is our service and our responsibility first and foremost to see to it that we take care of our own families.

Now here comes the negative side again.

Verse 9 & Command #5:

V. 9 “*Let not a widow be enrolled who is less than 60 years old, who was the wife of one husband.*”

Now in order to get on the widow list, there are qualifications for that and there are reasons for it.

And he’s going to give you three qualifications how to get on the list.

V. 9 “*let not a widow be enrolled who is less than 60 years old.*”

So #1, as you're showing respect to the widows, who really are widows, you don't let anybody who is under 60 get on the list. And we'll tell you why in just a minute.

Qualification #2: She must have been the *wife of one husband*. This doesn't mean that she might have had divorce in her background—but she, for most of her life, was related to one man. She was a one-man woman, just like we saw back in study #6 on “Character is a vital ingredient of leadership,” the man is a one-woman man. Her life was characterized by marriage, stability; and a commitment is important.

Qualification #3 is in verse 10: “*with a reputation for good works*”

And then there are five statements of the *good works* that ought to characterize a godly woman's life:

- 1. if she reared children**
- 2. if she showed hospitality to strangers**
- 3. if she washed the saints' feet**
- 4. if she aided the distressed**

5. if she devoted herself to every good work

You're saying, Wow! What a job description!

I'm saying, Yeah, look at it. It's a Proverbs 31 lady.

Five things: she reared children, she *showed hospitality to strangers*.

Now what does it mean *if she washed the saints' feet*?

It doesn't mean that she literally washed their feet but that she ministered to the needs of the brothers and sisters that came across her path.

She aided the distressed, those that were hurting.

She was always the one to get things baked and over there, to do the stuff that helped.

She devoted herself to every good work.

Now, the apostle is going to turn from these who are qualified as widows that are respected and have legitimate needs.

Now what's wrong with the ladies who are under 60?

Well, I'm glad you asked.

Verse 11 is going to tell you what the deal is. Command # 6.

v.11 “*But younger widows refuse* [you say, well there goes that male chauvinist Paul], *for when they feel sensuous impulses that alienate them from Christ, they are desiring to marry.*” Command # 6:

Now you may look at that verse and think, well goodness gracious, the Lord’s against sex.

That’s not what He’s saying.

“*Younger widows refuse*” and the reason for it— “*For when they feel sensuous impulses*”—which is as normal for a lady as it is for a man.

“*They alienate themselves from Christ.*”

What does that mean? Widows when they lost their mate, would make a commitment to Christ as their bridegroom for the rest of their lives.

They’re going to remain single for the rest of their lives and they’re going to serve the Lord in their single state.

And then some guy comes tripping along who is a widower, who is really going someplace and it looks like there is a future for her and she has sensuous impulses which is just normal. We’ve all seen it among our friends and it’s wonderful when it takes place in the body of Christ.

But she made a vow or a commitment and now because she did that, she alienated herself from Christ because she did it. And it says, “*they are desiring to marry.*”

Verse 12 explains a little more of that business of being *alienated from the Lord*

V.12 “*incurring condemnation because they have broken their first pledge.*”

They’d made a pledge to the Lord at the death of their husband to be faithful to Him for the rest of their lives and now these *sensuous impulses* have created a new situation for them.

And that’s the seriousness when you make a vow.

Let me give you some verses to warn you along this line:

Numbers 30:2 “*When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.*”

Deut. 23:21 *“If you make a vow to the Lord your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the Lord your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin.”*

Eccle. 5:4-5 *“When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it.”*

And that is all that is being said here.

It is normal for a person younger to want to be married, and so Paul is saying, Refuse them. Don’t put them on the list.

Let’s go to verse 13.

V.13 *“And at the same time they also are learning to be idle (lazy), going about from house to house; and not only idle, but also [and this is the only place this occurs in the New Testament] gossipy and meddlesome (paying attention to things that do not concern them), saying things which they ought not to say.”*

There are two reasons you have the 60-year age limit as the top point in your widow list. The reason is “they are desiring to be married.” That’s the first reason.

And secondly, they can't handle being idle. Idle hands—the devil's workshop. I mean, he looks for anybody who has an idle mind or who doesn't have enough to do in a given day, and he'll get them. And they're just doing what's normal for ladies to do, and that is, when they are idle they love to be together and talk, talk, talk.

2 Thess. 3:11 *“For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.”*

Whenever you have a *“therefore”* you find out what it's there for. We're coming down to the end of the argument.

Verse 14

V. 14 *“Therefore [in view of these two things that these younger women want to get married and that these younger women have a temptation to be idle and mess around in other people's business], I am desiring that the younger widows marry [that's the way you take care of that situation]. And then they need to be doing two other things.”*

They need to “*be bearing children and managing household affairs, giving the opponent no occasion for abuse or criticism.*”

Three things these younger widows ought to do.

They ought *to marry*.

They ought *to bear children*.

And they ought to *manage household affairs* so that the opponent, who is *Satan* (we are going to see in the very next verse), that *he will have no basis for abuse or criticism*.

