

Welfare?

By

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The content of this book is taken from Ryan Marks' book *1 Timothy*.

“Welfare” in 1 Timothy

Chapter 5

Rebuke not an elder, but intreat *him* as a father; *and* the younger men as brethren; **2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.**

The Body of Christ is meant to be a spiritual family. When you have a grievance or know that an older man is in error, entreat him as you would your father. *Webster's 1828* defines *entreat* as “to ask earnestly ; to beseech ; to petition or pray with urgency....” Treat older men as fathers. Treat younger men as brothers. Treat older women as mothers and younger women as sisters. With what? All purity. A young man may treat older men as fathers, younger men as brothers, and older women as mothers; yet lustfully chase the younger women in the Church. A young woman may treat older men as fathers, older women as mothers and younger women as sisters; yet flirt with many of the young men in the Body of Christ. Likewise older men and women can fail to conduct themselves with purity toward one another or those younger. This a grave error. We are to treat all *with purity*.

Honour widows that are widows indeed.

Not every woman who has lost her husband is a widow *indeed* as we shall see in the coming verses of 1 Timothy 5.

But if any widow have children or nephews,

The first test that must be applied to determine whether a woman is truly a widow in need is if she has children or nephews. Now this children and nephews phrase is interesting for it seems to be indicating that God expects the men (sons) or nephews to take care of the older women in their families. However, Scripture also mentions the issue of whether or not her family is nearby:

“Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: **for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off**” (Proverbs 27:10, KJV).

let them learn first to shew piety at home,

But the main point that Paul is making is that these male relatives are to first show their piety (godliness) at home, not out somewhere else by good deeds.

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world. James 1:27 (KJV)

What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? **15** If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, **16** And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit? **17** Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. **18** Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. **19** Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. **20** But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? **21** Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? **22** Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? **23** And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. **24** Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. **25** Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way? **26** For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. James 2:14-26 (KJV)

and to requite their parents:

Also, they should honor their parents (Ex. 20:12). God has designed the family so that the parent takes care of the helpless child and then, if need be, the child takes care of the helpless parent.

for that is good and acceptable before God.

It is good and acceptable before God! Scripture does not say that this is an optional thing or a choice that we simply have to make. No, it is *good and acceptable* before God. God created the earth and each day after He finished, He said that it was good. So this design is good to God. And as Able's sacrifice was pleasing to the Lord, so it is acceptable that we honor our parents and elder family members in this way. **Remember, your religion only is a real as it is at home.**

Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. ⁶ But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.

A widow who is indeed a widow is desolate. She has no one and almost nothing. She trusts in God and prays day and night for His provision. Sadly, this is far more common than many Christians may realize. We tend to think, at least in America, that such desolation and poverty is not a reality in this country, but it is for a good number of widows. There may be two or three widows in this condition within a ten mile radius of our home.

But the widow who spends her life in pleasures (entertainments, self-centered activities) is dead while she lives. As we will see later on, it is not wise for an unmarried woman to go around pursuing pleasure. This is not to say that God wants her to be unhappy and unjoyful, but if pleasure and entertainment are pursued after one has "retired," life inevitably means very very little. True life is not found as we try to get it, but when we lay our lives down:

24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* **25** For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. **26** For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? **27** For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then

he shall reward every man according to his works. **28** Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Matt 16:24-28 (KJV)

Hereby perceive we the love of *God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. **17** But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of *compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? **18** My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

1 John 3:16-18 (KJV)

And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. **8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.**

Paul teaches Timothy, that Timothy is to “charge,” that is teach or command widows in his congregation not to spend their time being pleasure seekers and for male children and nephews to take care of the elderly women in their families. For if a man will not provide for his own family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.

For this reason, it is very important, men, for us to know how to work and provide for our families. Now, God is not saying that if a man has a disability that hinders him from being able to provide or if he is ill that he has denied the Faith, but that is the exception, not the rule. A man must provide for his own. Take care that Paul is not only referring to one’s immediate family, but to extended family (note the directive to nephews earlier on in the passage). *Because of this, it is wise for each young man to develop a variety of skills, stay out of debt, save, and have some wisdom and business savvy.* If a man has a secure financial position for his own immediate household, then he will be in a much better position to take a widow in

the family into his home or to provide for her another way. But if a man is lazy, enslaved by debt and caught up in chasing material pleasures himself, he will hinder himself by setting up temptations and obstacles to unfeigned obedience to God's Word.

Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, ¹⁰ Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

A widow is not to be cared for by the Church if she is under 60 years old. But not only that, the requirements of being cared for by the Church are quite specific: she must have been the wife of one man, known for her good works such as bringing up her children, lodging strangers, washing the saints feet (serving), if she has relieved the afflicted and diligently strived to follow after every good work. What these specifications do is ensure that the Church will not simply create a welfare system for widows who have reached the age of 60 and are alone. No, these requirements ensure that those who have been faithful to God and are in need will be taken care of by God through the hands of the Church. To simply say that any widow is to be cared for by the Church is far too broad, for there are many who, like today, would simply give the appearance of need in order to gain the benefits doled out by the Church. However, since the widows taken care of have no one else and are a certain age and known for their love for others, the character of the women being assisted is proven; it does not have to be guessed or gambled at whether or not a widow will simply accept help and then go around being a busybody. No, these women will continue sharing Christ's love as long as they can, it has been proven and the fact that their needs are met through the Body of Christ simply gives her more time to love others and serve Christ.

But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

Younger widows, Paul clearly commands are to be refused assistance because their new found time not spend praying and laboring for their needs to be met will not result in devotion to the Lord, but rather wantonness. Based on Webster's 1828, *wanton* carries with it idea of being frolicsome, given to excess, lustful, and extravagant. Younger women who have the ability to provide for themselves and have more energy should take care of themselves and even move back in with their parents. For if their needs are provided by a system, they will simply still be wanting to marry. This is not wrong, as we shall see. However, Paul very wisely says that a younger widow should not be cared for by the Church like the older and truly in need because doing so would create a cycle of the Church taking care of the young widows simply till they marry again and thus creating an unhealthy system that de-emphasizes personal devotion, hard work, and devotion to Christ.

For a good example of why providing for young widows is a bad idea, look no further than the welfare system of today for it has created a dependent culture and become a heavy burden for tax payers to haul around while it is really doing no one any real good based on the fact that it continues to grow and has created an entitlement mentality. At college, I even heard young women talking about how they wanted to have kids and how much the government would give them because they had them.

12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith.

Damnation carries with it the meaning of condemnation in addition to its' hell-related meaning. In this passage I believe Paul is using both meanings of the word. Let me explain. A young woman who is cared for by Church "welfare" would condemn herself as she pursues lusts and frolics around, taking no heed to loving God 1st and foremost and out of that love serving others; instead, she has exchanged a relationship with God for pride and self-centeredness by attempting to fulfill her own deepest longings. She eats her bread that has been provided for her and worries about how she will find a husband and what she will do tomorrow. This type of life style not only condemns her but does put her in danger of completely walking away from the Faith and thus receiving a stricter judgment in Hell for falling away than those who never came to Christ (See Revelation 2, especially verse 4, 2 Peter 2 especially verses 20-21).

And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. **14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.**

What is Paul's solution for the younger widows? It is very simple, it is a wise thing for her to marry again, have kids, take care of her home, and thus give no occasion to the Devil to accuse her for error. As we looked at last time, Paul advises this because he knows that taking care of younger widows encourages them to be idle, wondering about as tattlers and busybodies and running their mouths which gives the Devil a foothold and opens her up to greater dangers spiritually.

For some are already turned aside after Satan.

Turning aside after Satan does not mean that one has become a Satan worshipper or interested in the occult. That may happen, but turning aside after Satan is simply living one's life habitually like him: lying, accusing, manipulating, deceiving, lusting—all for the purpose of one thing: *you*. Self-centeredness was Satan's downfall. O the lie of believing in yourself! No, trust in God alone, He is your everything and has given you every blessing and natural faculty, talent, and gifting and understanding that you have. Praise the one who made you! For if you don't, pride, the very nature of what made Satan, Satan has seized you. And if you are in that cursed state of pride, humble yourself!

Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.
7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. **8** Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded. **9** Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness. **10** Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

James 4:6-10 (KJV)

16 If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed.

Do you know a widow? Do you think that she has needs? Then don't go to your Church as the first source of help for them. No, relieve them yourselves. Help cut the grass, do minor repairs, or buy her food. The purpose of all that Paul is saying is that we should love selflessly and compassionately as Christ did. Put action to your Faith. Those that are truly in need, the Church will care for, but there is a large mission field out there for not complete assistance, but for coming alongside and helping for a season or a lifetime: single mothers and their children, young widows just going through the loss of her husband, elderly widows who are fine financially, but lack children who love them and the ability to do certain things for themselves—this is the mission field of every family and every individual (notice that Paul says if *any man or woman....*)!

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

The elders, the pastors or overseers, of the church that lead the Body of Christ should be counted worthy of double honor. Today, far too few honor their Christian leaders and many false prophets have only contributed to that as they run off and entangle themselves in immorality and vain philosophies as they lead the Church. Remember that the true overseer is leading the Body because he loves the Lord and out of that love the Lord has commanded him like Peter to feed the Lord's sheep (John 21:15-19). When a pastor labors in the Word and doctrine (teaching) through teaching, preaching, exhorting, counseling, praying, leading, overseeing, and setting an example for the Body of Christ, he should be honored. His work is not easy. In fact, it can be the most hectic vocation on the planet, but when a man loves his Lord and is obedient to the call to feed the Lord's sheep, he should be honored. Today, ministers would do well to examine themselves, for there are some who are in the

ministry for completely self-seeking motives and not out of obedience to their Lord's command.

In addition, the Church should provide for their spiritual leaders just as the Levites and Priests were provided for by the people under the Law. When a man is working hard in the Lord's fields and preparing the harvest for re-planting, should he not share in the sustenance that he is producing? Of course he should! Just as an animal gets to nuzzle in the crops it is harvesting, so a spiritual leader should be provided for by the Church so that he can focus on God and serve whole-heartedly and with his whole attention. We expect Doctors to only practice medicine and be concentrated in their work and we expect soldiers at war to be fully devoted to their posts, likewise we should put our hand behind our mouth to make sure that our pastors are not divided in their pursuit of God and providing for their families.

**Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.
20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.**

Against a Pastor, overseer, elder, do not believe an accusation unless there are two or three witnesses to back it up. It is very important not to believe the rumors you hear of your spiritual leaders, for there are likely many. But if two or three witnesses say something, then one must consider and look deeper into the matter, for to disregard such a substantial accusation would be foolish.

If an elder truly is sinning and when gone to one on one and then with a few witnesses will not repent, then he should be openly rebuked before all so that those there will fear (understand the seriousness of sin and fear God). For example, if a pastor has fallen into homosexuality or some other form of immorality, the issue should not just be hushed over and the Church quickly focused elsewhere. No, the sin should openly be told (not in its gross details, but the specific sin[s] should be mentioned) to the whole congregation and the sin rebuked. What God's Word says about that sin should be read to the people and the pastor removed from spiritual leadership at least for a season of recovery. Likely, he will never be able to pastor again. However, we must remember the whole counsel of Scripture in regard to this topic of open rebuke. Number one, we should practice Jesus' steps first and if repentance occurs then open rebuke will not be needed. And likewise, God can

restore even the worst sinner: remember David was an adulterer and murderer and Samson was a playboy. Consider solemnly and seriously the Lord Jesus' Words:

Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!
8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.
9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. **10** Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. **11** For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. **12** How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? **13** And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. **14** Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

He teaches how we are to deal with our brethren when they offend us

15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. **16** But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. **17** And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. **18** Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. **19** Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which

is in heaven. **20** For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

and how often to forgive them

21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? **22** Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. **23** Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. **24** And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. **25** But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. **26** The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. **27** Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. **28** But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. **29** And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. **30** And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. **31** So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. **32** Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: **33** Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? **34** And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. **35** So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Matt 18:7-35 (KJV)

And Paul's Reminder:

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, **10** Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. **11** And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Cor 6:9-11 (KJV)

The next lesson will be a continuation of this one

I charge *thee* before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

Paul does not stop in verses 19 and 20 but continues on to charge Timothy before the God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and even the angels to observe the whole letter and specifically, the open rebuke principle without preferring any one over the other, but instead to interact without partiality. This is hard to do, but unless the serious matters contained in this entire letter are done without partiality, then little groups of those that are disliked and those that are favored will spring up and divide the Body of Christ. *When practiced without partiality, the Body of Christ is bound together in love, seeing that God's Word is the standard, and not our own contrivances, feelings, or systems.*