



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The First Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy

Chapter 5

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Introduction

- In this chapter, St. Paul is instructing his disciple Timothy how to deal with the different groups of people
- Dealing with different categories (1-2)
- Widows (3-16)
- Priests (17-18)
- Rebuke (19-21)
- Ordinations (22)
- Taking care of one's health (23)
- The hidden and manifest sins (24-25)

Dealing With Different Categories (1 Tim 5:1-2)



- The way in which the correction is applied to elders should differ
- They are to be encouraged to walk rightly
- Elders should treat those younger with love and compassion as brothers

Dealing With Different Categories (1 Tim 5:1-2)



- It is not appropriate to sharply rebuke an older woman
- Concerning sisters he adds “*with all purity*”
- One must give particular attention to the purity of such relationships



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- By “*honor*” St. Paul means to care for them as dependents
- Who are really widows: have no one to take care of them neither do they have any resources
- Putting religion into practice
(James 1:27)



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- Caring for the needs of one's family is part of what it means to live the Christian life
- Another reason is: repaying one's parents and grandparents for all the labor they put into raising me
- If you want to do something pleasing to God, this is one thing to do



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- What is the type of widow which the church should officially support?
- Left alone
- Continues in supplications and prayers night and day (Luke 2:36,37)
- Being a dependent and receiving entitlements, being alone, and not having a job, it is easy to spend life in pleasures



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- If you are living for yourself rather than living to serve God, you might as well be dead as far as God is concerned
- This is God's expectation: "He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Cor 5:15)



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- Part of attaining a blameless life is a function of someone else being willing to command and instruct us, and of our willingness to receive such commands and instruction
- This is the blessing of having a spiritual father



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- What is it to deny the faith and be worse than an unbeliever but to be not only unsaved but worthy of the punishment of an apostate
- For to neglect the needs of one's family, God having graciously provided for one's own need, is to devalue God's graciousness to such a point as to deny it altogether



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- The early church used to benefit from all the talents of her children
- So there was a rank called the “ecclesiastical widowhood” who used to serve the needs of the women in the church
- We read about them in Acts 9:41



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- The requirements of those widows are:
 - ❖ To be at least sixty years old (explained in verse 11)
 - ❖ Wife of one man: like the priests and deacons, they should not be married more than once
 - ❖ Good works: She should have a good report



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- ❖ If: in addition to the good report of good works
- ❖ Brought up children: to be qualified for ministry to orphans and to mothers of families
- ❖ Lodged strangers: hospitality
- ❖ Washed the saint's feet: humbleness



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- ❖ Relieved the afflicted: financial or other relief
- ❖ Followed good works: with the sick, the prisoners, the hungry, etc.
- Younger: under sixty
- Refuse: to take the role of “ecclesiastical widowhood”



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- Grow wanton against Christ: rebelling against Christ, their proper Bridegroom
- The desire to remarry, after being pledged to Christ and the service of the church (their first faith), brings condemnation on themselves



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- The ecclesiastical widow, moreover, engaged to remain single, because the interests of Christ's cause made it desirable
- They had pledged "their first faith" to Christ as ecclesiastical widows; they now wish to transfer their faith to a husband



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- Idle: inactive, doing nothing beneficial
- Wandering: they carry the affairs of this house to that, and of that to this; they tell the affairs of all to all
- Gossips: which causes conflicts
- Busybodies: inconsiderately curious
- They ought not: as Christians



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- Seeing that younger widows are exposed to such temptations, it is better for them to remarry
- This is a recommendation not a law
- Bear children: instead of idleness
- Manage the house: This is honorable and thus will attain a good reputation



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- If the opportunity (loose conduct of nominal Christians) were given, the adversary (of Christianity) would use it for the sake of reproach
- The adversary is eager to exaggerate the faults of a few, and to lay the blame on the whole Church and its doctrines



Widows (1 Tim 5:3-16)

- Some widows are already turned aside after Satan, by such errors and so have given occasion of reproach
- Taking care of one's family and not letting the church be burdened are very important Biblical principles
- Really widows: helpless and needy



Priests (1 Tim 5:17,18)

- Rule well: with wisdom, ability, and loving faithfulness (hegumen)
- The principle of reward: those who rule well should be double honored, promoted, rewarded, and distinguished from the rest
- The church should pay special honor to those who labor in teaching and preaching



Priests (1 Tim 5:17,18)

- The Scripture (Deut 25:4) and (Luke 10:7)
- While those who labor in word and doctrine have the right to be paid for doing so, then when they rule well, they should be acknowledged and honored for doing so



Rebuke (1 Tim 5:19-21)

- Elder: priest
- A conviction was not permitted in Deut 17:6 and Deut 19:15, except on the testimony of at least two or three witnesses
- Priests as public figures are more exposed to false accusations
- Timothy as a bishop has the power to judge in the church



Rebuke (1 Tim 5:19-21)

- Those who are sinning: whether priest or laymen
- Rebuke in the presence of all: publicly (Matthew 18:15-17), (1 Cor 5:9-13), (Eph 5:11)
- If the rebuke is disregarded, the next step is excommunication



Rebuke (1 Tim 5:19-21)

- Fear: the other members of the church may have a fear of offending (Deut 13:11) and (Acts 5:11)
- The responsibility of judging is a huge responsibility in which the bishop can be tempted with prejudice and partiality



Rebuke (1 Tim 5:19-21)

- After instructing him how to judge and assigning him this responsibility, he reminded him of the judgment throne of God
- Elect angels: Objects of divine love, not the fallen angels, worthy of honor, participating in our affairs



Rebuke (1 Tim 5:19-21)

- God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels are the witnesses to Timothy's ministry
- These things: the commandments in verses 19, 20
- Prejudice: preferring one before another
- Partiality: in favor of a man



Ordinations (1 Tim 5:22)

- The way to guard against scandals occurring in the case of the clergy is to be cautious as to the character of the candidate before ordaining him
- If you ordain an ungodly candidate, you are sharing in his sins and thus defiling your purity
- Be not a partaker in other men's sins by not "rebuking them that sin before all."

Taking Care Of One's Health (1 Tim 5:23)



- Timothy was sick but at the same time, he was observing strict asceticism
- St. Paul is reminding him to take care of his health as a gift from God (stewardship)
- He instructs him to drink wine to strengthen him, but he emphasized a “little”

Hidden and Manifest Sins (1 Tim 5:24,25)



- There are two classes of sins, as there are two classes of good works: those manifest and those hidden
- The former are those on which you should act decidedly at once when called on, whether to rebuke in general, or to ordain ministers in particular; as to the latter, the final judgment alone can decide; however hidden now they “cannot be hidden” then

Hidden and Manifest Sins (1 Tim 5:24,25)



- So, Timothy can only be responsible if he conspire at manifest or evident sins; not that those that are otherwise shall escape judgment at last
- Just as in the case of good works, he can only be responsible for taking into account in his judgments those which are manifest to all, not those secret good works which nevertheless will not remain hidden at the final judgment



Conclusion

- What are the qualifications of the ecclesiastical widow?
- Why did St. Paul encourage young widows to be married?
- How did St. Paul describe those who do not take care of their own family?
- How should the bishop protect himself from partiality and prejudice in judging others?