Verse 15

V. 15 And here is the tragedy and the reason.

“For already certain ones have been turned aside after Satan.”

Some have already been eaten up in this situation and been deeply hurt.

Now there are some differences of opinion about verse 16.

v.16 “If a certain person who is a believer is having widows, let him be taking care of them and let not the church be burdened, in order that it may give assistance to those who are truly widows.”

In the Greek language he, she, and it all have the same ending on the form.

This could be either a he or a she here.

So here is a scenario, there's a lady who has a lot of widow friends. And she has been cared for and blessed in her life and she can take the responsibility to meet the needs of these widow friends of hers by some means of creative subsistence, either by providing a home or some other means of support so that the church isn't burdened with that. So I would translate it like this: If she [and let's put Lydia there. She's a very prominent businesswoman in Philippi who was very successful.] If Lydia, who is a believer, is having widow friends, let her be taking care of them. She can help with that. *And let not the church be burdened [purpose] in order that it may give assistance to those who are truly widows.*

A good leader is a person who shows respect to people and meets legitimate needs.

Now command #7 and command #8 are there, in verse 16.

Command #7: *“Let her be taking care of them.”*

Command #8: *“Let not the church be burdened.”*

Actually, those domestic policies go back to verse 3:

“Be showing respect to widows who really are widows.”

There are 10 lessons that come out of this study.

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

Lesson #1: It is the responsibility of Christian leadership to treat the older man with respect in the body of Christ.

Lesson #2: Widows are to be shown respect in the congregation. This means honor and provision as necessary.

Lesson #3: It is the responsibility of one's family to help meet the needs of the other members of the family.

Lesson #4: Widowhood is no excuse for living a life of luxury.

Lesson #5: A good leader treats people with respect and meets legitimate needs.

Lesson #6: The widow who qualifies has been characterized by a ministry in her earlier years.

Lesson #7: Paul says sexual desires and idleness disqualify, for the most part, younger widows.

Lesson #8: It is so easy to fall into the hands of Satan when we are experiencing unmet desires.

Lesson #9: Younger widows are to be marrying, bearing children, and managing household affairs.

Lesson #10: It is necessary for our witness to the outside world to be above reproach in these matters.

STUDIES IN THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

PART II - 1 TIMOTHY 4-6

"The Laws of Leadership"

Key verse 4:12: *"Let no one look down on you (think little of) because you are young; but keep on becoming an example of the believers in word, in behavior, in love, in faith, in purity."*

LAW NUMBER ELEVEN - A Good Leader Treats People with Respect and Meets Legitimate Needs

1 Timothy 5:1-16

Key verse 5:8

Notes

v. 1 Do not rebuke an older man, but entreat him as a father; younger men as brothers,
v. 2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all (with absolute) purity.
v. 3 Be showing respect to widows who really are widows;
v. 4 but if a widow is having children or grandchildren, let them be learning first to show piety to their own household and to make a return to those who brought them up; for this is acceptable in the sight of God.
v. 5 Now the one who is a widow and has been left completely alone has set her hope on God and is continuing in her petitions and prayers night and day.
v. 6 But the one who is living luxuriously is dead while she is living.
v. 7 And these things be commanding in order that they may be above reproach.
v. 8 But if a certain one is not caring for the needs of his own people, and especially the members of his family, he has repudiated the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.
v. 9 Let not a widow be enrolled who is less than 60 years old, who was the wife of one husband,
v. 10 with a reputation for good works, if she reared children, if she showed hospitality to strangers, if she washed the saints' feet, if she aided the distressed, if she devoted herself to every good work.
v. 11 But younger widows refuse, for when they feel sensuous impulses that alienate them from Christ, they are desiring to marry,
v. 12 incurring condemnation because they have broken their first pledge.
v. 13 And at the same time they also are learning to be idle (lazy), going about from house to house; and not only idle, but also gossipy and meddlesome (paying attention to things that do not concern them), saying things which they ought not to say.
v. 14 Therefore, I am desiring that the younger widows marry, be bearing children, be managing household affairs, giving the opponent no occasion for abuse (criticism);
v. 15 for already certain ones have been turned aside after Satan.
v. 16 If a certain person who is a believer is having widows, let him be taking care of them and let not the church be burdened, in order that it may give assistance to those who are truly widows.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Read 1 Timothy 5:1-16 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.**
- 2. How does Paul tell Timothy to treat his fellow men, according to verse 1?**
- 3. How does Paul tell Timothy to treat the opposite sex, according to verse 2?**
- 4. In what two ways does Paul characterize a person who does not care for the needs of his family, according to verse 8?**
- 5. List the seven ways Paul characterizes a widow who is qualified to receive support from the church.**
- 6. Why is the church to reject younger widows, according to verse 11?**
- 7. What is Paul's three-fold desire for the younger widows, according to verse 14?**
- 8. What has happened to some of the younger widows, according to verse 15?**
- 9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?**
- 10. What lesson have you learned from this study?**