

STUDIES IN 1 TIMOTHY

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

1 Timothy 5:1-16

Key Verse 5:8: "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."

TEXT:

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.

INTRODUCTION:

(Life's Not Fair but God Is Good by Robert H. Schuller)

The tornado had swept up the house, the barn and all the other buildings. Like some monstrous vacuum cleaner, it had sucked them away and dropped them in an unwelcomed heap on the neighbor's farm.

All of Dad's years of hard work had been leveled, destroyed in one fell swoop. He gripped the steering wheel with his well-worn hands. The gnarled knuckles turned white with rage. This silent, gentle man began to beat the steering wheel. Bitter tears crept across his stubbly cheeks. "It's all gone, Jenny!" he cried. "It's all gone!"

IT WAS ALL GONE! What a devastating blow! I looked at my father. What a bitter disappointment! Disappointed? Yes! Discouraged? Definitely not. Disappointments are life's realities. Discouragement is a human reaction.

Dad was not about to take this set-back lying down. He refused to be discouraged. Instead, he chose to be challenged. He still had fight left in him. Sure, it was all gone. ALL GONE! But we were not done in! We still had recovery power within us.

We managed to find shelter that night with relatives. Then we heard about a house in town that was being demolished. It was being cleared to make way for a new one.

The owners said we could have the materials if we would take the house apart and clear the lot for the new building.

What a deal! No ball and chain for us! We carefully pried one board from another. We peeled off the wood siding, one plank at a time. The studs and beams were carefully saved, and then we extracted and straightened every nail. Those salvaged supplies built a new house on the same farm where the original house had stood.

ALL GONE! BUT NOT DONE IN! The new house served Mom and Dad well until my older brother Henry got married. Then, as is the custom in those parts, my parents moved to town to allow Henry and his wife a chance to take over the farm. The newlyweds lived in that house for forty years!

ALL GONE? Perhaps! BUT NOT DONE IN!
DISAPPOINTED? Absolutely!
BUT NOT DEFEATED!

pp. 82-83

Life's not fair--why is it that way? "Why do bad things happen to good people?" is a question often raised. My answer? That's the wrong question. It's wrong because no one knows the answer. "Why" is the question God never will answer. When we ask "Why" we don't want an explanation--we want an argument. We want to argue--we don't want to accept. Life's unfair--that's a given--not a debate.

Likewise, God never answers the questions that begin with "When?" Such as, "When will this injustice cease? When will I be treated fairly?" Again and again in the Old Testament the people of God, in their suffering, cried out, "How long, oh Lord? Before You deliver us?" And never--never did God answer.

Ask smart questions, like, "What" will I do about this? Like: "What" are my options? Like: "What" do I have left? Like: "How" shall I respond? Will my reaction to what's happened make matters better or worse? Will it attract strong and good support? Can I turn this obstacle into an opportunity? Is there some good that could possibly come out of this bad scene? Is this a final defeat--or a temporary setback? Am I "finished"? If so, I'll choose the final finish--with a glow!
pp. 248-49

"Don't quit. Don't split. Just sit. Wait. God will outlive, outlast, and outperform your opponent."
p. 256

(How to Handle Adversity by Charles Stanley)

The reason so many of us struggle so intensely with adversity is that we have yet to adopt God's perspective and priorities. As you read the lives of biblical characters, you will notice quickly that their stories do not end with, "And they lived happily ever after." Oftentimes, their stories seem to end just the opposite way. Moses died in the desert just a few miles from the Promised Land. Paul, according to tradition, was beheaded by Nero. Many of the disciples were martyred.
p. 70

Since adversity is God's most effective tool insofar as spiritual growth is concerned, the degree to which we desire to grow spiritually corresponds to our ability to handle adversity successfully. Men or women who are only marginally interested in maturing as Christians will have a difficult time with adversity. Their tendency will be to blame God and become bitter. Instead of seeing adversity as something God is trying to do for them, they will see it as something He is doing to them. It is all a matter of priority and perspective.
p. 73

(Lincoln on Leadership: Executive Strategies for Tough Times by Donald T. Phillips)

One case in point occurred when Lincoln first showed his cabinet the original draft of the Emancipation Proclamation. After he had finished reading, Secretary Chase was bold enough to break the silence with a few suggested changes, and eventually all the members had their shot at his document. Lincoln said:

Gentlemen, this reminds me of the story of the man who had been away from home, and when he was coming back was met by one of his farm hands, who greeted him after this fashion: "Master, the little pigs are dead, and the old sow's dead, too, but I didn't like to tell you all at once."
p. 159

We are considering "The Laws of Leadership" in our study of 1 Timothy and now we come to LAW #11:

"A Good Leader Treats People with Respect and Meets Legitimate Needs" - 5:1-16

J. Vernon McGee says:

Both chapters 5 and 6 will deal with this very practical matter of the duties of officers in the church. This gets right down to the nitty-gritty of church life today. There is nothing romantic in this, but it is very realistic and meaningful for us.
p. 451

Guthrie observes:

Almost the whole of the remainder of the Epistle contains specific directions to Timothy to assist him in dealing with various classes of people within the Church. It may seem surprising that so much attention is given to the problem of widows, but no doubt this was a constant source of anxiety in the early Church as Acts vi shows. Since they were recipients of the Church's bounty it was fitting that careful regulations should govern their selection.
p. 99-100

Wiersbe says:

The first problem the early church faced was also a modern one: A group of church members was neglected by the ministering staff (Acts 6). I once heard a certain pastor described as "a man who is invisible during the week and incomprehensible on Sunday." Again, somebody in his congregation was feeling neglected.

Then Paul instructed Timothy how to minister to specific groups in his church.
p. 63

The apostle Paul in his letter to young Timothy is now dealing with DOMESTIC POLICIES:

how to handle the benevolences,

and the distribution of funds to assist those who have legitimate needs.

James 1:27

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

v. 1 Do not rebuke an older man, but entreat him as a father; younger men as brothers,

There are going to be 8 COMMANDS in our passage. The 1st one here from the pen of the apostle is a NEGATIVE COMMAND:

COMMAND #1:

"DO NOT REBUKE AN OLDER MAN."

Hendriksen says:

In the course of his pastoral work Timothy will at times have to correct the faults of certain church-members. These individuals can be distinguished as to age and sex: old(er) man, young(er) men; old(er) women, young(er) women. The comparative idea (older instead of old; younger instead of young) has almost vanished.

None of these must be treated harshly, least of all the senior members of the congregation.
p. 165

J. Vernon McGee says:

Timothy was a young man, and he needed to be very tactful in his relationship with these older men in the church. In other words, he was not to take the position of a know-it-all or of a dictator over these older men. He was to encourage them and have a word privately with them if he thought it was necessary.
p. 451

Barclay says:

To age there must always be given the respect and the affection which are due to those who have lived long and fared far upon the pathway of life and of experience. There is a famous French phrase which says with a sigh: "If youth but had the knowledge, if age but had the power." But when there is mutual respect and affection, then the wisdom and the experience of age can co-operate with the strength and the adventurousness and the enthusiasm of youth, to the great profit of both.

p. 121

Barnes says:

The word elder here is not used in the sense in which it often is, to denote an officer of the church, a presbyter, but in its proper and usual sense, to denote an aged man. This is evident, because the apostle immediately mentions in contradistinction from the elder, "the younger men," where it cannot be supposed that he refers to them as officers.

p. 173

Hiebert says:

Even old age does not shield from folly. In such cases Timothy, remembering his own youth, is not to withhold correction but is to administer it without unbecoming sharpness or harshness. The verb "rebuke" literally means "to strike, beat with blow," then metaphorically the force is "to pound with words, to reprimand." The aorist tense signifies that he is not to start doing such a thing. "But exhort him as a father." He must have respect for age and admonish him as a right-minded young man would a father who has erred.

p. 90

Lenski says:

"Do not go at an older man roughshod!" The verb means to assault or strike with blows, but it is here used in the metaphorical sense of pounding with words. We shall see that even younger persons are not to be treated in that way.

p. 653

1 Kings 12:1-16

Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all the Israelites had gone there to make him king. When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard this (he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), he returned from Egypt. So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: "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, "Go away for three days and then come back to me." So the people went away.

Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How would you advise me to answer these people?" he asked.

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."

But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. He asked them, "What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us'?"

The young men who had grown up with him replied, "Tell these people who have said to you, 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter'--tell them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist. My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.'"

Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, "Come back to me in three days." The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given him by the elders, he followed the advice of the young men and said, "My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions." So the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from the Lord, to fulfill the word the Lord had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite.

When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king:

"What share do we have in David,
what part in Jesse's son?
To your tents, O Israel!
Look after your own house,
O David!"

So the Israelites went home.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The word denotes elderly men in contrast with younger men.

Titus 2:2, 3

Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,

Timothy is admonished to treat elderly men with respect, not with rough rebukes, but with gentle exhortations.

Hiebert says:

This second verb is in thought supplied with each of the following groups. The present tense indicates that this is to be his habitual attitude in dealing with all cases that may occur.

p. 90

Lenski confirms this by saying:

The present imperative is iterative and refers to all cases that may occur: "proceed to admonish (him) as a father," admonish, not assault, and do that as one would admonish a father who may in some way be at fault.

p. 653

Hendriksen says:

Instead of dealing harshly with those who need correction, Timothy must admonish. The verb used in the original means to call aside. This calling aside may be for the purpose of encouraging, comforting, exhorting, entreating, appealing to, or admonishing. It is obviously the latter thought which is predominant in the present passage.

p. 166

Barclay says:

To our contemporaries we must show brotherliness. The younger men are to be treated like brothers. Aristotle had it: "To comrades and brothers one should allow freedom of speech and common use of all things." With our contemporaries there should be tolerance and sharing. Those who are Christian can never be strangers to each other; they must be brothers in the Lord.
p. 121

Paul tells Timothy to:

"ENTREAT [the older man] AS A FATHER;

AND "THE YOUNGER MEN AS BROTHERS."

v. 2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all (with absolute) purity.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Timothy is to treat the older women like his mother, Eunice.

2 Timothy 1:5

For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well.

THE "YOUNGER WOMEN [are to be treated] AS SISTERS, IN ALL (WITH ABSOLUTE) PURITY."

This is the same word we had back in:

chapter 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.

Barnes says:

Nothing could be more characteristic of Paul's manner than this injunction; nothing could show a deeper acquaintance with human nature. He knew the danger which would beset a youthful minister of the gospel when it was his duty to admonish and entreat a youthful female; he knew, too, the scandal to which he might be exposed if, in the performance of the necessary duties of his office, there should be the slightest departure from purity and propriety. He was therefore to guard his heart with more than common vigilance in such circumstances, and was to indulge in no word, or look or action, which could by any possibility be construed as manifesting an improper state of feeling.
p. 174

Lange summarizes these 2 verses so well by saying:

It is not only among the requisites, but the weightiest obligations of a pastor of the church, to mingle with every rank and age, as each may need; yet at the same time he should see that the holiness of his office is not endangered, and that the adversary find no occasion for reproach.
p. 61

v. 3 Be showing respect to widows who really are widows;

We now turn to a very important facet of the minister's responsibility and of the church corporately, that is, its care of those who have need.

This is COMMAND #2 in the passage.

The apostle is now going to be treating the subject of WIDOWS in the remainder of this passage.

Please keep in mind our LAW OF LEADERSHIP:

"A GOOD LEADER TREATS PEOPLE WITH RESPECT AND MEETS
LEGITIMATE NEEDS."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary reminds us:

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, widows, along with aliens and orphans, are viewed as special objects of God's mercy. As such, they are to be taken under the wing of the congregation.

Some of the great widows of scripture come to mind:

NAOMI,

RUTH,

and ANNA.

When I think of widows, I think of a very special lady, my mother. She was having her 85th birthday the other day, and when I called, she said that she was sitting there at the table thanking the Lord for 85 years. Her life and example have been such blessings to me as she continues to reach out in ministry to others.

Deuteronomy 10:18

He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing.

Deuteronomy 14:29

so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

Deuteronomy 24:17-21

Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this.

When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to 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, do not 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.

Acts 6:1

Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.

Barnes says:

We associate with the word widow, commonly, not only the idea of the loss of a husband, but many other things that are the usual accompaniments of widowhood--a poor and dependent condition; care and solicitude; sadness and sorrow. This idea is implied in the use of the word employed here--chera--which means properly one who is bereaved, and which, as Calvin says, conveys the idea of one in distressed circumstances.
p. 175

Hiebert adds to this by saying:

The basic thought in the word "widow" is that of loneliness. The word comes from an adjective meaning "bereft" and speaks of her resultant loneliness as having been bereft of her husband. The added word "indeed" places the emphasis upon those whose circumstances are characteristic of real widowhood. We might have expected Paul to say, "Sympathize with genuine widows," but instead he says "Honor." It is somewhat difficult to determine the exact force of the word here. In the light of the preceding verses it seems natural to give it its regular significance of showing respect and esteem. On the other hand, what follows shows that the problem of the support of widows is in the apostle's mind, hence it is generally held that with the word Paul implies a loving provision for their needs.
p. 91

Guthrie says:

Honour (timao) appears to convey not only the normal idea of respect, but also of material support (cf. Mt. XV 5) in view of the subsequent passage. Easton points out the graceful character of this word. 'Treat poverty not as something contemptible but as deserving honour'. Widows indeed means widows with no other means of support, i.e. genuinely destitute. It was a Christian duty to care for these.
p. 100

J. Vernon McGee says:

"Honour widows that are widows indeed." The instruction given in the Word of God is very practical. It uses a whole lot of common sense and is not moved by sentimentality. Christians are known to be tenderhearted, and there are a lot of people today who have their hands out to us. We need to be very careful. The early church took care of widows, but they didn't do it in some haphazard, sentimental way. The deacons were to make an investigation to see who were truly widows, where the need was, and how much need there was.

There are not many liberal or even conservative churches who are taking care of the widows in their midst. This is a much neglected area today.
p. 451

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Paul is referring to widows who are really in need.

Lock says:

The exact status implied here is not clear. A formal list is assumed to exist: there is a danger that unworthy recipients of charity will be admitted, and the main purpose of the writer is to control applicants, to exclude rather than to include: some have already been untrue to their ideal.

p. 56

Wiersbe says:

However, the church must be careful not to waste its resources on people who really are not in need. Whether we like to admit it or not, there are individuals and entire families that milk local churches, while they themselves refuse to work or to use their own resources wisely. As long as they can get handouts from the church, why bother to go to work?

p. 64

Demarest summarizes the section by saying:

The emphasis of the section, by virtue of its opening and closing words (vv. 3, 16), is that the church is to give special care to those who are "really widows." Everything in between deals with some of the questions that complicate the matter. But the central point must not be lost in the discussion. The church is to care for its widows with a special concern.

p. 205

Guy King says:

This is unfolded in verses 3-8, and in verse 16. It is concerned with those who are described as "widows indeed"--not merely ladies who have been bereaved of their husbands, but bereft of all! Seeing that, in these earliest days of Christianity, a big proportion of the believers were of the poorer people, it would be a not uncommon thing that a woman who lost her husband, and his earnings would be in just such a condition as is here contemplated. It may well be hoped that there will be those of her own family, or those of the family of the church, who will rally round her, and see that she is cared for, and adequately provided for.

p. 89

(Never Give Up by Don Hawkins)

Every year in her Christmas column, one of America's premier syndicated advice columnists describes her role with language that seems to give the most accurate definition of encouragement--"to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable."

p. 197

("The Art of Aging Gracefully" by Thomas K. Tewell)

Agatha Christie, the great mystery writer who was married to Dr. H. E. Mallowan, the renown[ed] archaeologist, once quipped, "There are some tremendous advantages to being married to an archaeologist. For one thing, the older I get, the more interested he becomes in me!"

p. 1

(Overcoming Loneliness by David Jeremiah)

John E. Roberts expressed sentiments about aging that really do put the whole matter into perspective. I think he points our attention to one of the greatest promises of all.

