

Letters to Lead By

1 TIMOTHY 5

FIRST DAY: Introduction

In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul prayed for them that their *love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment* (Philippians 1:9). God desires that His church *abound still more and more* in love, but love must be discretionary. Unfortunately, even in the church there are those who take advantage of love and seek to exploit it to their own exaltation and self-aggrandizement. Therefore, the servants of Christ must *be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves* (Matthew 10:16).

In 1 Timothy 5, Paul gave Pastor Timothy specific instructions on how the church is to be like a family, with respect, love, and discernment. These instructions to the church are still relevant today to those of us who seek to *abound still more and more* in love. There is a special, respectful, and discerning regard that we as believers are to have and exercise toward one another.

As you read Paul's instructions, pray for yourself and the church to increase in love with all knowledge and all discernment.

SECOND DAY: Read 1 Timothy 5:1–8

1. In 1 Timothy 4, Paul had exhorted Timothy to set an example to the believers in his behavior and priorities. As a pastor, Timothy needed to use discernment and show respect toward the individual members in his church. According to 1 Timothy 5:1–2, how was Timothy to regard:
 - a. *An older man*

(1) Link this with Leviticus 19:32 and share your thoughts.

b. *Younger men*

c. *Older women*

d. *Younger women*

(1) What underlying principle(s) do you see in the way we are to treat other believers?

(2) The Greek word used here for *rebuke* indicates striking at or lashing out harshly, while the word for *exhort* implies coming alongside to encourage or admonish. What does this convey to you concerning the proper way to correct another believer?

2. One group of people in the church was of special concern to Paul—widows. He addressed at length how Timothy was to care for them. 1 Timothy 5:3–7 (NLT) says, ³*Take care of any widow who has no one else to care for her.* ⁴*But if she has children or grandchildren, their first responsibility is to show godliness at home and repay their parents by taking care of them. This is something that pleases God.* ⁵*Now a true widow, a woman who is truly alone in this world, has placed her hope in God. She prays night and day, asking God for His help.* ⁶*But the widow who lives only for pleasure is spiritually dead even while she lives.* ⁷*Give these instructions to the church so that no one will be open to criticism.* Cite the characteristics you observe in this passage concerning a *true widow*.

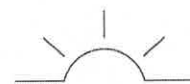
- a. Contrast the *true widow* with widows who:

- (1) Have family members (verse 4)

- (a) Remark on the fact that caring for widows is referred to as *godliness*.

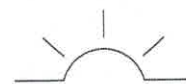
- (2) Live for *pleasure*—in Greek, *a wanton and indulgent life* (verse 6)

- b. How do you think following these guidelines concerning widows would prevent the believers from being *open to criticism*? 1 Timothy 5:7



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Anna, the prophetess, was 84 years old and serves as a model of a true widow. She never left the temple, but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer. God allowed her to recognize the baby Jesus as the promised Messiah. Her story is found in Luke 2:36–38.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the first century, widows had great difficulty supporting themselves. There were no pensions, no social security, no life insurance, and few jobs available for women.

3. What statement was made about those who do not *provide* for family members? 1 Timothy 5:8

a. Why do you think Paul made such a serious assertion?
See also James 1:27a; 2:15–17.

(1) Why is this important for believers to consider?

4. In light of your study today, consider Exodus 22:22–24, Deuteronomy 10:18, and Psalm 68:5. What does God's heart for widows convey to you about His character?

THIRD DAY: Read 1 Timothy 5:9–16

1. Paul continued his directives by specifying which widows should be provided for by the church. Use 1 Timothy 5:9–10 to cite and comment on the qualifications of these widows.

a. What stands out to you from this list of qualifications?

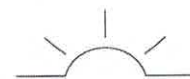
2. By contrast, Paul had different instructions for *younger widows*. In 1 Timothy 5:11–15 (NLT) he wrote, ¹¹*The younger widows should not be on the list, because their physical desires will overpower their devotion to Christ and they will want to remarry.* ¹²*Then they would be guilty of breaking their previous pledge.* ¹³*And if they are on the list, they will learn to be lazy and will spend their time gossiping from house to house, meddling in other people's business and talking about things they shouldn't.* ¹⁴*So I advise these younger widows to marry again, have children, and take care of their own homes. Then the enemy will not be able to say anything against them.* ¹⁵*For I am afraid that some of them have already gone astray and now follow Satan.* Use these instructions to note and comment on:

a. Potential pitfalls for *younger widows* (verses 11–13, 15)

(1) Why is this dangerous to the whole church?

b. Paul's advice for *younger widows* (verse 14a)

c. The desired testimony of *younger widows* (verse 14b)



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Paul's concern was that widows who grow *wanton* will pursue relationships with pagan men and that will result in those widows forsaking their commitment to Christ.

