

Day 1



Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.



My apologies: this lesson is longer than usual; please grant yourself some extra time during the week to reflect on these verses and to develop your answers to the discussion questions.

Instructions for the Church

Q1. In general, why is Paul writing to Timothy?

Q2. Do Paul's instructions to Timothy apply to us, today?

Q3. How would you generally characterize these: are they commands? Suggestions? Proposals? Recommendations?

¹ 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.



Definition of 'purity' (1) The quality or condition of being pure. (2) Freedom from spiritual or moral defilement; innocence or chastity.

Q4. Paul listed foundational relationship examples. Why did Paul emphasize "with absolute purity"?

Q5. What does "rebuke" mean to you?

 J.B. Phillips translated verses 1-2 this way in his paraphrase:

1 Timothy 5:1-2 [The Message (MSG)]

¹⁻² Don't be harsh or impatient with an older man. Talk to him as you would your own father, and to the younger men as your brothers. Reverently honor an older woman as you would your mother, and the younger women as sisters.

Q6. What is the ultimate goal that Paul is striving to communicate in verse 1?

³ Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need.

Q7. How should we describe “proper recognition”? (See verse 5 ↓ for Paul's definition of a ‘true’ widow.)

Q8. How are we to treat “widows who are really in need”?

 Jesus was a radical to the Jewish religion and to the world at-large. Ellicott had interesting comments on verse 3:

 “The mention of the relations of a pastor to the female members of the flock suggests another train of thought. Christianity had, during the thirty years of its history, developed a perfectly new existence for women who professed the faith of Jesus of Nazareth. In the Master's new and strange (new and strange to the civilised world of that day) command — that the poor, the needy, and the sick should be [aided], that the helpless should be helped, and the comfortless comforted — a blessed calling was invented — so to speak for Christian women. Their secluded and, in many respects, degraded life in the old world was, in great measure, owing to the fact that until Christ taught the universal duty of charity, women had no recognised public occupation in the world. The charge of the Founder of the new religion provided an endless variety of blessed, happiness-giving work for women of all ages and rank.

 “The novel prominence, however, of females in such great centres as Ephesus not only necessitated some organisation which should administer the alms [offerings of money], and generally watch over and direct the self-sacrificing labours of the female portion of the community, but also required special vigilance, on the part of the chief pastor and his assistant presbyters [elders] and deacons, to prevent the charities of the Church [from] being misused. The widow — the desolate and destitute, the mourning widow indeed, she who is in every sense a widow and has no one to whom to look for aid — she always has a claim on the Church. Not merely is she to be honoured by a simple exhibition of respect, but she is to be assisted and supported out of the alms of the faithful.” [©about 1880, Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, edited by Charles J Ellicott. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/1_timothy/5-3.htm]

Day 2

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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.

Q9. Who is to “learn first of all to put their religion into practice”?

Q10. As a parent to your child how would you explain Paul's wording “and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God”?

Q11. How does a parent teach their child love? Empathy? Charity? Mercy?

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.

Q12. From the text, what characteristics/traits does Paul use to describe this person? (I count at least five, possibly six.)

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Luke 18:1-8 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS)]

Jesus urges his disciples to persist in prayer

¹ Then he gave them an illustration to show that they must always pray and never lose heart.

²⁻⁵ “Once upon a time,” he said, “there was a magistrate in a town who had neither fear of God nor respect for his fellow-men. There was a widow in the town who kept coming to him, saying, ‘Please protect me from the man who is trying to ruin me.’ And for a long time he refused. But later he said to himself, ‘Although I don’t fear God and have no respect for men, yet this woman is such a nuisance that I shall give judgment in her favour, or else her continual visits will be the death of me!’”

⁶⁻⁸ Then the Lord said, “Notice how this dishonest magistrate behaved. Do you suppose God, patient as he is, will not see justice done for his chosen, who appeal to him day and night? I assure you he will not delay in seeing justice done. Yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find men on earth who believe in him?”

⁶ But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.

Q13. What kind of attitude marks the person, who puts her hope in God and ceaselessly prays, compared to one who “lives for pleasure” or is “self-indulgent”? (Paul is making a distinct contrast between the widow described in verse five compared to the widow described in verse six.)

