

1 Timothy 5:

Outline

(My thanks to the Outline Bible)

- I. THE PEOPLE (5:1–16): Paul gives advice concerning church members.
 - a. **In regard to older men** (5:1a): Treat them as respected fathers.
 - b. **In regard to younger men** (5:1b): Treat them as brothers.
 - c. **In regard to older women** (5:2a): Treat them as mothers.
 - d. **In regard to younger women** (5:2b): Treat them as sisters.
 - e. **In regard to widows** (5:3–16)
 - i. *Older widows* (5:3–10, 16)
 - ii. Widows who are over sixty, godly, and have no living children (5:3, 5, 9–10, 16): These are to be honored and provided for.
 - iii. Widows who have living children and grandchildren (5:4, 8, 16): They are to be cared for by their families.
 - iv. Widows who are carnal and live only for pleasure (5:6–7): They are to receive no help.
 - f. *Younger widows* (5:11–15)
 - i. The rule (5:11–12, 14): Let them remarry and raise children.
 - ii. The reason (5:13, 15): This will keep them from immorality and idle talk.¹
- II. THE PREACHERS (5:17–25): Paul's advice concerning church elders.
 - a. **Elders in general (5:17–22, 24–25)**
 - b. *They are worthy of double honor* (5:17–18).
 - c. *They must never be unjustly accused* (5:19–20, 24–25).
 - d. *They must be impartial* (5:21).
 - e. *They must be proven before being ordained* (5:22a).
 - f. *They must keep themselves pure* (5:22b).
 - g. **Timothy in particular** (5:23): "Drink a little wine for the sake of your stomach because you are sick so often."²

*Holiness sounds scary. It need not be, but to the average American it is. Our tendency is to say that holiness is something for the cloistered halls of a monastery. It needs organ music, long prayers, and religious-sounding chants. It hardly seems appropriate for those in the real world of the twentieth century. Author John White seems to agree with that as he wrote in *The Fight the images that came to his mind when he thought about holiness:**

*thinness
hollow-eyed gauntness
beards
sandals*

¹ H. L. Willmington, [*The Outline Bible*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), 1 Ti 5:1–13.

² H. L. Willmington, [*The Outline Bible*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), 1 Ti 5:17–23.

long robes
stone cells
no sex
no jokes
hair shirts
frequent cold baths
fasting
hours of prayer
wild rocky deserts
getting up at 4 A.M.
clean fingernails
stained glass
self-humiliation

Is that the mental picture you have when you think of holiness? Most do. It's almost as though holiness is the private preserve of an austere group of monks, missionaries, mystics, and martyrs. But nothing could be further from the truth

*I couldn't be in greater agreement with Chuck Colson's statement in *Loving God*: "Holiness is the everyday business of every Christian. It evidences itself in the decisions we make and things we do, hour by hour, day by day."³*

Detailed study:

I. THE PEOPLE (5:1–16): Paul gives advice concerning church members.

1 Tim. 5:1-2:

Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers,² older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.

- a. **In regard to older men** (5:1a): Treat them as respected fathers.
- b. These are general principles.
- c. Encourage
- d. Treat younger men as brother.
- e. **In regard to older women** (5:2a): Treat them as mothers.
- f. **In regard to younger women** (5:2b): Treat them as sisters.
- g. **CSB:** *The church is described in these verses in family terms (3:4–5, 15). Verse 1 does not prohibit the correcting of older men but speaks to the respectful manner in which this should be done.*⁴
- h. **ESV Study Bible:** *The church is conceived of as family (see 3:4–5, 15). Though the term "honor" does not appear in 5:1–2, it applies here as surely as it does in vv. 3, 17;*

³ Charles R. Swindoll, [*The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart and 1501 Other Stories*](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2016), 268–269.

⁴ Ray Van Neste, "[1 Timothy](#)," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1923.