They say that I am growing old,
 I've heard them tell it times untold,
 In language plain and bold--
 But I'm not growing old.
 This frail old shell in which I dwell
 Is growing old, I know full well--
 But I am not the shell.

What if my hair is turning gray?
 Gray hairs are honorable, they say.
 What if my eyesight's growing dim?
 I still can see to follow Him
 Who sacrificed His life for me
 Upon the Cross of Calvary.

What should I care if Time's old plough
 Has left its furrows on my brow?
 Another house, not made with hand,
 Awaits me in the Glory Land.

What though I falter in my walk?
 What though my tongue refuse to talk?
 I still can tread the Narrow Way,
 I still can watch, and praise and pray.

My hearing may not be as keen
 As in the past it may have been,
 Still I can hear my Saviour say
 In whispers soft, "This is the way."

The outward man, do what I can
 To lengthen out this life's short span,
 Shall perish, and return to dust,
 As everything in nature must.
 The inward man, the scriptures say,
 Is growing stronger every day.

Then how can I be growing old
 When safe within my Saviour's fold?
 E're long my soul shall fly away,
 And leave this tenement of clay,
 This robe of flesh I'll drop and rise
 To seize the "everlasting prize."
 I'll meet you on the Streets of Gold,
 And prove that I'm not growing old."

pp. 81-82

(Splashes of Joy in the Cesspools of Life
by Barbara Johnson)

You will get better and pass into the RECOVERY stage. Widowed twice herself, Ida Fisher, co-author of The Widow's Guide to Life, says three T's are essential to recovering from the loss of a loved one:

TEARS, TALK, AND TIME

p. 42

(When You Can't Come Back by Dave & Jan Dravecky
with Ken Gire)

Tragedy pushes us through a one-way door, and once we pass through it, we can never return to the way life was before that tragedy. A parent who loses a daughter to leukemia can never again go back to her bedroom and kiss that little girl goodnight, or read her bedtime stories, or kneel beside her bed and pray. A Vietnam vet with his legs blown off can never go back to the sidewalks of his youth where he skipped so kiddishly and carefree. A woman who has been brutally raped can never go back to a time of innocence when, as a starry-eyed little girl, she dreamed of being swept off her feet by some handsome prince.

We can't go back, no matter how much we ache to do so. All we can do is give thanks for what once was, for the good that was there, for the happy times that were had, for the laughter, for the love, for the memories that were shared. Then, saying good-bye to those times and to those loved ones, we can put our hand in the hand of him who gave orbit to the sun and the moon and the stars, and trust that he has a course for our lives as well.

p. 159

(Laugh Again by Charles R. Swindoll)

Joyful people stay riveted to the present--the here and now, not the then and never.

Helen Mailicoat made a real contribution to your life and mine when she wrote:

I was regretting the past
And fearing the future . . .
Suddenly my Lord was speaking:
"MY NAME IS I AM." He paused.
I waited. He continued,

"WHEN YOU LIVE IN THE PAST,
WITH ITS MISTAKES AND REGRETS,
IT IS HARD. I AM NOT THERE.
MY NAME IS NOT I WAS.

"WHEN YOU LIVE IN THE FUTURE,
WITH ITS PROBLEMS AND FEARS,
IT IS HARD. I AM NOT THERE.
MY NAME IS NOT I WILL BE.

"WHEN YOU LIVE IN THIS MOMENT,
IT IS NOT HARD.
I AM HERE.

MY NAME IS I AM."

p. 26

(Sky Edge by W. Phillip Keller)

Choice characters, fragrant lives, rare quality of life are not produced without the strain of sorrow and the suffering of adversity. Some of us will have to endure privation in personal isolation and more than likely without any public acclaim. Most of our inner anguish of soul is borne alone in the solitude of our own lives. We are not public performers, playing to a rapt but fickle audience.

p. 86

Such solitary trees, wind-twisted and storm-tossed, are not always the perfectly shaped specimens of their kind.

To the onlooker they may appear contorted, misshapen, yes, sometimes even broken and blasted by ice and hail and winter gales. Yet they own a special glory born of adversity. They reflect a unique strength that has stood the stress of a thousand mountain storms. They possess a beauty that can emerge only out of great agony and solitary suffering.

It is this steadfast character of the tough trees above timber line that has elicited my own personal awe, respect and interest. It is this unique quality of grandeur that fascinates the photographer; that excites the artist; that arrests the passerby.

Standing alone at the sky edge, the sturdy trunks, dwarfed and shortened by so much snow and ice, often appear compressed by the constriction of such an arctic climate. The branches, beaten and battered by nonrelenting wind with sleet in its teeth and snow on its wings, seem stubby and foreshortened. Here, one may have been torn away in a roaring gust. There, another may have been bent and twisted like a knotted arm held up in bold defiance against the storms of life. Sometimes the crown has been broken in a winter avalanche of snow and a new leader has emerged to push its twisted trunk into the clouds and mist that swirl through the peaks.

Still the trees survive. Still their sparse foliage reflects the upland sun. Still they stand silhouetted in royal splendor against their gaunt backdrop of snow fields, rock ridges and shining skies at the edge of the horizon. Still they put on new wood from season to season.

In their quiet fortitude lies a stirring example of the benefits of adversity. In their unusual beauty, mortal man can discover something of our Father's grand design for shaping special people.

First of all, it is of more than passing interest that these trees of unusual inspiration are not a part of the full forest of the lower slopes. They are rugged individuals set apart from the common crowd that make up the usual stand of timber. Isolated from their fellows, they are often rooted in some remote spot where they must stand alone against the storms. They do not enjoy the shelter of ten thousand other trees that might offer respite from the wind or shade from the sun.

pp. 82-83

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.

Now the apostle is going to turn to some possible exceptions to what he has just said about the provision for widows.

This 1st one has to do with children and grandchildren who should be expressing gratitude by sharing in the parent's need.

This is COMMAND #3:

"LET THEM [THAT IS, THE CHILDREN OR GRANDCHILDREN] BE LEARNING FIRST TO SHOW PIETY TO THEIR OWN HOUSEHOLD AND TO MAKE A RETURN TO THOSE WHO BROUGHT THEM UP."

(At Wit's End by Erma Bombeck)

I even adjusted to the family's nonconformer, the child who is a rebel, a loner, a renegade--the one I'm convinced the hospital gave me by mistake.

Every family has at least one. He's the preschooler with the active thyroid who gets locked in restrooms because he stayed behind to find out where the water went after you pushed down the handle. He's the one who wanders away from home and gets his arm stuck in a piece of construction pipe.

He's the one who rejects store bought toys in favor of taking the registers out and making tunnels out of old oatmeal boxes. He gets more lickings than all the other kids in the family put together.

In school he gets checkmarks for daydreaming, for not being neat, for not working to capacity. It doesn't seem to bother him. In his preoccupation for other things he is unaware that he drives his family crazy, arriving late for dinner every night, wearing his socks and underwear to bed to save time in the mornings, cutting the grass only when he needs money.

I used to worry about him a lot. Had he been a genius I'd have been properly awed by it. Had he been a slow learner, I'd have shown due compassion. But to be neither of these things only confused, puzzled, and tried my patience.

