

1 Timothy 5:1-8 HOW DOES YOUR FAMILY DO IT

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The body of Christ must reflect in its familial structure the one who adopted them.

Opening Illustration: Middle of January my dad says to me, "Hey, I want you to preach sometime soon." Since we are going through 1st Timothy, the date I preach would determine the text I preach from. Well, a month ago we had just gotten out of chapter 3, moving through chapter 4, some good stuff is there. Then I look at what I've been assigned a couple of weeks ago. You want me to preach on widows? What on earth do I have to say that can benefit this church about widows? I was so intimidated by this that I asked the staff and the elders to pray for me. I'm a 29 year old guy, just the intern, I'm not qualified for this. But isn't that right where Timothy was? So you can see why Paul spent a lot of space at the end of his letter giving Timothy guidance on how the body of Christ cares for widows. Timothy has to trust in the Word to save his hearers no matter who they are rather than his own experience or entertaining stories.

So, watch how Paul does this, 4:16 "Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers". Who are his hearers? Chapter 5 verse 1-2 Hits older men, younger men, older women and younger women. That's all of humanity. Verses 3-16 deal with widows, 17-25 with relating to elders, and chapter 6 verse 1-2 with slaves and masters.

First point,

Am I relating to the family as a whole?

Look at verses 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. Timothy as a leader was charged with relating to everyone. In this family, the elders, pastors, leaders are to be accessible to all groups. They are to be accessing all groups. They are to be communicating with all groups no matter their location in the body of Christ. And the body of Christ must reflect in its familial structure the one who adopted us. Each member in the family is to reflect the head of the family, Christ. Where on a social demographic scale did Jesus Christ relate to people? John 3 Pharisee, John 4 Samaritan woman, Matthew 8-9 Leper and a paralytic, Mt 15 a Canaanite woman, I think you're getting the picture. Christ relates to all people. He is accused of sinners and tax collectors. It's interesting that the tax collectors were not even good enough to be grouped in with the sinners, but that just goes to show that Christ was not bound by the world's system of where you are allowed to relate and where you are not. So ask yourself, "Where am I seeking to relate to the family as a whole?" If we are not getting out of our peer group bubbles, then we are reflecting the world's system and not the family God called us to be. The women's call to worship and the men's breakfast are great times for intergenerational fellowship. But depending on the church to provide a program so I can obey once every 6 weeks or so is not going to cut it. Once we hit the lobby after church, go pop someone else's social bubble.

Next is how. How am I relating to the family as a whole? How was Timothy instructed to relate to the family? First, the older men. Timothy was their leader, their elder, but he was a young elder. I know to some of you young elder makes as much sense as jumbo shrimp and Microsoft Works, but elder here does not refer to age, rather it's the qualifications laid out in chapter 3. Timothy was to communicate with all these groups. Part of communicating is confronting. How do you confront an older man Timothy? Well, don't rebuke. This word has the idea of a harsh striking at. I had an intense soccer coach my freshmen year of high school. He would often talk to us while on his toes, with hulk veins going up the sides of his neck helping to shade his face into a deeper red. That is not a how a younger man leads and older man, rather he is to appeal to an encourage him as you would a father. Younger men does not mean inferior, but rather treat them as an equal, as a brother. Older women in the same way you would bring things up with your mother, and younger women as sisters. The purity qualifier here has to do with chastity. Timothy, do not use your authority as a means of sexually advancing on younger women. That's how the world does it, but that's not how this family does it. Relate to them as sisters. A tie in baseball is like kissing your sister. That's just out of place, you don't want to do that. Same goes for how we relate to the family as a whole in order to protect the family.

Let me encourage you as we move through the next few verses not to check out or think this does not apply to me that much. The lawyer in Luke 10 asked Jesus who is my neighbor in order to justify himself. Don't be that guy. Who is my family? Matthew 12:46-50 While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. 48 But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" 49 And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." So you have more in common with a sister in Christ from the 1700's in Asia than you do with your immediate biological family who do not believe in Jesus as Savior and Lord.