6:1. Verse 1 of ch. 5 does not prohibit the correcting of an **older man** but speaks to the manner (respectfully) in which this should be done.⁵

- i. **Moody:** The word translated **rebuke** in this verse appears in contemporary sources in contexts that refer to a severe rebuke that seeks to punish rather than correct. Elsewhere Paul spoke of the appropriate rebuke that is the obligation of those who minister God's Word (2Tm 4:2). Family relationships provide the pattern for relating to the various age groups mentioned in these verses (v. 2). The apostle highlighted areas where a young leader might be especially vulnerable.⁶
- j. **MacArthur:** Some translations add "sharply" to the word "rebuke," which fills out the intensity of the Gr. term. An older sinning believer is to be shown respect by not being addressed with harsh words (cf. 2Ti 2:24, 25). **an older man.** In this context, the Gr. is indicating older men generally, not the office of elder. The younger Timothy was to confront sinning older men with deference and honor, which is clearly inferred from OT principles (cf. Lv 19:32; Job 32:4, 6; Pr 4:1–4; 16:31; 20:29). **appeal.** This Gr. word, which is related to a title for the Holy Spirit (*paraclētos*; cf. Jn 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7), refers to coming alongside someone to help. It may best be translated strengthen. We are to strengthen our fellow believers (cf. Gal 6:1, 2) in the same way the Scripture (Ro 15:4) and the Holy Spirit do.⁷
- k. **In regard to widows** (5:3–16)
 - i. *Older widows* (5:3–10, 16)

1 Tim. 5:3-10:

Honor widows who are truly widows. ⁴ But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God. ⁵ She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, ⁶ but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. ⁷ Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. ⁸ But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

⁹ *Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband,^[a] ¹⁰ and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work.*

- ii. Widows who are over sixty, godly, and have no living children (5:3, 5, 9–10, 16): These are to be honored and provided for.

⁵ Crossway Bibles, [The ESV Study Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2332.

v. verse

⁶ John M. Koessler, "[1 Timothy](#)," in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1901.

⁷ John F. MacArthur Jr., [The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 1 Ti 5:1.

- iii. Notice how he says: “widows ‘indeed.’” I like how MacArthur shares: **Honor.** “To show respect or care,” “to support,” or “to treat graciously.” Although it includes meeting all kinds of needs, Paul had in mind here not only this broad definition, but primarily financial support (cf. Ex 20:12; Mt 15:1–6; 27:9). **widows indeed.** Not all widows are truly alone and without resources. [this is clear in the next 2 verses] Financial support from the church is mandatory only for widows who have no means to provide for their daily needs.⁸
- iv. Further, The CSB: **The widow who is truly in need and deserves support from the church is one without family members to support her and who devotes herself to prayer and not to self-indulgence.**⁹
- v. Dr. Constable: *This whole discussion of widows, then, may focus on the younger widows in particular. They may be the same women Paul spoke of in 2 Timothy 3:6–7 who were responding positively to the false teachers. This may explain the inordinate length of the section.*¹⁰
- vi. *Paul spends more verses instructing Timothy on widows (1 Timothy 5:3–16) than on any other people group — including overseers! It was vital that Timothy’s care for the flock extend to what Jesus called “the least of these,” rather than majoring on the mighty and the wealthy, who easily attract church leaders’ fullest attention.*¹¹
- vii. **CHRYSOSTOM:** *Observe the discretion of Paul, how often he urges us to attend to human considerations. For he does not here lay down any great and lofty motive but one that is easy to be understood: “to [repay] their parents.” Why? For bringing them up and educating them. It is as if he should say, you have received from them great care.... You cannot compensate them. For you did not bring them forth or nourish them. Compensate them in their descendants. Repay the debt through the children. HOMILIES ON 1 TIMOTHY 13.*¹²
- viii. Widows who have living children and grandchildren (5:4, 8, 16): They are to be cared for by their families.
- ix. Notice in verse 4 he makes it clear that a true widow has no children or grandchildren. Paul is saying the family first should help providing for their mother/grandmother.
- x. MacArthur: **widow has children or grandchildren.** *Families, not the church, have the first responsibility for their own widows. return to their parents. Children and grandchildren are indebted to those who brought them into the*

⁸ John F. MacArthur Jr., [The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 1 Ti 5:3.

⁹ Ray Van Neste, [“1 Timothy,”](#) in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1923.

¹⁰ Tom Constable, [Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Ti 5:1.

