



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V22 N14 April 19, 2020

DEAR TIMOTHY

"Family Business"

1 Timothy 5:1-16

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Compassion

I seek to serve the last,
the least and the lost in
my community.

*"Defend the weak and the
fatherless; uphold the
cause of the poor and
the oppressed. Rescue
the weak and the
needy; deliver them from
the hand of the wicked."*

Psalm 82:3-4



How should
the church
address
the needs of
widows?

The term "widow" occurs 103 times in the NIV, often in a triad together with "the foreigner" and "the fatherless" in the Old Testament. Five times "the Levites" is added to the mix. These groups have one thing in common—they are all what we would call "food insecure." The Levites had "no allotment or inheritance of their own" (Dt 14:29), which left them dependent upon others for their survival. Without land, the Levites, not to mention the others, had no grain to harvest and no grapes nor olives to pick. So God instructed the Israelites to make provision for them. The instructions given in Deuteronomy serve as the benchmark for what is said about caring for foreigners, the fatherless, and widows in the rest of the Old Testament:

"Do not deprive the foreigner 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 foreigner, 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 foreigner, 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 foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this" (24:17-22; cf., 10:18; 14:29; 26:12; 27:19; Ps 146:9).

These words echo in what Boaz told his harvesters to do for Ruth, which, by the way, went far beyond the demands of the law: "Boaz gave orders to his men, 'Let her gather among the sheaves and don't reprimand her. Even pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don't rebuke her'" (Ru 2:15-16).

It seems the early church inherited Old Testament Judaism's concern for widows. The church in

Jerusalem distributed food and perhaps, money on a daily basis to Hellenistic, that is, Greek speaking, and Hebraic, that is, Aramaic speaking, Jewish widows. When a complaint arose from the Hellenistic widows to the effect that they were being discriminated against in the daily distribution, the problem was remedied by the selection of seven godly men to assume responsibility for the task. But apparently, not all women bereft of their husbands were bereft of their wealth, too, and needed assistance. Later Paul tells Timothy to limit the church's support to those widows who are really in need (1Ti 5:3) and even alludes to some women (presumably widows themselves) who had widows in their care (v. 16). Therefore, widows in Ephesus needed to qualify to be put on the list for support (vv. 9-10). According to one writer: "The historical portrait suggests there was a lot of variety in the social status of widows. Some were wealthy and even powerful. Some were poor, and many were in the middle. Some experienced a drop in economic position when their husbands died, and others did not. Although vulnerable in some ways, widows were also supported by social expectations that gave them increased status . . . Some New Testament passages underscore that some widows were quite poor. Acts 6:1 points to food distribution to (presumably) poor widows. 1 Timothy 5 reinforces the social convention that family members should provide for relatives, including widows. Male and female family members were to provide for widowed relatives, but the church stepped in if familial assistance was not available (1 Tim 5:16)" (Susan E. Hylen, "Widows in the New Testament Period," <https://bibleinterp.arizona.edu/articles/widows-new-testament-period>).

While academics continue to debate the legal and social status of women in the New Testament period, for example, whether they could own property or were totally without resources, as well as the degree to which they were dependent on their husbands and fathers, one thing is clear. The church assumed a charitable responsibility for those widows who were "all alone" and truly in need.

1 EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

1 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, so that no one may be open to blame. 8 Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, 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 Lord's people, 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 busybodies who talk nonsense, 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 care, she should continue to help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Box "as" indicating *comparison* in vv. 1, 2.
- Underline "father," "brothers," "mothers," and "sisters" in vv. 1, 2.
- Circle "give proper respect" in v. 3.
- Circle "really" in vv. 3, 5.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 4, 6, 13.
- Bracket "put their religion into practice" in v. 4.
- Highlight v. 6.
- Box "so that" indicating *result* in vv. 7, 16.
- Bracket "denied the faith" and "worse than an unbeliever" in v. 8.
- Bracket "faithful to her husband" in v. 9.
- Box "such as" indicating *comparison* in v. 10.
- Circle "first pledge" in v. 12.
- Circle "counsel" in v. 14.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. How should Timothy treat others in the church based on the images Paul uses in verses 1-2 – and how should we?

2. What must “give recognition” mean in the broader context of verses 3-16?

3. Identify a widow’s first line of defense against impoverishment.

4. Explain the *contrast* introduced in verse 6.

5. Any Christian who doesn’t provide for their indigent relatives “has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (v. 8; cf., Jas 1:27). How so?

6. Paul mentions “the list” in verse 9. What list?

7. What are the three requirements for being placed on the list?

8. To what “first pledge” is Paul alluding in verse 12?

9. Why exclude “younger widows” from the list? What are they to do?

10. **Discussion:** We live in a day of prosperity, pensions, and social security. Talk about how we individually and as a church should respond to the message of this passage.