2. Providing for others is not optional in this family. (3-7)

A. Who is the widow today? (Honor) lonely/outcast/least secure (this is where all relate)

Consider the widow Paul is referring to. They don't have social security, they don't have government housing, they are not in a country with an abundance of resources like we are today. You didn't work, you did not eat, and there was no job market for widows 1st century AD. Widows were lonely, they were the outcast, they were the least secure within the family. To understand some of the principles of this text, answer who is the widow today? Physically for the most part, widows have access to basic human needs here in Macomb County. But who are the lonely ones here at Cornerstone? Who are the outcast? Who would be the least secure? Certainly a widower has a lot in his life that this text applies to. What about an adult who is single and lives by themselves? What about those who intensely struggle with life dominating sins, with same-sex attraction yet are in the family of God? Are we caring for them? Are we providing for them? Look, if we got a list of widows and made sure they had bread and that wrapped up 1 Timothy 5 we would be

missing out on much of what this text has to offer. So as we go through how this family relates more specifically to widows, consider who the widow is today.

World leaves them that way, the family of God (honors) reverses this condition. This reflects what happened to you spiritually. We go after whom the world ignores. Sheep are not impressive. You don't use a sheep for a family crest, you don't mount a sheep on the wall in your man cave, and you most certainly do not ride sheep into battle. Scripture refers to us as sheep. Do not count yourself as being above where the widow is. Where were you, where did you come from? You were dead in your transgressions and sins following the course of this world...But God! If you have had a but God moment in your life where He has called you to turn from your highway to hell and trust in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross taking the punishment you deserve, then providing for these widows, caring for the lonely, the outcast, and the least secure is simply a reflection of what God has already done in your life. The body of Christ reflects the one who adopted us. If you're here today and have not trusted in Jesus as Lord and Savior then you do not have the security of belonging to the family of God, and all you have is a system that the world provides. And there is a short list of excuses the world uses to discard you. But that's not how we do it because providing for and caring are not optional in this family. God has been concerned about the widows and orphans and how his people treat them for a long time. Take for example Ex 22:22-23, Dt 10:18, 14:29, 24:17-21, 26:12-13, 27:19, Job 24:3,21, 31:16, Ps 68:5, 94:6, 146:9, Pr 15:25, Is 1:17, 23 Je, 7:6, 22:3, and Zc 7:10, Mal 3:5 to name a few (read Mal 3:5) That's just the Old Testament. One parallel passage in the New Testament on how this family treats the ones whom the world rejects, 1 Peter 2:9-11, listen up, "9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

Do you not see that every Christian spiritually came from a helpless situation? Do you not see that every Christian was a refugee? Do not let your politics get in the way of a Biblical worldview. The American flag is not in the Bible. Put that in your cheek and chew on it later when it is relevant, let's get back to the text.

What I want you to see so far in this second point is that where the widows are at physically, we were at spiritually, based on how God the Father treated us, we then honor and care for the widows, outcast, lonely, the ones that the world would reject.

B. Charge to the widow (discern)

That being said, there are some qualifiers that Paul gives to Timothy regarding who is truly a widow. 1. They don't have any biological family to take care of them and 2. There is a consistent pattern of godliness. It is likely there was a detrimental situation going on in Ephesus were some widows were taking advantage of the system in order to live an indulgent life. Because of the help they were receiving from the church, they could spend their extra energies indulging the flesh, killing themselves spiritually. If you have ever heard someone say we are supposed to help anyone no matter who it is, then it is up to God what is done with the help, then you can do some course correction on that thought with this text. We will be held accountable with how we steward the resources and abilities God has given, although much of the stewarding will be investing into those who are truly widows.

What should the reaction of a widow be? You are to use your loneliness to cry out to God. And to those of you who feel lonely or like an outcast, this text is calling you to leverage the position God has put you in to more fully pursue and lean on Him. If you are not pursuing Him with your loneliness or outcast position, then you are headed towards death. Look at verse 6, "but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives." This is the end result of leveraging your widow position for your own flesh. How do we react when something horrible happens to us?

Results of using loneliness for indulgence (self-pity = self-indulgence) is death.

I don't have a husband to take care of anymore, so no reason to stay disciplined, might as well indulge. Or, I'm single, I don't have a girlfriend or a wife, this porn is not affecting anyone but me. Satan can move on if that's how you're thinking, you're dead.

God did not rescue from death so you could go back to it.

Cling to the body! We are to take care of you. Now, if you have biological family, not limited to, but especially believers, they should be taking care of you. 1. This pleases God when you're taking care of those whom He has entrusted you with. 2, if you are taking care of your biological family, then it frees the church up to take care of those who are truly widows, who are truly in need.

