

The Pastoral Epistles

I Timothy 5:3-16 - ³ Honor widows who are truly widows. ⁴ But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God. ⁵ She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, ⁶ but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. ⁷ Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. ⁸ But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

⁹ Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, ¹⁰ and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work. ¹¹ But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry ¹² and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. ¹³ Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. ¹⁴ So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. ¹⁵ For some have already strayed after Satan. ¹⁶ If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows.”

This whole passage addresses the issues that come with widows in the church. It opens with a clear command to “honor” them. The word means, to esteem, or highly _____. But it also intends honor to those who are “truly widows.” This carries a concept of genuine needs: _____, _____, and/or _____.

Verse 4 proves that family is a higher priority than church. God is pleased when we take care of our own so that that burden does not fall on the _____, or on the _____. Taking care of our widowed family members is an act of “_____.”

In verses 5 and 6 there is a contrast between two types of widow: the one who sets her hope in God, praying continually, or the one who is self-indulgent. The contrast is clear, and simple.

Timothy was to make sure that these teachings about the widow were clearly understood in the church. He was especially challenged to make sure of the churches understanding to care for your own household. This broadens the ministry from the widow to everyone

else who is immediately related to you, to those in a more distant relationship, and then those who are fringe relatives.

There is an “enrollment” mentioned in verse 9. Like churches today keep records of enrollment for who is in Awana, who is in His Grace, who is in children’s church, or who is serving on the worship team, the church at Ephesus kept a record of the widows that they served. It speaks to _____, but also of _____.

The godly widow also exhibits godliness in service. What five activities are typical characteristics of her service?

1. “She has brought up _____.”
2. She “has shown _____.”
3. She “has washed the feet of the _____.”
4. She “has cared for the _____.”
5. She “has devoted herself to every _____.”

In contrast to the true widows, Paul instructs Timothy to not enroll the younger widows. They may very well have the inclination to re-marry. This would result in her condemnation because she turns away from devotion to Christ to serve a husband. (This isn’t inferring a loss of salvation, but rather blessing.)

The young widow may exhibit sinfulness in self-centeredness. What few things does Paul say are her characteristics?

1. She may “learn to be _____.”
2. She may go “about from _____ to _____.”
3. She may become a “_____,” and/or a “_____.”

To keep the young widow from sin, what does Paul advise?

In conclusion, Paul returns to the charge that families should care for their widows so that the _____ is not burdened.