I feared for this unpredictable child who was not only out-of-step with the world but whose feet rarely touched the ground. With his insatiable curiosity and hardheaded drive would he beat paths of greatness and discovery, the likes of Winston Churchill or Michelangelo? I wanted to believe that. Or would he find his measure of happiness drifting in and out of this world, living solely off his enthusiasm, imagination, and penchant for living life to its fullest?

Then one day I saw him clearly in the lines of Henry David Thoreau. He wrote, "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears."
pp. 161-62

(Mentoring: The Strategy of the Master by Ron Lee Davis with James D. Denney)

Some time ago, I heard Tony Campolo tell the following story at a national youth workers convention. Campolo and his wife have three children. In their social circle, they are often invited to cocktail parties or mixers where they mingle with career women--attorneys, doctors, journalists, educators. Often Mrs. Campolo is asked by one of these professional women, "And what do you do?"

Her usual abashed and intimidated reply: "Me? Oh, I'm just a mother."

Soon she got tired of feeling defensive about being "just" a mother. One night, after one of these social gatherings, she sat down with a pencil and paper and wrote down what she thought was the job description of a mother. By the next cocktail party, she had it memorized. Now she was armed with a response for the "What do you do?" question.

Mrs. Campolo was not disappointed. She was introduced to a woman who looked like the cover of Ms. magazine. "And what do you do?" the woman asked.

"Well," said Mrs. Campolo as she gathered her verbal artillery, "I'm socializing two homo sapiens into the dominant values of the Christian belief system so that they might be agents for change, enabling the kingdom of God to triumph over the dying kingdoms of this world. Now . . . what do you do?"

"Oh, me?" said the other woman. "I'm, just a doctor."
p. 185

The Bible Knowledge Commentary is talking here about those widows who have lost their husbands but had children or grandchildren:

In God's economy the first responsibility for caring for the needs falls on the family, not the church, and surely not the state. Such action is pleasing to God.

Barnes says:

This debt can never be wholly repaid, but still a child should feel it a matter of sacred obligation to do as much towards it as possible.
p. 175

Barclay says:

Philo, writing of the commandment to honour parents, says: "When old storks become unable to fly, they remain in their nests and are fed by their children, who go to endless exertions to provide their food because of their piety." To Philo it was clear that even the animal creation acknowledged its obligations to aged parents, and how much more must men? pp. 123-24

We live in times when even the most sacred duties are pushed onto the state, and when we expect in so many cases public charity to do what private piety ought to do.

Hendriksen admits:

According to a Dutch proverb it frequently seems easier for one poor father to bring up ten children than for ten rich children to provide for one poor father. But even if it means self-denial, this lesson must be learned. It is certainly implied in the fifth commandment. Moreover, it should be done with gladness, in the spirit of love, as a token of appreciation for that which the children have themselves received from their parents. Joseph's genuine concern for the welfare of his father should serve as a lesson for all time: "I am Joseph; is my father still alive?" (Gen. 45:3). Note with what tenderness and whole-hearted devotion he provided for his father. And read also the words of the crucified Christ with respect to his mother (John 19:26, 27). Surely, when children honor their parents and grandparents, such conduct is acceptable in the sight of God! His promise is bound to be fulfilled.
p. 169

King says:

There is one phrase here which, before passing on, I want to drag out of its context, because it contains a principle applying to Christian life in general. It is in verse 4--"learn first to shew piety at home". In its place here, it is the Scriptural way of saying that "charity begins at home"; but, in its wider application, it teaches us that all Christian life, virtue, or testimony should begin there. It is Exercise I, a mere ABC., in the curriculum of the school of Christ--"learn first".
p. 91

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.

Here we have the one you really want to help. She is a widow who "HAS BEEN LEFT COMPLETELY ALONE."

One is reminded of ANNA at this point:

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.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The widow who is really in need and left all alone has nowhere to look for help but to God and his people. Thus, one of the marks of a needy widow is that she puts her hope in God and spends her time in petition and prayer night and day.

Lenski says:

With tender tact Paul only describes this kind of a Christian widow. He says, "she has set her hope on God," on him who has made so many promises to just such sadly bereft widows and has raised so many protections around them in his Word. Paul states how this widow sets her constant hope on God: by ever continuing with her petitions, by laying all her needs before God, and by her prayers (the wider word which includes all types of praying), at night on her pillow, by day when worry would assail her about this or that.
p. 659

HOW TO AVOID WORRY

A widow who had successfully raised a very large family was being interviewed by a reporter. In addition to six children of her own, she had adopted 12 other youngsters, and through it all she had maintained stability and an air of confidence. When asked the secret of her outstanding accomplishment, her answer to the newsman was quite surprising. She said, "I managed so well because I'm in a partnership!" "What do you mean?" he inquired. The woman replied, "Many years ago I said, 'Lord, I'll do the work and You do the worrying.' And I haven't had an anxious care since."

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

Philippians 4:6, 6

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Psalms 146

Praise the Lord.
 Praise the Lord, O my soul.
 I will praise the Lord all my life;
 I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.
 Do not put your trust in princes,
 in mortal men, who cannot save.
 When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;
 on that very day their plans come to nothing.
 Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
 whose hope is in the Lord his God,
 the maker of heaven and earth,
 the sea, and everything in them--
 the Lord, who remains faithful forever.
 He upholds the cause of the oppressed
 and gives food to the hungry.
 The Lord sets prisoners free,
 the Lord gives sight to the blind,
 the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down,
 the Lord loves the righteous.
 The Lord watches over the alien
 and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
 but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.
 The Lord reigns forever,
 your God, O Zion, for all generations.
 Praise the Lord.

Hendriksen says:

The real widow, then, has nowhere else to go! Her
 refuge is the living God, for on earth she is no one's
 dependent. She was left all alone, and abides in that
 condition. There is no child or grandchild or anyone else
 whose duty it would be to support her. On God she has
 permanently fixed her hope. Her expectation is of him
 (Ps. 123:1, 2).
 p. 169

Barnes says:

She has no one else to look to but God. She has no earthly
 reliance, and, destitute of husband, children, and property,
 she feels her dependence, and steadily looks to God for
 consolation and support.
 p. 175

Hiebert says:

In contrast to the widow with children Paul places the genuine widow whom he characterizes as "desolate," that is, in a permanent state of being left alone and forsaken. She is without children or relatives to whom she may look for support. In her desolation she "hath her hope set on God," the God who in His Word has made many promises to just such sadly bereft widows. The construction indicates that her hope is directed toward God, while the perfect tense points to the abiding character of her Godward hope. With her thoughts turned Godward, she ever "continueth in supplications and prayers." In her supplications she continually makes known her needs to God, while in her prayers of worship and communion she approaches God when worry and care would assail her. And this she does "night and day." She allows no portion of her life to be unmarked by her prayers.
pp. 92-93

(A Burden Shared by David Roper)

Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Matt. 6:34). God doesn't tax us with tomorrow. He rather "leaves us to leave the future to him, and mind the present" (George MacDonald).
p. 74

(Over the Edge and Back by Joe White)

As one dear old country preacher once said, God may not get there when you want Him to, but He'll be there right on time.
p. 155

(Jumping Hurdles, Hitting Glitches, Overcoming Setbacks
by Steve Brown)

One time Spurgeon was worried about his ministry in London and the resources he needed to maintain it. He was depressed and filled with anxiety. Then God brought to his mind a rather silly image. It was the image of a mouse in the granaries of Egypt under Joseph. The mouse was worried about enough to eat. Then Spurgeon thought about a fish in the Thames river and how worried the fish could get about having enough water to breathe.

Then Spurgeon began to laugh: "Eat away little mouse," he said, "there is plenty. Swim away, little fish, there is more than enough water." And then, addressing himself, he said, "Stop worrying, little man. God has enough and more!"
p. 146

When Prince Albert died, Queen Victoria made one of the saddest statements I have ever heard. Her words were uttered through her tears: "Now there is no one left to call me Victoria."
p. 131

(Success, Motivation, and the Scriptures by William H. Cook)

I know that he is far more willing to do things for us than we are to ask him. And that is the great mystery. Knowing what I do about God's power and God's willingness to help, I keep on struggling with myself and trying to work things out in my own way when he could save me all the anxiety and do it better and easier. I believe God is made sad at the sight of so many of us trying to work things out for ourselves. He longs to help us, but we won't let him; we won't ask him.