Q14. Why would Paul describe the pleasure-seeking, self-indulgent widow as “dead even while she lives”?

⁷ Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame.

Q15. What does Paul’s wording mean to you: “so that no one may be open to blame”?

Day 3

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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.

Q16. How does our culture usually treat relatives and older parents?

Q17. If someone does not provide, why is that an indication that “he has denied the faith”?

Q18. Why does Paul assert that this “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.

Q19. The actions that are listed – bringing up children, washing feet of Believers, helping the troubled – why might these be revered? Might these actions be the result of servanthood?

Q20. Is this “works” theology? If I work hard enough, will I earn my way into Heaven?

 As Scripture promises, our eternal future is guaranteed for those of us who believe in the saving grace of our Lord Jesus who is the Son of the Living God (see Ephesians 1:13-14 ↓). However, we, who believe, are also expected to obey and to put our faith into action. We, who believe, are God’s voice, hands, and feet to this fallen world. We can pray for others. We can be kind to others. We can care for others. We can be merciful to others. We can listen to others. We can simply sit with the hurting person. Without judging another, we can explain that participating in a behavior goes against our personal moral Christian compass – and then walk away from the temptation. We can let our example be God’s beacon of light drawing those of the world to Him. We plant, we water, and God makes things grow.

Ephesians 1:13-14

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession — to the praise of his glory.

 Through God’s promptings, the unbeliever may wonder at the [agapé love](#) you are sharing with them and ask about your motives; you can truly say that as Jesus shared His love with me, I must ‘pay it forward’. Then, you must allow God to work His miracles in the other person’s heart as the unbeliever sees, witnesses, and experiences your kind, merciful obedience.

1st Corinthians 5:12-13a [Paul wrote]

¹² What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?

^{13a} God will judge those outside.

 Also, we must not judge the world, the unbeliever! This is probably the hardest for us, who believe, to overcome; our human behavior is ingrained in our worldly culture as we venerate the celebrity and overlook the homeless, as we cherish the attractive and ignore the imperfect, as we idolize the wealthy and neglect the destitute, as we excuse the exploitive behavior of the powerful and tell the poor to ‘work harder’.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God -- ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

Colossians 3:23-24

²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15

¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, ¹³ his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Q21. Why do you think Paul set such stringent standards in place for a widow to be enrolled?

 This teaching is difficult for us to understand. The commentator Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer wrote, "From this point the apostle takes up a special class of widows, [namely] those who had been placed by the church on a formal list, and who accordingly possessed a certain position of honour in the church. From 1 Timothy 5:16 it is to be inferred that it was the duty of the church to care for them so long as they lived, while from 1 Timothy 5:10 it appears that they had to perform for the church certain labours of love suited to them."

 Additionally, the commentator Charles Ellicott wrote extensively on this, "The question respecting the assistance to be afforded to the poor and destitute widows of the great Asian Church reminded . . . Paul of an organisation, consisting of widowed women, which had grown out of the needs of Christianity. [Paul expressed] some special rules here to be observed by his friend and disciple. What, now, is this organisation commended to Timothy in these special directions? Here, and [only here] in the New Testament, do we find it alluded to; but the instructions in this passage are so definite, so precise, that it is impossible not to assume in the days of Timothy and of Paul, in some, if not in all the great churches, the existence of an official band of workers, consisting of widows, most carefully selected from the congregation of believers, of a somewhat advanced age, and specially distinguished for devotion — possessing, each of these, a high and stainless reputation — they were an official band of workers, a distinct order, so to speak; for these widows, formally entered on the Church's list, could not possibly represent those poor and desolate widows, friendless and destitute, spoken of above. The minimum age of sixty years would also exclude many; and the advice of St. Paul to the younger ones to marry again could never have been addressed to women wanting even many years of the [required] "sixty.""

Day 4

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¹¹ 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.

 Perhaps, another Bible version will help to clarify Paul's intent:

1 Timothy 5:11-12 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS)]

Don't put the younger widows on your list. My experience is that when their natural desires grow stronger than their spiritual devotion to Christ they want to marry again, thus proving themselves unfaithful to their first loyalty.

