

OUR DUTY TOWARD OTHERS

1 Timothy 5:1-16

We frequently hear complaints about the lack of objectivity of the media.

We assume journalists *should* report facts—not political prejudice. Complaint arises when “news” articles preach partisan politics. Question persists: Can a journalist be impartial?

Can *ANYONE* ever be truly impartial?

A similar issue arises in the church.

Do WE treat others impartially? Without discrimination?

In the early church they face *RACIAL* discrimination:

Care for widows: Hebraic Jews vs. Hellenistic Jews –

Acts 6:1-7

Later, distinctions arise between Jews and Gentiles.

Some feel God’s people should act like Jews; others, like Gentiles.

Conflicts develop: whose rules we should live by?

In dealing with others and caring for needs, *people* play favorites.

We favor people like us!

Paul tries to establish an impartial basis

to guide God’s people in dealing with others.

He’s especially concerned about how God’s people care for widows.

He defines criteria to determine who receives help from the church.

Some of that criteria may require re-evaluation as WE try to apply principles without discrimination in a different cultural situation.

What underlying bedrock principles never change?

Which *principles* require fresh *application* to modern realities?

Paul gives **parameters for treating people justly in church,**

in interpersonal relationships,
in extending aid to the needy,
or in dealing with discipline.

Impartial treatment is required
because we act in the name of an impartial God.

God plays no favorites! **Acts 10:34-35**

OUR DUTY TOWARD OTHERS 5:1-6:2

PROPER RESPECT FOR OTHERS IN GENERAL 5:1-2

Swindoll: Every pastor: *"I love ministry ... it's the people I can't stand!"*

Eugene Peterson: Sundays are easy. The sanctuary is clean and orderly... the people polite. I know what I'm doing: I'm going to lead this people in worship, proclaim God's Word to them.... I've had time to prepare my words and spirit. And the people are ready, arriving dressed up and expectant. Centuries of tradition converge in the singing of hymns, exposition of Scripture, commitments of faith, offering of prayers.... I love doing this. I wake up early Sunday mornings, the adrenaline pumping into my veins.

But after the sun goes down on Sunday, the clarity diffuses. From Monday through Saturday, an unaccountably unruly people track mud through the holy places, leaving a mess. The order of worship gives way to the disorder of argument and doubt...."

Swindoll: "If a church has people, that church has problems."

So how does Paul want us to correct people in the body of Christ?

Basic concept: the church is the family of God.

We ought to treat one another as family.

1-2 *Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers,² older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.*

Encourage/exhort each as family.

Treat older men as you'd treat your father.

Honoring older men doesn't mean never correct them.

If you must correct older men, do it in a gentle, respectful way.

NOT as a "Know-it-all" or smart aleck.

Don't bawl them out. Don't embarrass them publicly.

Don't belittle them, to exalt yourself.

Treat older men with respect and honor.

Treat younger men as you'd treat your brother.

Don't boss them around, or act superior to younger men.

Show them the love you ought to show to a brother.

Treat older women as you'd treat your mother.

They deserve love and concern you ought to show your mother.

Treat young women as you'd treat your sister

–with respect and absolute purity.

Treat them as you want *other* men to treat *your* sister!

Spiritual authority often opens doors for sexual temptation.

Godly men—esp. leaders—ought to establish protective barriers.

We must guard our relationships with respect and absolute

purity!

RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD WIDOWS 5:3-16

Broadscope:

God cares for ALL the needy: aliens, widows, orphans.

Deut. 10:18 *“God defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing.”*

24:17-21 *“Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. ... When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the alien, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.*

[3X:] *Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow.*

N.T. => Acts 6:1-7

James 1:27 *“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world”*

Consistent principle: **God’s people ought to “Do good to all”**

Gal. 6:9-10 *“Let us not become weary in doing good ... As we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”*

Specific call: **Formal adoption and care for widows**
9-11

Worthy Widows 5:3-10

Paul’s tone indicates they’re going too far.

They're caring for needs of some that ought not be helped.

Wiersbe: "The church must be careful not to waste its resources on people who really aren't in need. Some people "milk" churches, while they "refuse to work or use their resources wisely."

The church is to care for widows, providing assistance to worthy widows with needs. 3, 5a

3-10 Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. ⁴ But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. ⁵ The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. ⁶ But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. ⁷ Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame. ⁸ If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. ⁹ No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, ¹⁰ and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

Widows lost their companions and means of support.

There was no Social Security system.

There were no retirement communities or health care facilities.

The family provided their "Social Security" and health care

system.

Latin America: women get pregnant to have a “safety net.”
People who had no family to care for them were on their own;
–the church came alongside to help them.

Different circumstances: church still has privilege of assisting widows.

“Give proper recognition” = lit., “value” = “honor” (KJV)

Includes respect, care for, as well as material support.

Families should take care of their own. 4, 8, 16

Word addressed to children, then to other descendants of widows

<= lit., “descendants” = *grandchildren* (KJV “*nephews*”)

Relatives shouldn’t turn care of widows over to the church.

