1 Timothy 5:1-25

"Here's How We Get Along"

How many of you realize that as the body of Christ, you & me (we) are all family? How many of you are honest enough to admit that at times (as family) those whom we should *care* for the *most* we can treat the *worst*? We will say things to family that we would never say to someone else, we will disrespect people in our family in a manner that we would never disrespect another individual. Of course the bible rebukes our outbursts in the flesh & commands us to repent yet my point remains that as a family we have to learn how to get along… Oh, I've *heard* of the fairytale family that never argues, never strays out of line in attitude or action toward one another, I've just never met one…

Because as people we have problems, it's called a "sin nature", we are all (by nature) self-seeking, self-centered, self*ish*. Yet the Word of God calls us to deny ourselves, to crucify the flesh, to, *"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself."*[1] We're to consider others 1st, ourselves 2nd, you cannot do that through the efforts of your own will, not for long. It takes the Person & the power of the Holy Spirit at work in your life.

Here's my point, as a family we are a fallible flock of flawed saints; if a church has people it has problems & because of that we need to know what body life looks like if it's to be lived out in a godly manner. How are we to treat one another in the church? The short answer is that we're to treat our fellow believer as we *should* treat our own flesh & blood family (not as we *would* treat them [necessarily ☺], but as we *should* treat them), notice. Vs 1-2

You see there it is. Fellow believers in the *body* of Christ are to be regarded as a close-knit spiritual family bound together by the *blood* of Christ & as such we're to treat one another w/respect. Even as if they were of your own flesh & blood.

Paul says, "Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father." Don't rebuke him, respect him, exhort him, the word is to "entreat" or "encourage" him. Last week we spoke of how people who are a decade or more older than you can sometimes have difficulty receiving from you because they can tend to believe you lack in life experience. Therefore Paul said, "Hey, raise the bar as it pertains to setting a godly example, let no one be able to justifiably criticize your life." Older folks can struggle enough receiving from a younger person, don't give them a reason to justifiably criticize you.

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[1] *The New King James Version*. (Phil 2:3). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Here Paul says, "When it comes to the older man, don't rebuke him, respect him." If you want to be able to minister to the older generation you need to render them the respect that they're due.

Any godly individual will have regard for those who've been down the road a ways, those who are aged. I used to ask my Grandma every now & then, "How you feelin today?" To which she would occasionally respond, "Like I got more years behind me than ahead of me!" (It was kind of an awkward answer, wasn't sure if I was supposed to laugh or cry ☺, how do you respond to that?) The bible says, *"You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord."* [2] Respect for the aged in our culture is something that is radically lacking. Again we read, *"The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, If it is found in the way of righteousness."* [3]

So don't rebuke an older man… respect him. Encourage him in a straightforward yet tactful manner to do the right thing.

Now, having said that, I need to say this. The word for rebuke here in Vs 1 is a very strong word & it's used only here in the NT. It means "to strike upon" "to beat upon" "to upbraid" the idea is that of a verbal ground & pound, don't go light that old man up, preserve his dignity & show respect.

So Paul isn't saying that we're not to bring correction to the older man in the standard usage of the word "rebuke". As a matter of fact he says in *2nd Timothy*, *"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."*[4] When a person in the fellowship is wrong in the way they're thinking, or in what they're doing, they're to be confronted regardless of how old or young they may be. However, Paul is saying, "Be mindful of the elderly, don't rake them over the coals & strip them of their dignity, be respectful of who they are." Appeal to him, as if he was your own father, not roughly, but respectfully.

As for younger men, don't talk down to them, but be as a brother to them, now you don't have to esteem the younger man as you do the older man, you can be a little more forthright, but they're still your partner in the work of the gospel & need to be treated as such.

Regarding older women, Paul says to treat them as they were your mother. Again the idea being the honor & respect due their age.