--Peter Marshall

p. 68

(Never Give Up by Don Hawkins)

There is perhaps no better example of this kind of divine provision than can be found in the life of George Muller. Converted to Christ at the age of twenty after a youth of excess and drunkenness, Muller entered missionary training in London. An illness brought about a change in plans, and Muller wound up as a pastor in Bristol, England, a city swept by a plague of cholera.

In 1836, Muller's Scriptural Knowledge Institute opened a home for orphaned girls--the beginning of a ministry that, by 1870, provided housing and care for 2,000 resident children. Although Muller never made an appeal for money, his children never went hungry or without clothing. By the 1880s, more than 1 million [pounds] had been contributed to the Scriptural Knowledge Institute--an incredible sum!

By the end of his life, Muller had raised almost 1.5 million [pounds] for God's work, without ever making public appeals for funds. Muller died with only 160 [pounds] to his name--but with a legacy of testimony to God's faithfulness and covenant care.

pp. 214-15

(The Existence and Attributes of God by Stephen Charnock)

He that is in danger of drowning, and hath the waves come over his head, will with all the might he hath, lay hold upon anything near him, which is capable to save him. God lets his people sometimes sink into such a condition, that they may lay the faster hold on him who is 'near to all that call upon him.'

p. 296-97

v. 6 But the one who is living luxuriously is dead while she is living.

Whereas you have the godly widow in verse 5, you have the widow with totally botched up priorities in verse 6.

THE WIDOW'S MIGHT

"My husband didn't leave a bit of insurance."

"Then where did you get that gorgeous diamond ring?"

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

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

Hiebert says:

Paul's verdict is that she is "dead while she liveth." "Her frivolous, selfish, sensual existence is not true life; it fills none of life's true ends; and, as to any real value to herself or to others, she is practically dead" (Lipscomb and Shepherd). She is alive in the flesh but is dead spiritually.
p. 93

Barnes confirms this by saying:

To all the proper purposes of life she is as if she were dead. There is great emphasis in this expression, and nothing could convey more forcibly the idea that true happiness is not to be found in the pleasures of sense. There is nothing in them that answers the purposes of life. They are not the objects for which life was given, and as to the great and proper designs of existence, such persons might as well be dead.
p. 176

Ecclesiastes 2:10, 11

I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my work, and this was the reward for all my labor. Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

Hendriksen says:

She is gay, frivolous, dissolute, pleasure-mad, "a merry widow." Whatever interest in religious matters she may have displayed at one time is now completely gone. Like the seed that fell among the thorns and was choked by them, so also in this woman's case, the word of God, to which at one time she listened outwardly, was choked by her delight in riches and pleasures. She reminds us of Kipling's Widow at Windsor with "ships on the roam and millions at home." Though physically alive, she has actually died and is therefore now dead to all higher interests. Of course, she never was a real Christian, but she used to pay her respects to religion. She went to church, and seemed to listen to the reading of the Word. Her lips used to move in prayer, and she was even emotionally stirred at times. Today, however, all that belongs definitely to the past. She is dressed in her gayest attire, and her purpose is "to have fun" and, perhaps, "to make a good catch." It is not necessary for Paul to add, "Do not honor such widows."

p. 170

Lenski says:

There is, however, another kind of widow who is not genuine--the worst kind of all: "But the one luxuriating, though living, has died." The impact made by this brevity is strong. Paul does not even use the word "widow" when he is speaking of her, she does not deserve it. The substantivized feminine durative participle is enough: "the one luxuriating." It is out of the question to supply as though this kind of a widow could be "a genuine and lonely one"; yet this has been done. She blossoms out in beautiful dress in order to enjoy her new freedom, is a rather fast lady (as White puts it), "the merry widow," and admirers give her "a good time." The word is exactly proper. It does not say that she is sensual but somewhat suggests that.

She is full of gay pleasure and enjoys the money spent on her.

pp. 660-61

This word we have translated "LIVING LUXURIOUSLY" is also used in:

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.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

She is seeking sensual pleasure. There is also a hint of prostitution here. It is wanton pleasure versus the godly life.

One need only witness the spiritual emptiness produced within those who choose such a profligate lifestyle to understand Paul's point. Such women must not be placed on the widow's list.

Romans 8:6

For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,

Revelation 3:1

And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

(The Existence and Attributes of God by Stephen Charnock)

Christ's righteousness is not offered to us to be put on, that we may roll more warmly in our lusts. The doctrine of grace commands us to give up ourselves to Christ, to be accepted through him, and to be ruled by him. Obedience is due to God, as a sovereign Lord in his law, and it is due out of gratitude as he is a God of grace in the gospel.
p. 266

One would wish that this widow would recognize her plight, and, with the prodigal son, come to her senses in the far country and make a decision to return home.

Luke 15:24

for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found." And they began to be merry.

v. 7 And these things be commanding in order that they may be above reproach.

This is COMMAND #4 of 8 commands in the passage.

"THESE THINGS" refers back to verses 1-6.

1 Timothy 4:11

These things be commanding and teaching.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

If the wrong women are on the list, their sensual lifestyles will bring reproach on the entire group.

Hiebert says:

Hence by "these things" are meant all the matters mentioned in the paragraph so far. These things were not written merely for Timothy's personal guidance; he is to pass them on to the entire congregation so that all the members concerned, being properly informed, "may be without reproach."

p. 93

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.

This is our KEY VERSE in Study #11 - LAW #11:

"A Good Leader Treats People with Respect and Meets Legitimate Needs."

Paul is reverting back to verse 4 in his argument here:

5:4

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.

The word we have translated "CARING" here according to The Bible Knowledge Commentary can be translated "to think ahead," "to provide by seeing needs in advance."

Even many non-Christians understand and fulfill their familial responsibilities.

Titus 1:16

They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed.

1 John 3:18

Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

Isaiah 58:10, 11

and if you spend yourselves in 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.

Matthew 25:34-36

Then the King will say to those on His right, "Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me 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."

James 2:14-17

What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

Demarest says:

Verse 8 states the negative side. Not to care for those of one's family and household is a denial of the faith. The close connection between the faith and such practical service is to be noted. The words of James come to mind: "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:14-17).

p. 206

DENYING THE FAITH

But if anyone does not provide for his own,
 . . . he has denied the faith. 1 Timothy 5:8

A friend stopped me in midsentence as I was making a favorable comment about a wealthy man who gives lavishly to Christian causes. "That's all well and good," he said, "but I wish he would remember his elderly parents. They are lonely and poor. He could make them very happy if he would just give them a little of his time and money." I was surprised to discover that this supposedly devout believer was neglecting his needy parents.

Paul had something to say about Christians like this well-to-do acquaintance of mine. He wrote, "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." That's strong language, and we need to take it seriously. But why is it so bad to neglect needy loved ones? First, the believer knows in his heart he has a responsibility to his own family. Second, he disobeys a direct command of Jesus Christ that we love one another as He has loved us. Third, he ignores the example Jesus set for us when on the cross He made provision for His mother's care. Fourth, he fails to take advantage of the Holy Spirit's special enabling power.

In a day when we tend to become so preoccupied with our own pleasures or problems that we forget aging parents or handicapped siblings, we need to be reminded of the apostle's words. Yes, as God's children, we must be willing to care for needy members of our own family. It's not an option; it's our Christian obligation. H.V.L.

Boast not a faith that's true to God.
 Who shows you how to live,
 If family members close to you
 Need help that you should give.

D.J.D.

He who fawns over strangers and fails his family is a fool.