Strong word directed against those who refuse to assist family **8**

No matter how strong his profession of faith,
he deserves greater condemnation than unbelievers.

First line of defense is always family.

Government provides services. Church provides assistance.

FAMILY is primarily responsible to care for their own.

Increasingly, parents live longer and need more care.

Missionaries come home to care for ailing parents.

Sometimes associates criticize them for leaving field:

“We’re supposed to love God more than father or mother.”

Maybe God *can* provide other family members to care for them.

We demonstrate love for God by caring for those He cares about:

elderly, widows, and orphans.

FAMILY is primarily responsible to care for their own.

Another exclusion: **Widows under sixty should remarry.**

9a

Seems to be age for “retirement eligible.”

Women less than 60 could come up with another solution

–get a job; find a husband.

Not likely to remarry after that–though 60 isn’t that “old” today!

**The church cares for those who live godly lives
and have nowhere else to turn. 5-7, 9-10**

Strict prerequisites:

Necessity 3-4, 8 Nowhere else to turn!

Sixty years old, unable to care for her own needs.

No family to care for her.

Testimony 9-10

Faithful to her husband Lit., “*a one-man woman*”

Parallel to church leaders–Totally committed to her husband.

Well known for good deeds.

She **trusts in God**, looking to Him, **praying for *His* help**.

5

She lives in contrast to *unworthy* widow who lives for pleasure.

–deserves no support from the church.

–considered dead–therefore not helped. **6**

Wiersbe: “It has been my experience . . . that godly widows are

‘spiritual powerhouses’ in the church. They are the backbone of prayer meetings. They give themselves to visitation, and they swell the ranks of teachers in the Sunday School. It has also been my experience that, if a widow is *not* godly, she can be a great problem to the church. She will demand attention, complain about what the younger people do, and often ‘hang on the phone’ and gossip. ... church-helped widows must be ‘blameless’—irreproachable.”

Active in ministry 5-10; Luke 2:37

Like Anna: served God faithfully—life committed to ministry. She doesn’t lay around idly, “watching soaps and eating bonbons.”

She’s actively involved serving the body of Christ,
according to the gifts and strength God gives her.

—raising children—childcare—her own, others’, orphans

Those who receive care should care for her!

—showing hospitality—Those who receive care, care for her!

She has “washed the saints feet”

—helped others when they had needs

—willing to take role of a humble servant

She helps those going through times of distress.

She devotes herself to all kinds of good deeds.

Acceptance of commitment

Service to Christ and to others isn’t reserved for the young.

This is how God desires older women to use their time.

Not only do they receive according to their need,
they give according to their ability.

They have dignity because they live to serve others.

These traits are similar to those required for leaders.

Models what God desires ALL godly women to look like.

Fitting tool for a woman to measure herself by:

“Am I the kind of woman God desires His people to look like?”

“Are these qualities true of me?”

Young widows 5:11-16

Risks for young widows 11-13

As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. ¹² Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. ¹³ Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busy-bodies, saying things they ought not to.

Final part of the story recognizes stages of life.

Paul isn't criticizing younger women.

Isn't focusing on an inappropriate “lustful” desire.

He simply acknowledges that their desires change.

Being put on “the Widows’ List” involves a life-time commitment to serve God and others.

Youthful desires compete with desire to serve God; may distract them from commitment to serve Christ.

Young widows aren't ready for the serious long-term commitment.

They still want more out of life.

They're still able to provide for their own needs.

Long-term idleness may lead to gossip; encourage busybodies.

Better plan for young widows 14-16 *So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander.¹⁵ Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.¹⁶ If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.*

Paul urges young widows to focus on what young women desire:

Focus on seeking husband God wants for you.

Focus on becoming a model wife.

The Message: 11-14 *"Don't put young widows on this list. No sooner will they get on than they'll want to get off, obsessed with wanting to get a husband rather than serving Christ in this way. By breaking their word, they're liable to go from bad to worse, frittering away their days on empty talk, gossip, and trivialities. No, I'd rather the young widows go ahead and get married in the first place, have children, manage their homes, and not give critics any foothold for finding fault."*

One reason for helping older women with a reputation for godliness and serving God, who have nowhere else to turn, is that **resources are limited.**

That was true in Paul's day, as today.

We must carefully determine who has greatest need
and how much we can provide.

That hasn't changed in 2000 years!

APPLICATION FOR THE CHURCH TODAY

God has given us deacons who care about widows and others
in need

Through giving to Deacon Fund, we support this ministry.

Paul urges us to actively pursue this form of showing God's
love

**Economic crisis intensifies the need for God's
people to express God's love by caring for the
needy in God's family.**

Caring for widows—for all the needy in God's family—

Isn't optional; it's essential.

**When we care for God's family in need,
we imitate Him Who is . . .**

Husband to the widow,

Father to the orphan,

Provider for the poor.