1 Timothy 5:12 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith.

 Presbyteress defined: [pronounced pres' buh' ter' ess] In the early church, one of the elder women in the order of widows, presiding among these, and having authority to teach. [<https://www.wordnik.com/words/presbyteress>]

 'broken their first pledge:' "[namely], pledged to Christ and the service of the Church. There could be no hardship at the age of sixty or upwards in not marrying again (1st Timothy 5:9), for the sake of serving better the cause of Christ as presbyteresses; though, to ordinary widows, no barrier existed against remarriage (1st Corinthians 7:39). . . The widow-presbyteresses, moreover, engaged to remain single, not as though single life were holier than married life . . . but because the interests of Christ's cause made it desirable (see on 1st Timothy 3:2). They had pledged "their first faith" to Christ as presbyteress-widows; they now wish to transfer their faith to a husband (compare 1st Corinthians 7:32, 34)." [©1882, *A Commentary, Critical, Practical, and Explanatory on the Old and New Testaments* by Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; https://biblehub.com/commentaries/1_timothy/5-12.htm]

 Paul seems to believe that the widow's focused devotion to Christ Jesus will be diluted (or lost) if the widow desires remarriage. Paul fears for lost salvation or diminished service to the Lord's work due to conflicting worldly priorities.

Q22. How would a younger widow "abandon . . . their former faith" (1st Timothy 5:12 [ESV])?

Q23. Why would a younger widow "incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith" (1st Timothy 5:12 [ESV])?

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 busybodies, saying things they ought not to.

Q24. What does Scripture teach about gossiping?

Proverbs 11:13 [NIV]

A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.

Proverbs 16:28 [NIV]

A perverse person stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.

Proverbs 20:19 [NIV]

A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid anyone who talks too much.

Titus 2:3-5

³ Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴ Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

¹⁴ So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander.

Q25. What seems to be Paul's primary concern for younger widows?

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.

Q26. As you read verses 15 & 16, what principle seems to jump out?

Q27. Do churches today follow Paul's teaching? And should they?

Q28. These verses 9-16 seems to be steeped in rather old-fashioned traditions. Do these verses apply to us today?

¹⁷ The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages."

Q29. Why should an elder who teaches and preaches be "worthy of double honor"?

Deuteronomy 25:4

"Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain."

Q30. What principle is God teaching when he says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain"?

 Commentary to Deuteronomy 25:4: "they [used oxen] in those parts [to 'tread the grain,' which separates the kernel from the husk or chaff], either . . . by their hoofs, or by drawing carts . . . over the corn. Hereby God taught them humanity, even to their beasts that served them, and much more to their servants, or other men who laboured for them, especially to their ministers." [©about 1800, Commentary of the Old and New Testaments by Joseph Benson. Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/deuteronomy/25-4.htm>]

 "When you harvest grain, there are three key steps. You first cut the grain. Then you thresh it by beating the grain with something hard to loosen the chaff that covers the kernel. Then you winnow it or separate the kernels from the chaff, often by throwing it all into the air so that the wind can blow the chaff away while the kernels fall back to the ground. But sometimes, with certain grains, it could take an awful lot of force to break the chaff away and so one of the best ways to accomplish that was by getting a big, heavy animal with hard hooves (like an ox) to step on it. This was called treading out the grain and it was a very common way to thresh your grain at harvest time." <https://www.standrewshespeler.ca/2016/08/28/iv-thou-shalt-not-muzzle-the-ox-when-he-treadeth-out-the-corn/>

Q31. Why do you think Paul emphasized that "The worker deserves his wages"?

Deuteronomy 24:15

Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and is counting on it. Otherwise, he may cry to the Lord against you, and you will be guilty of sin.

Leviticus 19:13

“Do not defraud your neighbor or rob him. Do not hold back the wages of a hired man overnight.”

Malachi 3:5

“ So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers, and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me," says the Lord Almighty.

Luke 10:7a [Jesus instructed His disciples when he sent out the seventy]

Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages.

Q32. How should we, today, apply Paul’s teaching in verses 17&18?