¹¹ https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/i-worked-harder?utm_campaign=Daily%20Email&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=121770712&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8BlrX4WjSOam4Bu_01VwWGrAX-1k9hEOR5KQw5qH5a_2idj5R-nbQlwWGPCPKJr9WS_mj9qPFvL9BraoJXoE8cOPI9kw&utm_content=121770712&utm_source=hs_email

¹² James Stuart Bell, ed., [Ancient Faith Study Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bibles, 2019), 1497.

*world, reared them, and loved them. Fulfilling this responsibility is a mark of godly obedience (cf. Ex 20:12).*¹³

- xi. ESV Study Bible: *Some have suggested that an order of widows as an office in the church is in view here, but this is unlikely since the stated issue is provision for those in need.*¹⁴
- xii. Verse 5: the one left alone, fixed her hope on God, continues in prayer...
- xiii. Wow! Prayer is such an important ministry.
- xiv. MacArthur: **left alone**. See note on v. 3. *The form of this Gr. word denotes a permanent condition of being forsaken and left without resources. She is "really" a widow, since there is no family to support her. fixed her hope on God. A continual state or settled attitude of hope in God (cf. 1Ki 17:8–16; Jer 49:11). Since she has no one else, she pleads with God as her only hope.*¹⁵
- xv. Widows who are carnal and live only for pleasure (5:6–7): They are to receive no help.
- xvi. Verse 7: prescribe these things so that they may be above reproach. Paul is concerned with their holiness.
- xvii. Verse 8 has very strong language: we must provide for our family, or risk being denied the faith.
- xviii. If we do not provide for our family we are worse than an unbeliever.
- xix. *The strong language in this verse indicates that provision for one's own household is a spiritual responsibility.*¹⁶
- xx. MacArthur: **if**. Better translated, "since." Paul negatively restated the positive principle of v. 4, using the Gr. construction that implies the condition is true, suggesting that there were numerous violations of that principle at Ephesus. Any believer who fails to obey this command is guilty of: 1) denying the principle of compassionate Christian love (cf. Jn 13:35; Ro 5:5; 1Th 4:9); and 2) being "worse than an unbeliever." **Most pagans naturally fulfill this duty, so believers who have God's command and power to carry it out and do not, behave worse than pagans.** Cf. 1Co 5:1, 2.¹⁷
- xxi. Widows go on the list if:
 - 1. Over 60
 - 2. The wife of one man
 - 3. having a reputation for good works;
 - 4. and if she has brought up children,

¹³ John F. MacArthur Jr., [*The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible*](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 1 Ti 5:4.

¹⁴ Crossway Bibles, [*The ESV Study Bible*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2332.

¹⁵ John F. MacArthur Jr., [*The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible*](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 1 Ti 5:5.

¹⁶ Ray Van Neste, "[1 Timothy](#)," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1923.

¹⁷ John F. MacArthur Jr., [*The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible*](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 1 Ti 5:8.

5. if she has shown hospitality to strangers,
 6. if she has washed the saints' feet,
 7. if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work.
- xxii. Notice all of those limitations.
- xxiii. **washed the saints' feet.** *The menial duty of slaves. It is used literally and metaphorically of widows who have humble servants' hearts (see notes on Jn 13:5–17).*¹⁸
- xxiv. *"Sixty was the recognized age in antiquity when one became an 'old' man or woman . . ."*¹⁷⁹¹⁹
- xxv. Our resources are not inexhaustible.

I. *Younger widows* (5:11–15)

1 Tim. 5:11-16:

But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry¹² and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith.¹³ Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.¹⁴ So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander.¹⁵ For some have already strayed after Satan.¹⁶ If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows.

- i. The rule (5:11–12, 14): Let them remarry and raise children.
- ii. The reason (5:13, 15): This will keep them from immorality and idle talk.²⁰
- iii. But...
- iv. Refuse...
- v. People may want to be on the list, but they should not be on the list.
- vi. Their passions pull them away from Christ.
- vii. Notice in the list for the older widows Paul wrote about them having a singular focus on Christ.
- viii. Good summary in the CSB: *The issue in these verses is either that these **widows** who were being supported by the church had pledged to remain unmarried or that these **younger widows** might be tempted by their desires to marry unbelievers, thus turning away from the faith. Since these concerns were prompted by the fact that **some have already turned away to follow Satan**, Paul must have seen this as an important matter. It seems likely that*

¹⁸ John F. MacArthur Jr., [The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible](#). (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006), 1 Ti 5:10.