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[2] *The New King James Version*. (Lev 19:32). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
[3] *The New King James Version*. (Prov 16:31). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.
[4] *The New King James Version*. (2 Timothy 4:2). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

As for the younger women, safeguard all purity, keep the relationship godly, protect them & treat them like you would your little sister. I think this is huge in all respects but w/regard to "dating" or whatever you wanna call it, if you're a man be a godly example to that young woman. Don't make them have to tell you "no" all the time, or put them in awkward places where they're forced to decide whether or not things are appropriate. *You* be the one to protect *them*, *you* set the standard, you keep things above board & blameless, preserve her integrity. But as for men in general, Paul says. "Hey, don't be flirtatious, don't be provocative, remain pure."

Vs 3-8

Should the church be benevolent? Yes. Is the church obligated to give money to everyone who asks? Not by a long shot. As a matter of fact we would do well to get back to some biblical specifics as opposed to be governed by our emotions. People bank on the fact that if they give you a sad enough story you'll be moved to give them money. But the bible lays out some principles of benevolence.

Yes, we want to be there as we can for genuine, legitimate need. However there's no obligation to simply hand money to the person who has for whatever reason simply chosen not to work &/or has incurred debt due to foolish decisions (or isn't using wisdom in how they're handling the resources that they have).

Paul says, "Honor widows who are really widows." That word "honor" is the same word from which we get our word "honorarium". It speaks of financial support. Now, keep in mind that Paul was writing to a generation that knew nothing of social security, retirement plans, life insurance, Medicaid etc. The single most destitute individual in his culture would've been an elderly widow, they would have nothing & no means to provide for themselves.

Paul says, "You have in your fellowship a widow who is completely bereaved, deprived of *everything*, no husband, no children, no grandchildren, nothing. *Then* you can begin to consider helping her make her way (pay her bills & such)." But just being completely bereaved isn't enough, there's more qualifications that need to be met.

But before we even get to that Paul says, "Hey, let's get back to family values. If your mother is out in the cold, w/no husband & no means to provide for herself in anyway & you're not willing to be there for her, than shame on you!" This is the woman who scrimped & saved & sacrificed to provide for you throughout your entire childhood & now you're going to turn your back on her when she's in need?

Hey, don't be callin yourself a Christian if that's the stance you take… (More on that in just a moment). Paul says, "Benevolence begins at home". This person has taken care of you in life & now it's only appropriate for you to tend to her. So if she's to be legitimately helped by the church, she ought not have any children or grandchildren whom she can turn to 1st. It goes back even to the 10 commandments doesn't it? It doesn't matter how old you get, "Honor your father & your mother" is still the word of God.

The bible obligates us to tend to the needs of our parents to the best of our ability as they get to the age when they can no longer take care of themselves… That doesn't mean that retirement homes, or assisted living facilities are sin, that may be the best thing you can do, there may be needs in place that you're not qualified to tend to. Those are things you work out between you & the Lord. The point here is that family, looks out *for* & takes care *of*, family.

Ok, she has no family, does the church automatically pick up her bills? No. We need to determine, is she a believer? Is that demonstrated in the way she leads & has led her life? If she's to be helped by the church, she should serve the church in someway, in this case, Paul says she should be in prayer & be willing to pray for the spiritual health & well being of the church.

The true widow lives for the things of the Spirit, but the one who lives for the things of the flesh (Vs 6) is dead while she lives. If she's mindful of the things of the Lord, help her out. If she's mindful of the things of this world, not seeking to live a godly life, she's on her own. We're to do our best to ensure that those who are asking for God's money are leading godly lives. The word "pleasure" here is more literally "self indulgent".

It's not uncommon for people to come to the church for assistance because they're in need having lived their lives in self-indulgence (drugs, alcohol etc) now they have nothing & are asking for a hand out. It's legitimate to say, "No".

