

“Be Not a Respector of Persons”

HEART ATTITUDE: Love and Acceptance of All Christians

1 TIMOTHY 5:1 – 6:2 (NIV)

^{5:1}*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, 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.*

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.*

²⁴*In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not cannot be hidden.*

More . . .

The Most Excellent Way

Discipleship/Leadership Bible Study Homework

^{6:1}All 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.

²Those 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.

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• FOCUSING

1. What groups of people are treated with special favor in our society today?

2. Whose responsibility is it to care for the needy?

3. How much money do you think a pastor should make? Why?

4. What adjectives would you use to describe our society's morality?

• STUDYING GOD'S WORD

5. How should believers treat older men, younger men, older women, and younger women? (5:1-2)

5:2 – All believers are members of god's family. Men in the ministry can avoid improper attitudes toward women by treating them as family members, not as possessions or objects. If men see women as fellow members in God's family, they will protect them and help them grow spiritually.

6. To whom did Paul tell Timothy to give proper recognition? (5:3)

7. What should the children and grandchildren of a widow do? (5:4)

8. What does the widow who is really in need and left alone do? (5:5)

The Most Excellent Way

Discipleship/Leadership Bible Study Homework

The church should support those who have no families, and it should also help the others – whether elderly, young, handicapped, ill or poverty stricken – with their emotional and spiritual needs. Those who are helped often turn around and help others so the church becomes a circle of caring.

9. What is true about the widow who lives for pleasure? (5:6)

10. Why did Paul tell Timothy to give these instructions? (5:7)

11. Why is it important to provide for your family? (5:8)

Family relationships are important to God. Paul says that a person who neglects his family responsibilities should not call himself a Christian. These responsibilities include emotional support, spiritual support, as well as financial support. Are you doing your part to meet the needs of those included in your family circle?

12. Of what is the elder who directs the affairs of the church worthy? (5:17)

13. Why should elders be paid? (5:18)

Those who minister in The Most Excellent Way are volunteers, receiving no monetary rewards. Preaching is proclaiming the Word of God and confronting listeners with the truth of Scripture. Teaching is explaining the truth in Scripture, helping learners understand difficult passages, and helping them apply God's Word to daily life. *Elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor. Often we take these servants for granted. How can you honor your preachers and teachers? How would you desire to be honored?*

14. How should accusations against an elder be handled? (5:19)

15. Why should those who sin be rebuked publicly? (5:20)

16. How did Paul encourage Timothy to keep these instructions? (5:21)

Church leaders are not exempt from sin, faults and mistakes. But they are often criticized for the wrong reasons – minor imperfections, failure to meet our *expectations*, personality clashes. Therefore Paul said that complains should not even be heard unless confirmed by two or three witnesses. Sometimes leaders should be confronted about their behavior, and sometimes they should be rebuked. But all rebuking must be done fairly, lovingly, and for the purpose of restoration.

The Most Excellent Way

Discipleship/Leadership Bible Study Homework

17. What did Paul encourage Timothy to do and not do? (5:22)

Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands means not to appoint leaders quickly. Ministry leaders must never be in a hurry to choose leaders because major problems or sins may be overlooked. Choosing ministry leaders is a serious responsibility. Candidates must have strong faith and live up-right lives, with the qualities listed in 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. Not everyone who wants to be a leader is eligible – we must be certain of a candidate’s qualifications.

18. Why did Paul encourage Timothy to use a little wine? (5:23)

It’s unclear why Paul gave this advice to Timothy. It may be that he was practicing strict self-denial and Paul was telling him to loosen up a bit. Maybe contaminated water had led to Timothy’s indigestion and so he should not drink only water. Whatever the reason for Paul’s advice, it is not an invitation for abusing alcohol.

19. What is the impact of a per’s sins and good deeds? (5:24-25)

20. Why should slaves consider their masters worthy of respect? (6:1)

21. How should slaves treat masters who are believers? (6:2)

In Paul’s culture there was a great social and legal gulf separating masters and slaves. but as Christians, masters and slaves became spiritual equals (see Galatians 3:28). Paul did not speak against the evils of slavery. His counsel on the master/slave relationship applies to employer/employee relationships.

• UNDERSTANDING

22. How should we treat fellow Christians?

23. Which of your family members need your active care?

24. When and how have you learned from the mistakes of others?

25. In what negative ways does favoritism affect how we treat others?

26. How can we keep ourselves pure in a society that does not support God’s ideals?
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