(From Our Daily Bread, April 26)

ALONE AGAIN

"In this affluent, independent society, congregations may be tempted to assign the care of widows to social agencies, government programs, and secular professionals."

Every day of the year, an average of over 1,300 women join the ranks of American widows. It's not something that happens only to the elderly. One out of four widows is younger than 65, and the average age of the 11 million widows in this country is 56.

Virtually every church has some widows among its members. The sad thing is that the support widows receive in many congregations is short-lived. Often within a year after the husband's death, they are forgotten. Christians in our wealthy, individualistic culture tend to expect government-funded programs to take care of widows, but Scripture makes it very clear that this is one of the responsibilities of the church (Jas. 1:27).

The two most basic needs of widows have changed little since biblical times. First, they are lonely. One church found that Sunday afternoon was the loneliest time of the week for women who have lost their husbands, so they scheduled their "widow-to-widow" meetings for that time slot. The second need grows out of financial pressures. Because of the time lag in starting Social Security payments or processing the benefits from life insurance policies, the new widow may find herself penniless for the first few weeks after her husband's death. The church should be prepared to offer immediate assistance during this time. Money problems may come up later as well since one study shows that 25% of widows will exhaust their husband's life insurance benefits in the first two years.

Christians can minister to widows through secular organizations, such as the Widowed Persons Service, through an organized program in their church, or through personal involvement. One woman who lives in a rural area makes herself available to drive widows into town for shopping and doctor appointments, for example. Widows are not looking for pity, but sensitivity is appreciated. Visits, phone calls, birthday and anniversary cards are good ways of expressing concern. Those who plan couple-oriented church functions like banquets should be careful not to exclude widows. Widows with young children especially appreciate men in the church who will take a meaningful part in their children's lives.

"Alone again" by Wesley Teterud. Moody, May 1992. Pages 26-29.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

I am sure Timothy sometimes felt the demands upon him for wisdom and good judgment in these matters was way beyond him.

(Never Give Up by Don Hawkins)

At times I felt like the Mississippi hunter described by Christian comedian Jerry Clower. While chasing raccoons one moonlight night, the hunter tangled with a wildcat in a tree some thirty feet from the ground. "Go ahead and shoot up here!" the desperate hunter exclaimed to his companion as he struggled with the cat.

"I can't," came the reply. "I might hit you."

"Go ahead and shoot up here anyway!" cried the hunter as he wrestled with the wildcat. "One of us has got to have some relief!"

p. 8

Our LAW OF LEADERSHIP, however, says:

"A Good Leader Treats People with Respect and Meets Legitimate Needs."

(Principle-Centered Leadership by Stephen R. Covey)

Hans Selye, the author of Stress Without Distress, commented, "Leaders are leaders only as long as they have the respect and loyalty of their followers."

p. 104

As Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, the Russian poet and philosopher, has observed, "You only have power over people as long as you don't take everything away from them. But when you've robbed a man of everything, he's no longer in your power--he's free again."

p. 103

(Success, Motivation, and the Scriptures by William H. Cook)

Characteristics of a Biblical Success Image

Christianity has well remembered some of the sterling characteristics of the apostle Paul. His best known qualities have been cited for centuries.

APPRECIATIVE--"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you" (Phil. 1:3).

CONCERNED--"For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:3).

CONSIDERATE--"Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Cor. 8:13).

HUMBLE--"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints" (Eph. 3:8).

SERVANTLIKE--"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1:1).

But little is said about the other characteristics which made the man. Other things to be considered include at least fifteen personal strengths.

BOLD--"We were bold in our God to speak unto you," (1 Thess. 2:2).

CONFIDENT--"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

COURAGEOUS--"I withstood him (Peter) to the face because he was to be blamed" (Gal. 2:11).

DETERMINED--When stoned and left for dead, he got up and headed for the next town to preach again (see Acts 14:19).

EXCITED--He was persuaded that nothing could ever separate him from the love of God (see Rom. 8:38-39).

FOLLOWER OF FAITH INSTEAD OF FEELINGS--In the midst of a 14-day storm at sea, he exclaimed, "Sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God" (Acts 27:25).

GOAL-SETTER--After three missionary journeys, he still wanted to go to Rome and later to Spain to carry on his work (Rom. 15:24).

HAPPY--When he looked forward to going to Rome, where he knew he might die, he said, "That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed." (Rom. 15:32).

MOTIVATOR OF OTHERS--To Philemon he wrote, "Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee" (Philem. 21).

PERSISTENT--Two years, while a captive of Rome, living in his own house, apparently with guards guarding him all the time, Paul continued "preaching the kingdom of God" (Acts 28:30-31).

POSITIVE THINKER--"If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

RADIANT--"I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:25-26). Twenty-five times in his letters he talks of his joy.

SATISFIED WITH POSSESSIONS--"For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11). "For I have all and abound" (v. 18).

THRILLED--"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown" (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

VICTORIOUS--"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:18).

I know many of those qualities are listed in our modern flurry of success books. And I'm delighted. I just consider it important that we remember these ideas originated with someone else--someone who was wonderfully in charge of giving daily direction to an apostle's life nearly 2,000 years ago.

pp. 58-60

(The Signature of Jesus: On the Pages of Our Lives
by Brennan Manning)

This kid's life, spent mostly in an alcoholic fog, had been shredded six times. Tears were rolling down my face. I reached out, embraced him, held him for a long time, and said, "I have a word for you from your brother Jesus: Welcome home." He was sobbing and asked, "Tell me who Jesus is." I told him about my own tarnished past and the Jesus I had met in my need. We prayed. He accepted Jesus as his Savior. Light broke into his darkness. Peace filled our hearts.

Later when I was alone, the specter of canonical irregularity rose before me and I felt a twinge of guilt for not observing due process. A quiet calm came when I prayed, "Dear Jesus, if it's a fault for being too kind to a sinner, then it's a fault I learned from you. For you never scolded anyone or brandished the Law at anyone who came to you seeking understanding and mercy."

p. 141

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

Here we have COMMAND #5.

Paul is going to outline for us the 3 QUALIFICATIONS for the "widows who are really widows." This then takes us back to verse 3 in our study:

"Be showing respect to widows who really are widows."

QUALIFICATION #1:

"LET NOT A WIDOW BE ENROLLED WHO IS LESS THAN 60 YEARS OLD."

QUALIFICATION #2:

SHE MUST HAVE BEEN "THE WIFE OF ONE HUSBAND."

In other words, she must have been faithful to her husband--a one-man woman.

This is interesting because it takes us back to the reverse of what we have seen in the elders and the deacons--that they both were to exhibit the character of a one-woman man.

(The Grace Awakening by Charles R. Swindoll)

This reminds me of a story I heard recently. During a last-minute Christmas rush, a woman hurried up to a perfume saleswoman in a large department store and asked her, "Do you still have Elizabeth Taylor's Passion?" The hassled lady behind the counter responded with quick wit: "If I did, do you think I'd be working here?"

p. 253

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.

THE 3RD QUALIFICATION is:

SHE MUST BE WELL KNOWN FOR HER GOOD DEEDS.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

As illustrations of the kinds of things he had in mind, Paul cites 5 examples which characterize godly women.

The little word "IF" occurs 5 times here in the passage:

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."

One is certainly reminded of Proverbs 31 when you read a list of things like this.

v.11 But younger widows refuse, for when they feel sensuous impulses that alienate them from Christ, they are desiring to marry,

COMMAND #6 of the 8 commands in the passage is here in verse 11:

"BUT YOUNGER WIDOWS REFUSE."

Paul then states the reason for this command:

"FOR WHEN THEY FEEL SENSUOUS IMPULSES THAT ALIENATE THEM FROM CHRIST, THEY ARE DESIRING TO MARRY."

