

1 Timothy

Week 5: Chapter 5 - Chapter 6:2

Pray for your time together in God's Word!

Study Synopsis: This study focuses on examining Paul's instructions regarding leaders in the church and the care of widows.

Read passage out loud as a group. Option: Give the group 3 minutes to look at the passage by themselves

1 Timothy 5:1-16 (NIV)

⁵ Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, ² older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

³ Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. ⁴ But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. ⁵ The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. **6** But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. ⁷ Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame. ⁸ If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

⁹ No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, ¹⁰ and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

¹¹ As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. ¹² Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. ¹³ Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. ¹⁴ So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. ¹⁵ Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.

¹⁶ If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

Part One: Families and Widows

? Do you have any siblings? Describe an experience where you helped a sibling or one of them helped you.

Leader's Note: Sin says, "I am only going to worry about myself – it's all about me."

In 1 Timothy 5, Paul makes it clear that because we are in the body of Christ, we should relate to others differently.

? Paul speaks about treating younger men and women in the church as brothers and sisters. When you meet someone who is new to the church, how is it different to view them as a brother or sister, rather than just as a new person?

Possible Answers: Engage with them, show genuine interest in them

? How is Paul's instruction to treat younger women with "absolute purity" different from how our culture tends to treat younger women?

Possible Answers: When viewing women as "sisters", many of the negative views that our culture supports (viewing women as objects, etc.) will be replaced with seeing women as family.

Leader's Note: This observation could also apply to how women view men. If there is any point in the small group where men and women are separated, it would be useful to explore the above question further.

? Has your church experience felt like a family? Why or why not?

What would it look like for Hope to operate this way?

Possible Answers: The obvious answer for this will be "small group!" but encourage your group to encourage other ways that Hope ministries operate like a family. Some options include relationship panels at men or women events, SHAPE class helps people understand their strengths, mentoring.

? Do you know anyone who is a widow? How have you seen their needs get met?

? What do you think it could practically look like for the church to care for widows today?

Optional Discussion: Scripture mentions caring for widows in many places. Have your group read the following and then discuss why Israel (and the church) was called to care for widows.

Deuteronomy 10:17-18

¹⁷ For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. ¹⁸ He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing.

Exodus 22:22

²² "Do not take advantage of the widow or the fatherless.

Isaiah 1:17

¹⁷ Learn to do right; seek justice.

Defend the oppressed.

Take up the cause of the fatherless;

plead the case of the widow.

? Why do you think God singles out orphans and widows as requiring special care?

Possible Answer: These groups have needs that no one else naturally meets within a family unit, so God's people are called to intervene. It reflects the gospel to care for those who are helpless and who cannot save themselves.

Part Two: Leaders

1 Timothy 5:17-6:2 (NIV)

¹⁷ The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." ¹⁹ Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. ²⁰ Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.

²¹ I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.

²² Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

²³ Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.

²⁴ The sins of some men are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. ²⁵ In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not cannot be hidden.

6 ¹All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. ² Those who have believing masters are not to show less respect for them because they are brothers. Instead, they are to serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers, and dear to them. These are the things you are to teach and urge on them.

? What do you think it means that elders are worthy of double honor?

Possible Answer: We are to acknowledge the value of the elders in our church and respond by treating them with respect and as an integral part of our community.

? Paul lays out several guidelines regarding elders in this passage. What do these guidelines teach us about the role of elders in the church?

Possible Answers: They are to be held in respect, as spiritual leaders there are expectations for their conduct, it is an important and weighty responsibility to conduct the affairs of the church and to be responsible for preaching and teaching.

? In verse 20, Paul states that sin among elders is to be rebuked publicly. Why do you think Paul gives this instruction?

Possible Answer: It is to be rebuked publicly to serve as a warning to others. This preserves the authority of the elders, as well as assisting the body of Christ in becoming more like Jesus by killing sin.

? Think about the leaders whom you respect, especially within the church. What qualities help you to respect those authorities?

Possible Answers: Honesty, faith in Jesus, engaging, willingness to admit failure, integrity.

? What does it mean for you personally to respect and care for the leaders of your church?

? What is our community application of this passage?