Paul says, "Command these things so that people will know what God expects of them." If you are need of God's resources, He expects you to be living a godly life…

"But if anyone does not provide for his own," the typical way that God provides for our needs won't be through the church, but through our own hard work. Paul says that if we won't take care of our own, if we won't do everything we can do to support our family then we have in essence denied the faith & shown ourselves worse than an unbeliever… The idea being that even those who are in the world understand their general responsibility to tend to the needs of their family. So if you won't even do that, what does that speak of you?

This is why we can pray w/such confidence for the one who is currently between jobs. Because we know it's God's will that they be providing for the needs of their family through working…

Now as it pertains to widows, again we realize that times were different in Paul's day. It may not be finances the widow needs today (though it may be), it could be friendship they're in need of. An invitation to thanksgiving dinner, a chore around the house… There are several ways we can minister to & meet needs for the widow that undoubtedly we fail in…

Vs 9-10

When he says, "Taken into the number" they evidently kept a register of widows whom they would tend to & take care of. Paul gives even more stipulations, if they're under 60 they're still able to support themselves or get remarried, they don't need to be on the list. If she's over 60 she needs to have been faithful to her husband, a one man kind of woman. Just like the leaders of the church were to be one woman kind of men. If she wasn't honoring the Lord, but bouncing around from relationship to relationship & then suddenly in need she banks on her sad story, Paul says, "No".

She needs to be well reported for good works, have the reputation of a godly character, she's trained up her kids (taking for granted she's had them) in godliness, she's been hospitable, she's served in humility, cared for the sick, encouraged the sorrowing. In other words, she needs to be a godly woman.

Vs 11-16.

If the widow is young, she should be encouraged to get a job, or to get remarried. Evidently when these widows would be put on the registry of the church they would commit to leading a life of service to the Lord saying that they were no longer interested in being married but in simply serving the Lord.

Paul says, "If they're too young, they might say that initially, as they're in need or sorrowing, but eventually they'll begin to have impulses again of a physical nature." When he says that they grow wanton against Christ, what he's saying is that initially they could never imagine remarrying, but eventually they begin to have a sexual impulse again & they want to be married & that desire for marriage begins to consume them. But then they feel as though they've failed the Lord because they said they weren't going to pursue another man & they carry this guilt around, the feel all condemned.

He says, "Not only that but when they're young like that & have no bills to worry about they do unwise things w/their time. They struggle resisting the temptations of idleness & go visiting everyone & can begin to be gossips & busybodies. Rather than giving their time to godly service, they become susceptible to being idle gossips… I read somewhere that too much time with not enough to do is dangerous for *anybody* except those who are too old to get in trouble ☺.

So Paul says, "Hey, it's better for them to remarry, have kids if they want, & manage the house" (we're talking Prov 31 here). That way it keeps the enemy from getting a foothold in the situation.

Then he underscores for a 3rd time, the church needs to be free to meet legitimate needs. Not bear the responsibility that's in reality due the family. So if your mother is a widow & has no provision in her life, don't tell her to go to the church, take care of her.

Vs 17-18

To put it plainly the scripture is saying to pay you pastor well. That's weird for me to say (& just so that you know I feel extremely blessed by how the Lord provides for me through this body). This word "honor" in Vs 17 quite frankly speaks of compensation. It's almost like he's saying, "Whatever you think it's worth to be fed the word of God & tended to spiritually/eternally, double that & call that his salary." I don't know that, that *is* what he's saying, but it almost reads like that.

You're to honor the widows, you're to doubly honor the elders who rule well, especially those who labor in the word & doctrine.

Some believe that a Pastor isn't really spiritual unless he's kept on the edge of poverty. However that's not a biblical position at all… The bible says you're not to muzzle an ox as it treads out grain, it's to partake of all that it needs in order to stay focused on the work at hand. Jesus said, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."

Again there's no gripe from me, I'm simply reporting what the word teaches on the issue. Yes, there are those who abuse the system, but most people in ministry don't embark upon the career because of the pay. It's ok to bless the man who brings God's word to you, odds are he's not twisted w/ulterior motive or going to become all carnal because he gets paid well.