(If I Really Believe, Why Do I Have These Doubts?
by Lynn Anderson)

Bill Cosby dubbed biological adolescence as "temporary brain damage." I understand why. When our first child hit the ninth grade, Carolyn and I felt sure that she was mentally ill--or we were. We kissed a sweet, compliant, and cuddly child to sleep one night and woke the next morning to find a sullen and capricious alien in our house.
pp. 90-91

Paul is saying that they need to say no to the younger women. Younger women might be faced with normal sexual desires which would overcome their dedication to Christ, whereas the older women would have their active sexual lives behind them.

v.12 incurring condemnation because they have broken their first pledge.

The apostle now gives the reason for his command in verse 11.

Barclay says:

It is not that younger widows are condemned for marrying again. What is condemned is this. Sorrow and death might enter into the home of a younger couple. The husband dies; and then the widow in the first bitterness of sorrow, and on the religious impulse of the moment, might decide to remain a widow all her life, and to dedicate her life to Christ and the Church. Now a woman doing that was regarded as having taken Christ as her bridegroom, and as being herself the bride of Christ. So then, if she broke her vows, and wished to marry again, she was regarded as having broken her marriage vow to Christ. She would have been better never to have taken the vow. No one inside or outside the Church would have thought any the less of her, if she had not taken it. But having taken it, her duty is to be true to it, and to keep her life consecrated to Christ.
pp. 131-32

The Bible Knowledge Commentary agrees by saying:

. . . the first pledge taken on joining the list of widows wherein the woman vowed to serve Christ entirely without thought of remarriage.

1 Corinthians 7:34, 35

and his interests are divided. And the woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is seemly, and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.

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.

Deuteronomy 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.

Ecclesiastes 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.

OPEN INVITATION

A minister was planning a wedding at the close of the Sunday morning service. After the benediction he had planned to call the couple down to be married for a brief ceremony before the congregation. For the life of him, he couldn't think of the names of those who were to be married.

"Will those wanting to get married please come to the front?" he requested.

Immediately, nine single ladies, three widows, four widowers, and six single men stepped to the front.

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

MEMORABLE OCCASION

Widower to elderly girlfriend: "I seem to be getting a little forgetful. Did I ask you to marry me last night?"

Elderly girlfriend: "Well, someone did, but I've forgotten who it was!"

(From InfoSearch 3.0)

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.

Here Paul states the 2nd reason for refusing the younger widows.

The 1st is:

"they are desiring to marry."

The 2nd is:

They cannot handle being "IDLE."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary calls these next 3 verses:

"The temptations connected with idleness."

Hiebert says:

Other youthful widows, if placed on the list for support, would be exposed to the danger of developing harmful habits and practices. "And withal they learn also to be idle, going about from house to house." To relieve them of the necessity of self-support would be to expose them to the dangers of idleness with all its attendant evils. "Idleness," it has well been said, "is the teacher of every sin." In their idleness they would wander from house to house without good cause and in doing so would fall into the snare of becoming "tattlers also and busybodies." They would become gossips, indulging in frivolous and harmful conversation, and carry from house to house mischievous matters. Having no proper employment of their own they would become "busybodies," prying into the business of others which was none of their business. Such spiritual dangers Paul would avoid by his refusal to give them full support. Harvey remarks:

The inspired pen has here drawn the true picture of many an idle and worse than wasted life, degrading, bemiring itself in the filthy slime of social gossip and scandal, instead of ennobling and elevating itself in the service of Christ.

pp. 98-99

Lock says:

"they learn to be idle," an unusual construction, but found in the technical phrase of learning a profession;

p. 60-61

Barclay says:

In any event the perils of idleness remain the same in any age and generation. There was the danger of becoming restless; there was the danger, that, because a woman had not enough to do, she might become one of those creatures who drift from house to house in an empty social round. It was almost inevitable that such a woman would become a gossip; because she had nothing important to talk about, she would tend to talk scandal, to repeat tales from house to house, each time with a little more embroidery and a little more malice and sting in the telling. The best way to avoid worthless, gossiping talk is to pack life with activity and to store the mind with knowledge so that there is always something which is worth talking about. Such a woman ran a risk of becoming a busybody. Since she had nothing of her own to take up her attention, she would be very apt to be over-interested and over-interfering in the affairs of others. It was true then, as it is true now, that "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do."
p. 132

The Bible Knowledge Commentary translates the word "GOSSIPY":

It is only used here in this form and also means "foolish."
The verb form is seen in:

3 John 10

For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, neither does he himself receive the brethren, and he forbids those who desire to do so, and puts them out of the church.

(To the End of the Race by George McDaniel Cole)

A bitter word may hate instill,
A brutal word may smite and kill.

A gracious word may smooth the way
A joyous word may light the day.
A timely word may lessen stress,
A loving word may heal and bless.

Anonymous

p. 31

(Jumping Hurdles, Hitting Glitches, Overcoming Setbacks
by Steve Brown)

I heard about a pastor who was criticized because he supposedly went to a meeting his wife was attending and forced her to leave. In self-defense, he took out an ad in the local newspaper, which read:

In the first place, I never attempted to influence my wife as to her choice of a meeting.
In the second place, my wife didn't attend the meeting in question.
In the third place, I did not attend the meeting.
In the fourth place, neither my wife nor myself had any inclination to attend the meeting.
In the fifth place, I do not now have, and never have had, a wife.

p. 128

UNPRODUCTIVE BUSYBODIES

. . . there are some who walk among you disorderly, working not at all but are busybodies. 2 Thessalonians 3:11

At first reading, this text seems contradictory. If people don't work at all, how can they be said to be busy? The paradox is explained when we realize that the word "busybody" really means "a meddler," and it applies to Christians who are constantly intruding in the affairs of others. They are industrious, but only in things that are unprofitable. Their energy is expended in gossiping, criticizing, and stirring up strife.

F. W. Boreham said of such people that they reminded him of a sad-eyed pup called Towser. One day this panting canine followed Farmer Brown into the yard and fell exhausted upon the grass. "Look how worn out poor Towser is!" said a friend who had been waiting for them. "Yes, but it isn't the long walk that's done him in," said Brown. "He tired himself out by zigzagging from one side of the road to the other and getting into all kinds of mischief. He couldn't pass an open gate without running through it to nose around and see what was on the other side. If he noticed a hen anywhere along the road, he always took off after it and sent it scurrying. He would run toward every dog he saw, and bark or try to start a fight. He meddled with everything that moved. No wonder Towser's all tired out!"

Don't be like that dog who wasn't happy unless he could run hither and yon and stir up trouble. God disapproves of such futile activity, for it creates discord among believers. If you confine yourself to the narrow path of constructive Christian service, you won't be an unproductive busybody.

--H.G.B.

Stop your carnal, wicked meddling,
Set your sights on what is right;
Honor Christ by full devotion,
Make His service your delight.

--Bosch

THOT: Trouble is usually produced by those who produce nothing else.

(From Our Daily Bread, February 24)

2 Thessalonians 3:11

For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.

Paul says further in:

2 Thessalonians 3:12

Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.

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);

"THEREFORE" is going to introduce the final section which concludes Paul's instructions with regard to the church's responsibility to widows.

There are 3 THINGS that he wants the younger widows to do:

1. "MARRY,"
2. "BE BEARING CHILDREN,"
3. "BE MANAGING HOUSEHOLD AFFAIRS."

By doing this they will be:

"GIVING THE OPPONENT NO OCCASION FOR ABUSE (CRITICISM)."

Since he is mentioned in verse 15, it could very well be that this "OPPONENT" referred to in verse 14 is also Satan.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The enemy could be the church's adversaries who look for every chance to tear others down.

1 Corinthians 16:9

for a wide door for effective service has opened to me,
and there are many adversaries.

