

## Message #29

## I Timothy 5:3-8

In the mind of God and in the sight of God, no church will ever become a pillar and support of the truth if it does not take good care of its godly widows.

We can come to as many services as we want, we can sing, pray, and listen to messages; but if we don't take the widows in our church seriously, we will never be an individual or a church that becomes a pillar and support of God's truth.

One does not have to be a Biblical scholar to realize that God, in both the O.T. and the N.T., takes a very personal interest in widows. He looks closely at the widows and He looks closely as to how they are being treated and cared for. In fact, in His law, God threatens to kill one who afflicts a widow (Ex. 22:22-24). He curses one who distorts justice against a widow (Deut. 27:19). He demands that widows be defended (Is. 1:17), and He says true worship of Him takes good care of the widows (James 1:27), and His blessings will be given to those who do (Deut. 14:29).

**NO CHURCH WILL EVER BECOME A PILLAR AND SUPPORT OF THE TRUTH IF IT DOES NOT TAKE GOOD CARE OF ITS GODLY WIDOWS.**

In the first century world of the church, there were no pensions or social security system or huge life insurance policies that automatically supported a widow. A widow in the first century was usually very poor, very alone, and very defenseless. She typically could not find a job outside of her home and if she were a Christian, most in that society could care less if she starved to death. God expected the church to help these women. He expected His church to take good care of godly widows.

**DIVISION #1 – The command to the church to honor the widows. 5:3**

The verb “honor” is an imperative, which means it is a command. The verb literally means the church has been commanded by God to see the great value that God places on a widow. The idea of honor, in this context, includes the idea of support.

Now the term “widow,” which is repeated twice in this verse, is one that refers to a woman who was married, but whose husband is dead or gone. Actually the word is broad enough that it could refer to a woman who was married, but who has lost her husband through death, desertion or divorce (i.e. Num. 30:9).

The words “widow indeed” indicates that not every widow merits the kind of care called for in this context. The word “indeed” speaks of a widow who is really and truly a widow by Biblical definition and standards (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 319). Paul, in this context, is going to carefully define a “widow indeed” (5:5).

Here is the point—once a woman has been classified as a widow who meets the Biblical prerequisites for being a “widow indeed,” the church must realize that it has been commanded by God to take care of her.

**DIVISION #2** – The conditions of a widow the church is to honor.

**Condition #1** - The condition of the family. **5:4**

The first condition that must be met if a widow is to be fully cared for by the church is that she has no family that can take care of her. If she has children or grandchildren, they are responsible to take care of their mother or grandmother. The law of God demands this kind of honor (Ex. 20:12; 21:15, 17). The burden of caring for the widow is not first to the church, but to the family (**5:16**).

**(Statement #1)** - Because piety is **first** practiced in one’s own family. **5:4a**

The term “piety” is one that speaks of godliness that God deems as reverent and godly. As we have said in this study many times, the home is the initial training ground for godliness. If you want to be classified as being a godly individual, you must start in your own home.

The home is the lesser, the church is the greater. Before God will classify one as godly, he must first practice piety in his own home.

**(Statement #2)** - Because a return is first made to the parents. **5:4b**

We all owe our parents honor, especially if we had Christian parents who pointed us in the ways of God. If a mother or grandmother needs help, that woman’s own children or grandchildren ought to be willing to give some sort of return for all of the time, effort, and expense.

**(Statement #3)** - Because this is acceptable to God. **5:4c**

If a family member neglects caring for a widowed mother or grandmother, one’s life and worship are not acceptable to God. God does not look favorably on one who shirks their responsibility in this area. Many blessings and many rewards will be lost through this neglect.

**Condition #2** - The condition of isolation. **5:5a**

Another condition is that of isolation. If a widow is to be fully cared for by the church, she must have been left “all alone.” There are three things to point out concerning this participle:

- 1) The word literally means to be alone in the sense of being forsaken and all alone.
- 2) The word does not say how or why she is forsaken.
- 3) The participle is perfect passive, meaning she has been alone since some point in the past and continues to be alone at the present, and she had nothing to do with the action.

**Condition #3** - The condition of salvation. **5:5b**

The widow that the church must care for must be one who is saved. She must have her hope fixed on God. What this means is that this woman trusts totally in God for her salvation and her provisions.

We may again point out that the verb “has fixed her hope” is perfect tense, indicating this woman placed her faith in the Lord at some point in the past and continues to demonstrate her faith in God at the present.

The church may choose to do everything it can for any widow (Gal. 6:10), but it has a God-given command to take care of the widow who is all alone, who has demonstrated that she is a believer in the context of the church.

**Condition #4** - The condition of faithfulness. **5:5c**

The widow that the church must support will be one who demonstrates a continual faithfulness to the things of God. The words “night and day” are words that express a continual and constant faithfulness to the things of God.

**Condition #5** - The condition of non-sensuality. **5:6**

The word “wanton” is one that refers to a riotous type of pleasure.

Now winding down this first section, Paul says two things to Timothy:

1) He is to teach these things so they may be above reproach. **5:7**

The words “above reproach” are the same used in 3:2 which refers to a reputation that is deserved and earned. God is saying I want my people to think this way concerning widows. I want sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters to continually think this way. I want the whole church to continually think this way about widows.

2) Those who do not provide for their own deny the faith and are worse than an unbeliever. **5:8**

Most unbelievers recognize their need to take care of their father and mother.

When a son or daughter does not take care of their mother . . .

When a granddaughter or grandson does not take care of their grandmother . . .

When a church does not take care of its widows, it is a disgrace and that church will never become a pillar and support of the truth.