¹⁷⁹ 179. Kelly, p. 115.

¹⁹ Tom Constable, [Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Ti 5:9.

²⁰ H. L. Willmington, [The Outline Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), 1 Ti 5:1–13.

*his concern was over remarriage to an unbeliever, with the wife adopting the religion of her husband, as was a common custom in that era.*²¹

- ix. Verse 12: they had a previous pledge to Christ and now they cannot follow through.
- x. *It was not wise to place younger widows on this list, and Paul explained why. Younger widows' sensual desires would be stronger, and these feelings would make it very hard for them to remain committed to serving Christ wholeheartedly as single women.*²²
- xi. Verse 13: without work, they are idle. They are gossips:
- xii. There was an article in Christianity Today about this: *The word 'gossips' translates the Greek term 'phluaros'. But this translation is not derived from the context. Nor is there any clear instance in ancient Greek literature where phluaros means 'gossips' or 'gossipy'. It normally refers to talking nonsense. The traditional mistranslation of phluaros was corrected in the 2011 NIV. 'Talking nonsense' corresponds with the description of false teaching in 1 Tim. 1:6 as 'meaningless talk' (NIV) and as profane empty utterances in 6:20 and 2 Timothy 2:16. This is what the women are saying. 'Gossips' is definitely wrong. 'Busybodies' is probably wrong also. The Greek term 'periergos' means a meddler and refers more specifically to meddling by means of magic arts (sorcery). In Ephesus, a well-known center for magic, this would be expected (compare Acts 19:19, which contains the only other use of this word in the NT). Among the things which these women ought not to say are their magical incantations.[ii] Paul does not think that all younger widows are gossips and busybodies. His concern is about these particular younger widows in Ephesus. They are probably false teachers, dabbling in magic, a probability that has been obscured by the traditional translations.*²³
- xiii. Verse 14-15: Younger widows are to follow the normal life trajectory.
- xiv. This will keep them from sin.
- xv. Some have already followed satan. That is quite a statement!
- xvi. *"The metaphor [turning aside] is that of a young animal trying to free itself from the yoke, and becoming restive through its fulness of life."*²⁴
- xvii. Moody: **Turned aside** is the same term Paul used earlier to refer to the false teachers who had turned aside to fruitless discussion (1Tm 1:6). Although the home is the primary sphere of service for many, it is not the only context where God calls women to serve Him (1Co 7:34). The obligation (v. 16) to care for widows in one's family does not fall exclusively upon the women of the church who have the means to provide significantly for their widowed

²¹ Ray Van Neste, "[1 Timothy](#)," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1924.

²² Tom Constable, [Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Ti 5:11.

²³ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/scot-mcknight/2020/october/worst-nt-translations-relation-to-women-3.html>

²⁴ Tom Constable, [Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Ti 5:11.

*relatives (as indicated by Ac 6:1–5). Women are singled out because they would have greater sensitivity to a widow’s needs.*²⁵

Dr. Constable: *In the ancient world most people expected that a widow would remarry.*¹⁸⁸ *The apostle urged the younger widows to use their strength to bear children and to care for their families, the primary duties of a typical Christian wife (cf. Titus 2:5). By doing so, they would not give the enemy (any accuser of believers) an opportunity to criticize them for going back on their pledge to serve Christ as a “widow indeed.” Evidently this had already happened in the Ephesian church (v. 15). In forsaking their professed service of Christ in this way some had turned aside to follow Satan. This is a strong description of the real situation involved in going back on a commitment to Christ.*

Did Paul mean that every young widow, and perhaps every young woman, should get married and bear children? I think not. This was the typical role of a young woman in Paul’s day and still is today worldwide. This seems to be another example of his presenting the typical situation with room for exceptions assumed.