Hiebert says:

The "adversary" may here mean any human opponent of the Gospel who would be anxious to use any scandal as a means of discrediting the Gospel. But with the article the reference may well be to the personal Devil using the human adversary as his agent.

p. 99

Barclay says:

The world is quick to use any scandal to discredit the church. It is always true that "the greatest handicap the Church has is the unsatisfactory lives of professing Christians," and it is always true that the greatest argument for Christianity is a genuinely Christian life. And there is no argument in all the world for Christianity like the beauty and the joy and the fellowship of a truly Christian home.

p. 133

Wiersbe says:

The result of all this is a good testimony that silences the accusers. Satan (the adversary) is always alert to an opportunity to invade and destroy a Christian home. The word occasion is a military term that means "a base of operations." A Christian wife who is not doing her job at home gives Satan a beachhead for his operations, and the results are tragic.

p. 68

v.15 for already certain ones have been turned aside after Satan.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

It is too late for some. No doubt Paul is aware of specific cases in the churches where younger women had been placed on the list and then had broken their vows.

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.

Here in verse 16 we have COMMANDS #7 AND 8.

COMMAND #7:

"LET HIM BE TAKING CARE OF THEM."

COMMAND #8:

"LET NOT THE CHURCH BE BURDENED."

There are a large number of expositors who believe that Paul is talking about women here who are believers, and are having the responsibility for widows, and they are in a position to be taking care of them. He is commanding this so that "THE CHURCH WILL NOT BE BURDENED."

The purpose is then stated:

"IN ORDER THAT [THE CHURCH] MAY GIVE ASSISTANCE TO THOSE WHO ARE TRULY WIDOWS."

This takes us back to verse 3:

"Be showing respect to widows who really are widows."

In The Bible Knowledge Commentary, we read:

Paul specifies that any believing woman who possessed the means bore the same responsibilities in her family as would a man in similar circumstances.

Lock says:

The general principle is reasserted and applied to women, who have just been thought of as managing households. Such a woman may have a widowed mother, or grandmother, or daughter, or even servant in her house.
p. 61

Hendriksen says:

But if any believing woman has widows, let her assist them.

Here, let us say, is a lady like Lydia, who has a spacious home. She has a servant, a friend, or a relative, who happens to be a widow. Perhaps she can provide a home for that widow, or even for more than one widow. Or else she can help the widow financially by providing work. Let her then do her Christian duty so that God may be glorified, so that this gracious lady may herself experience in her heart the peace which results from divine approval of deeds well done, and so that the needy one may be relieved.
p. 178

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

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.

(And the Angels Were Silent by Max Lucado)

I took my daughter Andrea on a walk some time ago. She was four and curious, so we went to explore our neighborhood. "Let's cover some new territory," I suggested. Off we went, striding confidently out of the safe harbor of our cul-de-sac and stepping into unknown regions.

Captain Kirk would have been proud.

The area was brand new to her. We walked down streets she'd never seen and petted dogs she'd never touched. Virgin territory. Wilderness wanderings. The yards were different. The kids looked older. The houses looked bigger.

I thought all the change might trouble her. I thought the new sights and sounds might generate anxiety.

"Are you okay?" I asked.

"Sure."

"Do you know where we are?"

"No."

"Do you know how to get home?"

"No."

"And you aren't worried?"

Without slowing her pace she reached up and took my hand and said, "I don't have to know how to get home. You already do."

pp. 39-40

(How to Handle Adversity by Charles Stanley)

The writer makes an interesting promise. When we are in need, God will provide us with mercy and grace. This verse does not promise us a change of circumstances, freedom from pain, or deliverance from our enemies. It simply states that when we have a need, God will shower us with mercy and grace. Granted, we would rather have God relieve us of pain than sustain us through it. But He is under no obligation to do so. And He is no less faithful either way.

pp. 133-34

(A Burden Shared by David Roper)

Never give up! One is never too old to be fruitful. "Age is not decay; it is ripening, the swelling of the fresh life within" (George MacDonald). No one has ever out-lived the power of God.

p. 183

(Growing More Like Jesus by Richard L. Strauss)

It was a time of despondency, doubt and physical agony for Frank Graeff as he sat down to write. He was a pastor in Philadelphia

Does Jesus care when my heart is pained
Too deeply for mirth and song;
As the burdens press, and the cares distress,
And the way grows weary and long?

Does Jesus care when I've tried and failed
To resist some temptation strong;
When for my deep grief I find no relief,
Tho my tears flow all the night long?

Does Jesus care when I've said good-bye
To the dearest on earth to me,
And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks--
Is it aught to Him? Does He see?

He sought for solace and strength in God's Word, and found it in 1 Peter 5:7: "Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you." I wouldn't be surprised if he also opened his Bible to the Gospels and read again some of the familiar stories of Jesus' life and ministry. The most casual reading of the record would have left him with not one shred of doubt. The answer flowed from his pen as readily as the questions had come:

O yes, He cares--I know He cares!
His heart is touched with my grief;
When the days are weary, the long nights dreary,
I know my Savior cares.

In that one brief and beautiful verse Frank Graeff had captured the essence of Christ's compassion.
pp. 86-87

(Sky Edge by W. Phillip Keller)

And so it was I saw clearly again the profound lessons that my Lord was imprinting indelibly upon my crushed and suffering spirit. Out of this pressure of pain, this stress of sorrow, would eventually flow streams of refreshment to others in the days to come.

Only out of the crucible of our calamities can there come the poured-out life that, though crushed, releases the fine wine of selflessness to enliven others amid their anguish. Yes, out of death comes life. Out of despair comes love. Out of darkness comes light. It is always so with God. He is the source of all hope. And it is He who imparts Himself to me.

p. 118

(Jumping Hurdles, Hitting Glitches, Overcoming Setbacks by Steve Brown)

We have gone through a tragedy in our home. We have discovered that Quincy ("The Wonder Dog"), our German shepherd, has very serious congenital physical problems. Both of his hips are malformed, he has an overbite that prevents him from eating properly, and he has some other serious internal problems. Of all the dogs who have lived with our family, Quincy is the most loving. His love for our family is almost human.

I know. I know. He's just a dog. And most dogs with Quincy's problems are put to sleep, right? And I know animals are not created in God's image. I also know one must never over sentimentalize a pet. But Quincy has been a part of our household for almost ten months now, and, well . . . we like him a lot.

At any rate, Quincy has gone through the first hip operation, and it was very painful. He was with the vet (an experience that, before this operation, had been rather pleasant for him) for about four days, and during that time he was in incredible pain.

When we went to pick up Quincy, I was afraid his attitude might have changed toward me. After all, I took him to the vet and was, at least indirectly, responsible for his pain. If I had been Quincy, I probably would have been angry at the one who made me go through something that hurt me so much. And remember, as a dog, Quincy doesn't know that the pain is necessary for his healing. All he knows is that it hurts--a lot. Even before the operation, every time Quincy put any weight on that hip, he would whine. He could barely walk, and when he did, it was with great anguish. And so, with some hesitancy, we went to get Quincy from the vet.

Quincy looked horrible. He had lost weight. The two places where the surgery was performed (his hip and stomach) were shaved. He was obviously tired and looked far older than his ten months. But do you know what he did when he saw us? He started wagging his tail. He pulled at the leash held by the vet just so he could get next to us. And when we got home, he came over and put his head in my lap--my lap! I couldn't believe it, but oh, how I enjoyed it. I petted him for a while and then gently pushed him away. He limped to the middle of the living room, turned around, and came back to me, once again putting his head in my lap.

Teacher and theologian Dr. Barnhouse once said that all of life illustrates Bible doctrine. As I was scratching Quincy behind the ears, I prayed, "Lord, make me like Quincy. I know You never hurt me without cause. I know You can't always explain why You do the things You do, but You repeatedly demonstrate Your love for me. Teach me to come to You the way this dog has come to me. Teach me to trust You and love You when it hurts, even when I don't know why I hurt."

pp. 30-31

STUDY #11 - 1 Timothy 5:1-16

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