1 Corinthians 9:7-9 [J.B. Phillips New Testament (PHILLIPS)]

[This teaching of paying workers their just wage is not a new subject for Paul, for he also wrote in his 1st letter to the Corinthians:]

Just think for a moment. Does any soldier ever go to war at his own expense? Does any man plant a vineyard and have no share in its fruits? Does the shepherd who tends the flock never taste the milk? This is, I know, an argument from everyday life, but it is a principle endorsed by the Law. For is it not written in the Law of Moses: ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain’.

1 Corinthians 9:12 [NIV-1984]

[In 1st Corinthians 9, Paul completes his thoughts regarding support for a preacher by asking:] If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?

Day 5

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¹⁹ Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses.

Q33. What does Paul mean when he writes, “Do not entertain an accusation against an elder”?

Q34. Why is it important to have 2-3 witnesses?

Deuteronomy 17:6

On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

Deuteronomy 19:15

A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.

Q35. What does it mean to hold others accountable?

Q36. Is this principle applicable to an “elder” only, or to others within the fellowship of Believers?

²⁰ Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.

Matthew 7:2-3

² For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. ³ "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?"

Q37. Since Jesus taught us to be cautious of the “log that is in your own eye,” are we to actually confront others?

Q38. If someone said that the Bible is inconsistent and then cites Jesus’ teaching (Luke 7:2-3 ↑) compared to Paul’s (1 Timothy 5:19-20 ↑ or 1st Corinthians 5:11-13 ↓), how would you answer? (Consider Jesus’ audiences compared to Paul’s audiences)

Jesus’ audience?

Paul’s audience?

Your conclusion?

Q39. Why did Paul want fellow Believers to “take warning”? Why might this apply to us today?

Warning?

Today?

1 Corinthians 5:11-13

¹¹ But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler — not even to eat with such a one. ¹² For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? ¹³ God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

Q40. Of what is Paul most fearful (and wants to squash before it is a problem within the church)?

Q41. Have we witnessed any recent scandals within the church? And what were the consequences? How was the body of Believers affected? How did society react?

Day 6

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²¹ I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.

Q42. Why does Paul warn us against showing “partiality”? Why does Paul add “do nothing out of favoritism”?

Partiality?

Favoritism?

James 2:1-4

The Sin of Partiality

¹ My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. ² Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. ³ If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," ⁴ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

²² Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure. ²³ Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.

Q43. Why should Believers be careful about the “laying on of hands”?

Q44. Why do you think Paul felt it necessary to even state “[do not] take part in the sins of others”?

²⁴ The sins of some men are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them.

Q45. What might be obvious sins?

Q46. What does Paul mean when he writes that “the sins of others trail behind”?

 Paul . . . tells [Timothy], in his choice of men to fill the public positions in the Church of God — in his public inquiries into their conduct and teaching — in his inquiries respecting sinners, who, having forfeited their position as members of the community, were seeking re-admission into church fellowship, not to forget there were two classes of sins: the one class public and open, heralds, so to speak, of the judgment to follow. In the case of men [openly] sinning, the church's chief pastor would have no difficulty in determining upon his course of action. But there was another class of sins — silent and, as far as public and general knowledge went, unknown [secret] — only [known] after judgment [by the church] had been given. To rightly estimate such characters will require much care and penetration, and this will be part of Timothy's work. The judgment (krisis) . . . mentioned is that of Timothy as shown in the careful selection of candidates for ordination — in determining what sinners are fit for restoration to church fellowship — in pronouncing sentence in the matter of accused presbyters [elders]. [©about 1880, Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, edited by Charles J Ellicott. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/1_timothy/5-24.htm]

²⁵ In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not cannot be hidden.

Q47. How are “good deeds . . . obvious”?

 We Believers are admonished to serve others, silently, without boasting, without telling others about our good deeds. Paul is instructing Timothy that “good deeds” performed by a possible candidate will be obvious. He will undoubtedly be informed about the good deeds by others; from observers who see the results of the good deed or directly by the recipient. Bottom-line: God will make those good deeds known to him.

Matthew 6:2-4

² “So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

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