Vs 19-20

Ok, herein lies the balance of discipline in the life of the church leader. 1

1st of all we're to realize that the man whom God calls to rebuke people on a semi regular basis is more than likely going to have a lot of enemies. A lot of people who would rather see him hurt than repent of their own sin because their pride got all offended when they were called out. So they become experts at criticizing the one who brought the rebuke.

So Paul says, "Don't believe everyone who brings an accusation against an elder (or a leader in the body)". It's not special treatment, it's fair protection. If you're not willing to write your complaint down, sign it & confront the man on it, it's probably going to be set aside as gossip or speculation.

However, if something is brought to my attention 2-3 times by different people (not the 2-3 people who were gossiping about the same thing) then its time to give the accusation some serious consideration. 1st of all if you go accusing a pastor of something out of line you have to be able to verify the facts, 2-3 witnesses. Rumor & suspicion aren't adequate grounds for discipline. 2ndly when an accusation is made, witnesses ought to be present, the accused has the right to face his accuser. & If the accuser isn't willing to face the accused, again it's probably not going to be taken seriously, will be set aside as false accusation or speculation.

If the accusation is verified than the situation is to be dealt with & disciplinary procedures begin. Vs 20 reminds us that leadership doesn't shield us from accountability, it makes us all the more accountable.

Vs 21

This is what we call a radically solemn charge. Before God, the Lord J.C. & the elect angels (that is those who did not sin, but kept their proper domain (Jude 6). In other words, "Timothy, you better take this responsibility seriously, when it comes to these things (even & perhaps especially handling church leadership appropriately) you better do them w/out prejudice & w/no partiality."

If someone is in the wrong, they're in the wrong even if you like them, no partiality, if they're in the right, they're in the right, even if you don't like them, w/out prejudice. Honor the Lord in what you do & in the decisions you make.

Vs 22

Put simply, if you would be careful & take it slow in ordaining people into leadership a lot of headaches could be avoided. Let people be proven prior to placing them in leadership. Doesn't mean we'll always get it perfect, but going slow will avoid a lot of potential problems.

I have enough sin of my own, I don't want to share in yours…

Vs 23

We finally found it! Now we're all justified in pounding down the alcohol right!? Wrong, Timothy was probably avoiding alcohol to be a good example but since he was having stomach problems & the alcohol would kill much of the bacteria in the impure water of his day Paul says, do what's best for your body.

If you're trying to discipline your body for the kingdom of God in a manner that's not good for your body, than it's not good…

Here's the point, medicine is not the enemy of faith. I'm sure Paul prayed for him, yet God chose not to heal him physically. So Paul said, "Take your medicine & serve the Lord."

Be careful trying to justify drinking alcohol w/a verse that really has nothing to do w/drinking alcohol in the context you're implying.

This Vs is medicinal in it's application, all healing comes from God, He can use medicine just as effectively as He can work miracles. Pray & take your medicine…

Vs 24-25

This goes back to not laying hands on men too quickly, some guys are good at hiding their sin, so don't be too quick to place people in positions of leadership. Even so if a man has good works in his life, you will eventually see that. You will know them by their fruits, maybe not immediately, but eventually, so be patient.

So we have some real practical words on how we're to do ministry & how we're to treat one another w/kindness & dignity, as a family, in the body of Christ…

Prayer Points:

Lord God as always we thank You for Your Word. How practical it is & how speaks to us right where we're at. Father I pray for every family here individually but also the C.C. family we make up collectively. May we honor You in how we treat one another. May we render the honor & the dignity & the respect that's due to Your sons & Your daughters as we interact w/one another & go through life together. Glorify Yourself in our lives.

Today we're talking about family matters, the question that confronts you is, are you a member of the family of God? Are you a son or a daughter of God having been adopted by faith in J.C.? If not I want to invite you to believe on the Lord J.C. today who has loved you, died on the cross & given Himself for you rising again 3 days later so that you can be forgiven of all your sin & be welcomed into the family of God, a new creation.