

Kingdom Provision

1 Timothy 5:1-16

4:12 Don't let anyone despise your youth, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity.

vs. 1, Don't rebuke (speak harshly), but exhort...as fathers, brothers, mothers, and sisters. Urge each toward right conduct.

Large section on widows - creating proper guard rails so no one takes advantage of the church's support.

Two concerns

1. How to identify "real widows" (5-7, 9-10) so that the church may care for them. (3-4, 8, 16)
2. The activities of the "young widows" (11-15).

Compare and contrast -> Similar to Timothy in contrast to the false teachers.

Who are these "young widows"?

They are those who are in relationship with the false teachers.

2 Timothy 3:6-7 For among them are those who worm their way into households and deceive gullible women overwhelmed by sins and led astray by a variety of passions, **7** always learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Caring for widows is already firmly established in the ethos of God's people. It is foundational to narrow path living.

Acts 6:1-6 (caring for the Hellenistic Jewish widows)

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

Deuteronomy 24:19-21 "When you reap the harvest in your field, and you forget a sheaf in the field, do not go back to get it. It is to be left for the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. **20** When you knock down the fruit from your olive tree, do not go over the branches again. What remains will be for the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow. **21** When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left. What remains will be for the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow.

The overall theme of this passage is compassion.

Followers of Jesus are to care for others, especially family members, which includes the vulnerable widow.

So...how do you determine if one is a "real widow"?

- She is truly alone and in need.
- No family to support her.
- One who is godly, and given to prayer.

vs. 4, Widows who have children or grandchildren -> families need to be responsible and care for their parents.

This type of care is putting their religion into practice.

Genuine Jesus saturated behavior begins at home with one's own family.

Repay their parents -> you repay the earlier care you yourself received. This is pleasing to God.

Exodus 20:12 Honor your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

vs. 5, For those widows who are truly alone, where are they placing their hope? Is their hope in God? Are they women who are filled with prayer?

Strong example - Anna - the ideal widow

Luke 2:36-37 There was also a prophetess, Anna, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well along in years, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, **37** and was a widow for eighty-four years. She did not leave the temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayers.

vs. 6, self-indulgent

Contrast -> a true widow is a trusting, prayerful woman, who does not live for pleasure.

- The verb used here means “to live luxuriously”. Living in a selfish and extravagant way. The problem is not wealth but the misuse of wealth for pleasure.

James 5:5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and have indulged yourselves. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

****To live in this way is to be the walking dead.**

Notice the chiasmic structure

- a - instructions to relatives (vs. 4)
 - b - instructions to widows (vs. 5)
 - b - rebuke towards selfish widows (vs. 6-7)
- a - rebuke towards selfish relatives (vs. 8).

To operate in a space that is less than those who do not believe is equal to denial of the faith.

vs. 9-16, Context, context, context...And, at the same time, we can't simply dismiss its application to our context.

Enrolled on the list

vs. 9-10, What are the criteria?

1. Over sixty. (Cultural norm for old and beyond the age to remarry)
2. Have been faithful to her husband.
3. Known for her good deeds.

What are these good deeds?

Paul's list of good deeds is not prescriptive but simply gives examples of the kinds of good deeds a widow might have done.

A woman who has brought up children (likely inclusion of orphans).

Shown hospitality.

Washed the saints' feet (act of humble kindness).

Helped the afflicted (those in trouble).

Summary statement: Devoted herself to every good work.

A real widow is one who has the public and ecclesial reputation for goodness.

- How did one live according to God's good design?

In contrast, the younger widows...

vs. 11, Are drawn away from Christ

How?

By desire -> they want to remarry -> so much so that they will compromise and marry an unbeliever.

vs. 12, They have turned their back on their “original pledge (pistis / πίστις - active reliance and trust in Jesus). Marriage becomes more important than her faith in Jesus.

vs. 13, Idle, gossips, and busybodies

- Idle -> describes women who have sufficient funds not to work
- Too much time on their hands -> again comparing the activities of the older widows.
- They are going from house to house. They are disrupting the gatherings of worshiping communities.

- The term *gossip* is not “spilling the tea on others”. Those who are talking nonsense, foolishness, and are speaking in a way that is absurd as it compares to truth. (They are getting drawn in and repeating the lies of the false teachers).

1:6 Some have departed from these and turned aside to fruitless discussion.

4:7 But have nothing to do with pointless and silly myths. Rather, train yourself in godliness.

6:3-4 If anyone teaches false doctrine and does not agree with the sound teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the teaching that promotes godliness, **4** he is conceited and understands nothing, but has an unhealthy interest in disputes and arguments over words. From these come envy, quarreling, slander, evil suspicions,

6:20 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding irreverent and empty speech and contradictions from what is falsely called knowledge.

vs. 14, What is the solution?

For the younger widows (those who do not qualify) to follow the example of the older widows (those who do qualify).

At the heart of the matter is the character of these women.

Younger women don't be fooled by the deception of the world.

Colossians 2:8 Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elements of the world, rather than Christ.

2 Timothy 3:6 For among them are those who worm their way into households and deceive gullible women overwhelmed by sins and led astray by a variety of passions,

So get married, have children, manage your households, and give the adversary no opportunity to accuse us.

Put your faith, hope, and love in the truth of Jesus.

DON'T SETTLE

Paul's motivation: Jesus centered community living.
We are the King's family, brothers and sisters.
The outside world is watching.
They are just waiting to find fault and to mock.

Paul is aware.

Paul is not trying to control how women live their lives.

He is simply warning the church to go above and beyond people's expectations (walk the 2M).

vs. 15, For some have already turned away (flesh, world, enemy).

vs. 16, Women helping women

This is not gender bias. This is wisdom and discernment in action!

Acts 9:36-42 In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which is translated Dorcas). She was always doing good works and acts of charity. **37** About that time she became sick and died. After washing her, they placed her in a room upstairs. **38** Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples heard that Peter was there and sent two men to him who urged him, “Don't delay in coming with us.” **39** Peter got up and went with them. When he arrived, they led him to the room upstairs. And all the widows approached him, weeping and showing him the robes and clothes that Dorcas had made while she was with them. **40** Peter sent them all out of the room. He knelt down, prayed, and turning toward the body said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, saw Peter, and sat up. **41** He gave her his hand and helped her stand up. He called the saints and widows and presented her alive. **42** This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

Question: Direct application - Do you have family members who are in need that require your care and attention? If so, what is the Holy Spirit prompting you to do?
How are we as a church family caring for the needs of those in our midst? How are you contributing (resources) to 2M so the resources are available to serve those in need?

Despite life's circumstances how are you allowing Jesus to be your everything?
Your savior, light, comfort, rest, joy, peace...?

Are you thinking about the way your everyday personal life is being integrated into your everyday communal (church) life? Are you aware of what those outside your faith community are observing?

Do they see a difference in your thoughts, actions, relationships, use of time & resources, compassion, justice, perseverance, and care for others?