Taking care of your own is key in being above reproach, look at verse 7. This without reproach is put on the children and grandchildren in verse 4 in regards to caring for the widows, but you'll notice that the paramount qualifier of an elder in chapter 3 is above reproach. So even though these commands in chapter 5 we are reading were charged to Timothy, all believers, you, need to seriously consider their implications.

Conclusion: Who's Calibrating Your Moral Compass? (8)

Charge to those with abilities to provide.

My freshmen year in soccer had two juniors that were leaders on the team. Kevin and Jacob. They got to count the odd numbers while the rest of us counted the evens during stretches and so forth. They were also they only two guys that were faster than me that year. One practice involved a drill where a defender would start at the goal, and someone on offense would come toward the goal with the ball. They were to dribble past the defender, then they could shoot. Well, I was the defender and Jacob was coming in with the ball. He kicked it out a little too far in front of him and I bolted and sent the ball off to the side. Not how the drill was supposed to go.

I did a better job than he did, and he was supposed to be a leader on the team, and that was a problem and coach knew it. On the toes, hulk veins, red face, and this was not on the group, but all coming down on that one poor junior. If this team was going to work, he had to be a leader. He had to do his job. If we are going to be the family of God, we better not be shown up by the world in generosity and love. Yes, the unbeliever was created in the image of God, but the believer has been redeemed and adopted as a co-heir with Christ, and we are to reflect our Savior and Father. If you have the ability to provide for your own flesh, then you have the ability to provide for your family. If you will not provide for your family who is truly in need, then God is calling you worse than an unbeliever. Please heed this warning. The world sees family as an inconvenience, something to work around. God sees family as one of the primary things you work for. How this family does it ought to be reflected in how the immediate families within do it.

1. Are there true widows in your biological family that need your care?
2. How is the gospel guiding your relations with widows (lonely, outcast, least secure) in the body?

3. If you are a widow, are you leveraging your position for death or for godliness?

2014 story

Let me finish with a story and some encouragement.

Rewind three years. Beginning of 2014 - Just Taylor and I in our apartment, in Louisville KY. She's pregnant with RJ, we are both going to school, and I had no idea how simple life was without kids. Well, Taylor's cousin and her daughter come back into our life and they are not in a good place. Beginning of February we find out this little girl is going to foster care. Because we were biological family, we were a loophole in the system, and were able to get her out of technical foster care and took temporary custody of her. 2 days after we found this was all going down. Taylor's pregnant with our first. We are both going full time in school. When I say full time, my wife's in her second trimester rocking 21 credits so she can graduate. Based on the world's standards on how the world does it, we should not have taken little Peyton in. But this is how we do it. Remember the widow, the lonely, the outcast the least secure? Well the downside of us loop-holing the foster care system is that we did not qualify for much financial assistance, and our economic trajectory was quickly sending us toward the least secure through the spring of 2014. What happens? The body of Christ finds out about what we are doing and people from Cornerstone, Shively and Parkwood all step in to provide, not to mention other individuals most of whom were believers. God is still in the business of multiplying bread and fish through his church. End of 2014 she is able to go back with her mom, and I needed to provide for my family.

not the church's job to sustain us when I had the ability to provide and pull on another job if necessary. This allows the church to help others, it is continue to reflect the one who adopted them to those who most need it.

I know at the end of sermons you often leave with a sense of guilt, a sense of really needing to buckle down on what the preacher was saying, but let me offer you some encouragement. We have a good Samaritan team headed up by ???. They take younger guys with them to teach them how do to basic home repair and maintenance to those in our church who are in need. If you feel led to care for the widows in the church in this way whether you're an older or younger man, jump in with this group. If you're a widow with a need, call the church and let the Samaritan's team know how they can care for you. Older men training younger men how to care for widows, they are on point with this! The body of Christ reflects the one who adopted us. This is how our family does it.

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1. Am I Relating to the Family as a Whole? (1-2)

A. Where

B. How

2. Providing for others is not optional in this family. (3-7)

A. Who is the widow today?

B. Charge to the widow

Conclusion: Who's Calibrating Your Moral Compass? (8)

A. Charge to those with abilities to provide.