

Ministry to Seniors and Widows
(1 Timothy 5:1–16)
Grace Chapel December 20, 2009 Dr. John Niemelä

INTRODUCTION

MINISTERING TO DIFFERENT AGES AND GENDERS (5:1–2)

Timothy is to avoid sharply rebuking an older man, but to advise him as he would (his own) father in all purity (5:1a)

With all purity (from v 2) applies grammatically to all four groups, but especially pertains to the ministry to the fourth group, *younger women*.

[Timothy is to avoid sharply rebuking a younger man, but to advise him] as he would (his own) brothers in all purity (5:1b)

[Timothy is to avoid sharply rebuking an older woman, but to advise her] as he would (his own) mother in all purity (5:2a)

[Timothy is to avoid sharply rebuking a younger woman, but to advise her] as he would (his own) sisters in all purity (5:2b)

Timothy was an adult in Acts 16:1ff in A.D. 50 (prob mid-20s). This is A.D. 62. He is almost 40.

MINISTERING TO WIDOWS LACKING A SUPPORTIVE FAMILY (5:3–8)

Timothy is to honor (make available financial honoraria) for widows who are truly all alone (lacking family to support them) (5:3)

Honor refers to a financial honorarium, just as in 5:17.

She only has one mouth to feed (whereas elders will have wife & family), so widows received a single honorarium, while elders who rule well received a double honorarium

Paul defines the phrase *widows who are really widows* in verses 5 and 16.

No husband, child, or grandchild supports her. Answered prayer is how she has food.

Children & grandchildren of widows (who have children or grandchildren) should first learn to show godliness at home by repaying their parents (or grandparents), because God regards this as good & acceptable (5:4)

The importance of the word *first*. It is important for all involved: family, widow & church.

In our day, what about the government?

The widows (about whom Paul speaks) are truly all alone, depending totally upon God answering their prayers for having food to eat (5:5)

[These widows who depend totally upon God] contrast with the living dead (widows) who live in (promiscuous) pleasure (5:6)

Timothy is to command [children & grandchildren to care for their destitute ancestors and for widows to maintain sexual purity], so that they may be blameless (5:7)

Cf. 4:11

Anyone who does not provide for his own family, especially for his own household has denied the faith, being worse conduct than that which would be expected of an unbeliever (5:8)

ENLISTMENT OF WIDOWS FOR SUPPORT (5:9–16)

Timothy is only to (under normal circumstances) provide ongoing financial support to widows sixty and above (5:9a)

[Timothy is only to provide ongoing financial support to widows] who are one-man kind of women [not promiscuous] and who abounds in good works toward the saints: such as raising children, lodging strangers, washing the saints' feet, assisting the afflicted; an abundance of good works (5:10)

5:14 demonstrates something about the meaning of a *one-man woman*.

Timothy is not to enlist younger widows, because a desire to marry may cause them to abandon their commitment [for a length of time to this], making them culpable [before God] (5:11–12)

[Another reason for Timothy not to enlist younger widows is that] their house-to-house ministry may degrade into idleness and gossip (5:13)

[In light of younger widows not being best suited for such ministry] Paul encourages them to remarry, bear children, care for their own household, in order not to enable the Adversary to reproach them (5:14)

Paul says this, because some (younger widows enrolled in the list) have turned away after Satan (5:15)

Any believer (male or female) having responsibility toward widows should assist them financially, not burdening the church (with this financial responsibility) so that it may assist those widows who are really alone (5:16)

CONCLUSION