- (1) What does bad behavior give *opportunity* for?
 - (2) Since this type of behavior is not limited to young widows, share a way it might be avoided. See Proverbs 26:20–22.
3. According to Paul, what is a family's responsibility toward *widows*? 1 Timothy 5:16
 4. Caring for *widows* is just one aspect of ministry to those in need in the body of Christ. From your study today, what do you note about the responsibility of the church and the responsibility of individual believers as it concerns those in need? See also Galatians 6:10.

FOURTH DAY: Read 1 Timothy 5:17–20

1. Recall that Paul extensively wrote about the office of elders (pastors) in 1 Timothy 3:1–7. As Paul returned to the subject of elders, he instructed that *elders who rule well* are to be given *double honor*. The Greek word for *double honor* denotes generous pay or the double blessing of respect. Why do you think this is a fitting blessing for *elders who rule well*? 1 Timothy 5:17a

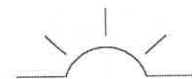
- a. The Greek word for *labor* denotes intense, wearisome effort. What areas are the *elders* to *labor* in? 1 Timothy 5:17b

(1) Link this with Acts 6:3–4, and share your thoughts.

(2) Why do you think this concentrated *labor* is beneficial to the whole church?

(a) Why is such *labor* worthy of *double honor*? See also 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13.

2. In 1 Timothy 5:18, Paul cited the Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 25:4) and the words of Jesus (Luke 10:7). These Scriptures communicate that just as an ox should be permitted to eat from the grain it is treading, so all who labor for the gospel should be provided for financially. Link this with 1 Corinthians 9:7–14 and share your thoughts.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Pastor Warren Wiersbe noted, *The word "honor" is used as in "honorarium."* An honorarium is a gift to those you choose to honor.¹

3. From 1 Timothy 5:19–20, note and comment on Paul's directives regarding:

a. *An accusation against an elder* (verse 19)

(1) Link this with Deuteronomy 19:15 and Matthew 18:15–16. What wisdom do you see in this instruction?

b. *Elders who are sinning* (verse 20)

(1) In the Greek, the word *sinning* implies habitual sin that is known to the congregation. Why is Paul's directive fitting under such circumstances?

4. From your study today, contrast *elders who labor in word and doctrine* with those who are *sinning*. What is the discretionary attitude love should take? See 1 Peter 4:8 and Jude 22–23.

FIFTH DAY: Read 1 Timothy 5:21–25

1. Paul's instructions to Timothy included an impassioned *charge*. Use 1 Timothy 5:21 to fill in the blanks concerning this *charge*:

I _____ you before _____ and the _____
 _____ and the _____
 _____ that you _____ these things without
 _____, doing nothing with _____.

- a. Why do you think Paul felt it necessary to *charge* Timothy in this matter?

(1) Identify the dangers of:

(a) *Prejudice* (Galatians 3:26–29)

(b) *Partiality* (James 2:1–4)

(2) Why is Paul's *charge* essential for the church today?

2. Paul further cautioned Timothy concerning eldership. Use 1 Timothy 5:22 to answer the following:

- a. Why is it important not to *lay hands on* (ordain) someone for the ministry *hastily*?

- b. Practically, what does sharing in *other people's sins* look like? See Psalm 1:1.
 - c. Why do you think purity is paramount for leadership?
3. In 1 Timothy 5:23, Paul paused to give Timothy personal advice concerning his health. What does this suggest about his relationship with Timothy?
4. First Timothy 5:24–25 (NLT) says, ²⁴*Remember, the sins of some people are obvious, leading them to certain judgment. But there are others whose sins will not be revealed until later.* ²⁵*In the same way, the good deeds of some people are obvious. And the good deeds done in secret will someday come to light.* How does this speak to you concerning:
- a. *Sins* (verse 24)
 - (1) Read Matthew 10:26 and share a way this truth can serve as a:
 - (a) Warning
 - (b) Comfort

b. *Good deeds* (verse 25)

- (1) Link this with Matthew 6:3–4, 6. Share your insights.

5. What effect do you think the behavior of leadership can have on:
- a. The testimony of the church to the world
 - b. Individual believers
 - c. The congregation in the church

SIXTH DAY: Review

1. From your study this week, cite the attitude to be demonstrated toward:
- a. Older men
 - b. Younger men

- c. Older women
 - d. Younger women
 - e. True widows
 - f. Young widows
 - g. Elders who rule well
 - h. Elders with questionable behavior
2. Take a moment to pray for each of the groups above who are in your church.