Commentary On The Text

In 1 Timothy 5:3-6:2, Paul gives Timothy instructions regarding various groups in the church—widows, elders, and slaves. Verses 1-2 serve as a short transition between 4:11-13 and 5:3-6:2. In it Paul provides his protégé with a primer on interpersonal relationships. Although Timothy is the apostle’s delegate, he is not to lord it over or take a heavy-handed approach with his parishioners. He is to carry out his designated responsibilities like a family member, treating older men like fathers, younger men like brothers, older women like mothers, and younger women like sisters.

What follows in verses 3-16 is an extended discussion regarding caring for widows in the congregation. Paul begins by stating a general principle: “Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need” (v. 3)—where “proper recognition” in the broader context involves giving material support as necessary (cf., vv. 8, 16). But not all women bereft of their husbands are necessarily needy, so Paul introduces *means testing* of a sort. A widow with children or grandchildren, who can help, are not really “all alone” (v. 5); her relatives should be her first line of defense against the wolf at the door. Christian relatives that do not help their destitute family members have “denied the faith,” that is, they have failed to do what their faith requires (see Jas 1:27) and are worse than unbelievers who do help their destitute family members. But not all widows, who are “all alone,” are to be helped by the church. One commentator explains: “Only those who give evidence that they are looking to God for their needs, and are seeking to honor Him with their lives qualify (e.g., Anna in Luke 2:36-38). These are ‘widows indeed’” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 Timothy,” 2020 ed., 100, plano-biblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1timothy.pdf).

Having identified who is a true widow, namely, a godly woman with no relatives to support her, Paul adds three eligibility requirements: 1) she must be over sixty years old, 2) must have been faithful to her husband, and 3) must be well known for her good deeds. Otherwise, her name is not to be added to “the list of widows” (v. 9). Mention of a list raises a question. What list? One commentator answers: “Some interpreters (Hendriksen Bernard) feel that Paul here described a special order of widows with spiritual and charitable duties to perform in order to qualify for financial remuneration. Such an order of widows existed in later centuries, but it would have been an unlikely development at the time. What we see here is a tendency from which the later institution developed. Guthrie sees it ‘preferable . . . to suppose that special duties in the Church were reserved for some of the old widows receiving aid, and some official recognition of this fact was given.’ It is more likely that Paul was outlining

qualification of those widows who would be able to get personal help from the church and was not giving any official recognition to an order of widows” (Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, NAC, 149). The context supports this answer to the question since it concerns *qualifications* rather than *duties* of older widows.

But what about widows who were under sixty years old? Many younger women were widowed in that day for two reasons: 1) life expectancy was short. According to one commentator, people were considered old in their forties (Walter L. Liefeld, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 175), and 2) women typically married men who were nearly twice their age—according to another commentator, fifteen to twenty for a girl and thirty for a man (Megan K. DeFranza, “Journeying from the Bible to Christian Ethics in Search of Common Ground,” in *Homosexuality, the Bible, and the Church*, 88-89). Younger widows were not to be put on the list for two reasons: 1) they would likely want to remarry (v. 11), which would entail them breaking their “first pledge,” evidently a pledge to serve the Lord and remain unmarried, taken when placed on the list, and 2) even if they did not remarry, they would likely “get into the habit of being idle,” and not only become idlers “but also busybodies” (v. 13). So Paul encouraged younger widows to exercise their option to remarry, to have children, and to manage their homes and families. It was practically their only option in a day when there was no life insurance, no social safety net, and no career opportunities for women. Women have many other options today.

Finally, there were apparently women of means in the church, who had widows in their care. They were to continue helping these widows, so that these women would not become a burden to the church, leaving it free to help those who were bereaved of their husbands and bereft of relatives to help them.

While the needy widows—and widowers, who were likely few in number in the early church—persist over time, they vary widely from culture to culture. The church’s response to them must, therefore, fit its historical and cultural context. Perhaps one church has a literal “list;” perhaps another doesn’t. Perhaps the age of eligibility in one church is sixty; perhaps it’s sixty-five in another. One commentator writes: “The exact social position, and economic position as well, of a widow will vary in different societies. Available resources will also vary. Customs regarding remarriage also differ from culture to culture. Christians must proceed thoughtfully to determine what is the best way to put doctrine into practice and to express love and respect in caring for widows in their society” (Liefeld, 185).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *rebuke*

[*epiplēssein*] ‘to rebuke’ is a strong, almost violent, term, occurring only here in the NT. Rather than standing over an older man and rebuking him, Timothy is [*parakalein*], ‘to encourage,’ him to follow the correct teachings” (William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, *Pastoral Epistles*, 269).

v. 1 *an older man*

Cf., “rebuke not an elder” (KJV). The same word used here is used to refer to the *position* of elder in the church (cf., Ac 20:17, 28; 1Ti 5:17, 19, 20), but “in this context it is clear that that the Greek word *presbyteros* refers to age, not to a church elder” (Walter L. Liefeld, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 174).

v. 3 *proper respect*

Lit., “honor.” The word *honor* her carries the double meaning of respect and financial support. This Greek word can imply both senses, and both are intended in this context” (*The NET Bible*, 3sn on 1Ti 5:3).