*“The wife who works simply to get luxuries may discover too late that she has lost some necessities. It may be all right to have what money can buy, if you do not lose what money cannot buy.”*²⁶

xviii. **CHRYSOSTOM:** *Why ... did Paul forbid young women to remain as widows even if they were willing?... Do you not see that it is not those who wish to keep their widowhood but rather those who prefer to marry after being widowed whom he forbids to remain as widows and to be appointed to that holy company? And he does so very wisely. For if you should intend to engage in second marriages, he says, do not profess widowhood. For breaking a promise is much worse than not promising at all. AGAINST REMARRIAGE 3.*²⁷

II. THE PREACHERS (5:17–25): Paul’s advice concerning church elders.

1 Tim. 5:17-25:

*Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.*¹⁸ *For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.”*¹⁹ *Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.*²⁰ *As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.*²¹ *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality.*²² *Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others;*

²⁵ John M. Koessler, [“1 Timothy,”](#) in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, ed. Michael A. Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 1902.

¹⁸⁸ 188. B. W. Winter, “Providentia for the Widows of 1 Timothy 5:3–16,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 39 (1988):85; W. K. Lacey, *The Family in Classical Greece*, p. 117.

²⁶ Tom Constable, [Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), 1 Ti 5:13.

²⁷ James Stuart Bell, ed., [Ancient Faith Study Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bibles, 2019), 1500.

keep yourself pure. ²³ (No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.) ²⁴ *The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later.* ²⁵ *So also good works are conspicuous, and even those that are not cannot remain hidden.*

- a. **Elders in general (5:17–22, 24–25)**
- b. *They are worthy of double honor* (5:17–18).
- c. Verse 17: a definite focus on preaching and teaching.
- d. This verse implies that there is a sort of honor that comes with serving in church leadership.
- e. James 3:1 says that the teachers will be judged to a stricter standard
- f. This honor may have to do with respect from people
- g. 1 Thess 5:12 is similar
- h. Heb 13:7 and 13 are similar and this is the idea of obedience and respect
- i. The elders are said to “rule” or “stand before”
- j. There is a leadership idea here. Though the traits are mainly about who the leaders are, they do have a strong leadership position.
- k. Preaching and teaching are specified: it is important that the leaders can work with the Scriptures. Preaching and teaching are similar, yet different. Doctrine is incredibly important.
- l. Verse 18: this verse is about paying leaders who providing for them.
- m. 1 Cor 9 is written about this, of course Paul chose not to be paid at least from Corinth
- n. Chapter 4:15 was about giving oneself wholly to these teachings. This may require payment as we cannot work elsewhere.
- o. This is quoting DT. 25:4 and 1 Cor 9:9 where it is also quoted
- p. In Matthew 10:10 Jesus says that the worker is worth his pay; also: Luke 10:7 and 1 Cor 9:14
- q. *They must never be unjustly accused* (5:19–20, 24–25).
- r. Verse 19 is out of the Old Testament.
- s. → This is a good way of doing things. People may easily accuse a leader of things just for notoriety’s sake.
- t. DT 17:6 and 19:15; Matthew 18:16

- u. → I wonder if this was a problem that Paul was anticipating?
- v. Verse 20: This seems aggressive
- w. → yet when sin is public it may need to be rebuked publicly
- x. → These people are continuing in sin (like 1 Cor 5)
- y. The verb “to sin” is in the active voice which means that the subject is performing the action or in a state of doing that action
- z. This still carries the idea that the rest will have a fear of sinning
 - aa. *They must be impartial* (5:21).
 - bb. *They must be proven before being ordained* (5:22a).
 - cc. *They must keep themselves pure* (5:22b).
 - dd. **Timothy in particular** (5:23): “Drink a little wine for the sake of your stomach because you are sick so often.”²⁸

Jonathan Edwards:

Resolved, never to do anything which I would be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.

—Jonathan Edwards, quoted in Jerry Bridges, *Pursuit of Holiness*²⁹

²⁸ H. L. Willmington, [The Outline Bible](#) (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1999), 1 Ti 5:17–23.

²⁹ Charles R. Swindoll, [The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart and 1501 Other Stories](#) (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2016), 269.