vv. 3, 5 *really*

Cf., “Honor widows who are truly widows” (ESV); “Support widows who are genuinely widows” (HCSB). The term “widows” is defined more narrowly than “women whose husbands have died” (NLV). “A true widow is not simply a woman whose husband is dead but one who deserves to be supported by the church. The following verses spell out two considerations for determining if a widow is truly deserving of support: she must be totally alone with no means of support (which includes the idea of being elderly and not desiring remarriage), and she must have shown exemplary Christian character throughout her life” (Mounce, 278).

v. 4 *first of all . . .*

Cf., “first learn to show godliness . . .” (ESV); “first learn to fulfill their duty . . .” (NET). See Jas 1:27. “Paul spoke to children and grandchildren who had the means and responsibility to care for aged parents and grandparents. He stated three facts about giving financial help to needy relatives. First, such help is a sign of true piety or godliness. To care for aged parents or other relatives is an evidence of the same godliness which Paul commanded in 4:7. Second, Paul saw the giving of this care as a repayment for the earlier care which children had received. Third, care for older widows is pleasing to God (see 1 Tim 2:3 for a similar statement)” (Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, NAC, 146-47)

v. 6 *dead*

These widows are presumably believers, so they are dead not in the sense that they are unsaved, that is, dead spiritually, but in the sense that their faith isn’t showing the signs of life that are normally evident. Their faith is dead in that it isn’t accompanied by action—at least at this point in their lives (Jas 2:17). “In the contemporary world many widows were tempted to resort to immoral living as a means of support, and that is probably in the apostle’s mind when he uses the verb *spatalaō* (liveth in pleasure)” (Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, TNTC, 101).

v. 8 *denied the faith*

“Family members have a universally recognized duty to care for one another (‘provide for his own . . . household’). Even unbelievers acknowledge this. If a Christian (‘anyone,’ i.e., in the church) fails here, he behaves contrary to the teaching of his (‘denied the’) ‘faith’ and is, in this particular, ‘worse’ than the typical ‘unbeliever’ who helps his needy relations. Even as He hung on the cross, the Lord Jesus made provision for His mother’s care (John 19:26-27)” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 Timothy,” 2020 ed., 83, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1timothy.pdf).

v. 12 *first pledge*

“Paul assumed that a wholehearted commitment to the Lord characterized those on the list (cf. v. 5). If the church leaders placed younger widows on the (‘pledge’) list, and they subsequently wanted to remarry, they would have to ‘set aside [this] (their previous) pledge’ of devotion to, and service of, Christ alone. They would thereby incur some form of temporal ‘condemnation.’ Perhaps this punishment came from their consciences, their church family, or elsewhere. It certainly was not eternal condemnation” (Constable, 104).

v. 14 *counsel*

Paul recommends an alternative to the potential negative consequences of younger widows being placed on the list, namely, that they remarry, have children, and manage their homes.

v. 15 *follow Satan*

“Departing from God’s will does not necessarily identify a person as an unbeliever. He or she may be a prodigal who is a true child of the Father but has chosen to depart from Him” (Constable, 106).

Other Texts to Consider

James 1:27

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.”



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

The church, the body of Christ, ought to express its faith in a tangible way by caring for its most vulnerable members – needy widows with no relatives to help – in a culturally appropriate way.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

My parents owned a restaurant when I was growing up and I learned at a ridiculously young age how to talk to adults, mainly because I played hostess when business was slow. My parents would have snatched me bald-headed if I was anything less than polite and respectful to customers, especially elders. In our passage this week Paul encourages Timothy to treat elders as he would his parents. Let's just stop right there. Culture looks different today than it did during Paul's time, but some things remain the same. Children today should recognize parents with respect and authority, otherwise, how can we possibly expect them to view other adults in this same manner? I'm not suggesting we hold an authoritarian hammer over our heads, because no one likes to follow that leader. However, I do think in some respects, the modern family dynamic has allowed children to rule the roost. One blessing of these shelter-at-home weeks we're living in is the opportunity to hit the reset button for our families. The slate has been wiped clean, the calendar is empty; it's time to claim control. Your child has no options but to follow your lead, and while flexibility is key, authority rules. Listen, I know this is hard. I hop on board the struggle bus, too. However, it's very likely we won't get this precious time again. You have been given full authority to be the boss of your family! When this is over, what new dynamic do you want to stick? We are praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read 1 Timothy 5:1-16.

1. How should we treat older and younger men and women?
2. What is different between the family's and church's responsibility to take care of widows?
3. Describe the woman put on the list of widows

What Do You Think?

How is your biological family different from your church family?

What Do You Do?

Brighten someone's day by drawing a picture with a short note and having your parents send it to a local senior care facility.

CORE COMPETENCY: Compassion

I believe God wants me to help others in need.

MEMORY VERSE: Galatians 6:10

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for 12 years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church in 1998. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. She and James are Shepherds of the Bailey Community Group. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76120
817-274-1315
wearecentral.org