

Repeated Words, Themes, and Ideas

1. Godliness/Ungodliness, Timothy's actions must be pure when correcting anyone in Ephesus (whether young, old, male, or female), especially when correcting younger women. He must treat them all as if they're his blood relatives (father/mother or brother/sister), 5:1-2. God wants children and grandchildren to repay their mothers and grandmothers by providing for them during widowhood. However, in order to receive such support, the widows must live godly lives instead of lives of pleasure. Timothy must insist on these behaviors so that they all will be blameless in this area. And anyone who refuses to support widows, especially those of their own family, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever, 5:3-8. The type of godly behaviors that qualify a widow for support are: did she honor her marriage bed, has she a reputation of doing good works, was she a good mother, did she show hospitality to strangers, did she minister to the saints, did she help relieve those suffering, in other words, did she avail herself of every opportunity to do good works? 5:9-10. The church must refuse to support younger widows because their normal and natural desire to marry will provoke them to break their vow to Christ to serve the church as widows. Instead of serving the Lord, they will become idle wanderers who gossip and are busybodies. Therefore, it's God's desire that younger widows become strong and independent wives and mothers in order to prevent Satan from speaking ill of them or the church. With some younger widows it's too late, i.e., they've already turned to follow Satan. Thus, everyone is obligated to support their widows so that the church won't be burdened and prevented from supporting those who really deserve it, 5:11-16. Godly behavior towards pastors means: generously paying them for their work as God indicated in Scripture, i.e., "The laborer is worthy of his wages." And accusations against them should not be entertained unless they're accompanied by two or three witnesses. And pastors who are found guilty of sin must be rebuked in the presence of the church to prevent other pastors from sinning, 5:17-20. Our conduct takes place before God, Jesus Christ, and the elect angels so those who decide matters of widows and pastors should not act with prejudice or partiality, 5:21. The elders must not appoint new leaders hastily because the sins or good works of some men are not clearly evident until much later, 5:22, 24-25 (other places this appears: 1:3-4, 5, 6-7, 9-10, 13, 18-19, 19-20; 2:1-2, 8, 9-10, 11-15; 3:1-7, 8-13, 14-15, 16; 4:1-5, 6-7, 6-8, 8-10, 12, 15).
2. Seeing God's Word simply as Doctrine/Instruction vs. Personal Life-transforming Power, God's Word is not a textbook that teaches you the subject of widows. Instead, it's supposed to change your behavior towards widows: if you're a child or grandchild of a widow, you're supposed to provide financially for her as a show of appreciation for what she did for you growing up. You're also supposed to discern between a widow who deserves support and one who doesn't, i.e., one who lives a godly life versus one who spends her life chasing pleasures. In other words, God's Word is supposed to make your behavior towards widows blameless, 5:3-7. When God's Word is simply doctrine to you, something you study, it won't change your behavior towards widows, i.e., you'll refuse to provide for widows, even those in your family. You'll become an individual who denies the faith and is worse than an unbeliever, 5:8. Widows whose lives are transformed by God's Word pursue godly lives in every respect, as wives, mothers, and those who care for those in need (e.g., strangers, the saints, and the afflicted). They pursue every good work whenever possible, 5:9-10. Younger widows who only hear doctrinal instruction, make a vow to serve Christ as widows but later forsake that vow in pursuit of marriage. They become idle wanderers who gossip and are busybodies. But widows whose heart is transformed by God's Truth, remarry and pursue a life of godliness as strong and independent wives and mothers. They refuse to give Satan an opportunity to disparage them or the church, 5:11-15.

Church leaders who see God's Word as life-altering Truth and not textbook information, pay pastors generously knowing that their labor is worthy of compensation. They also use careful judgment when addressing accusations of sin against a pastor. They refuse to be prejudice or partial. And they will not hastily appoint new leaders knowing that some men's sins or good works may not be evident until much later, 5:17-25 (other places this appears: 1:3-7, 8-16, 18-20; 3:15-16; 4:1-5, 3, 6-11, 3, 12-16).

3. God, God considers it good and acceptable that children and grandchildren financially support the widows in their family, 5:4. A real widow [as far as financial support from the church is concerned] is one who has no family to support her, trusts in God, and continues in prayers and supplications night and day, 5:5. Timothy's job [and that of all church leaders] takes place before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, whether it's oversight of the financial support for widows or treatment of elders, therefore, it must be done without prejudice or partiality, 5:21 (other places this appears: 1:1, 2, 9-11, 12-17; 2:1-4, 5; 3:5, 15, 16; 4:3-5, 8-10)
4. Faith/Doctrine/Truth/Word, anyone who refuses to provide for widows, especially those in his/her own family, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever, 5:8. Pastors who rule well, especially those who labor in studying and teaching God's Word, deserve generous compensation, 5:17. When justifying generous pay for pastors, God quotes His Word (Deuteronomy 25:4; Luke 10:7) 5:18-19 (other places this appears: 1:2, 3, 4, 5, 5-7, 10, 18, 19; 2:5-7, 11-14; 3:9, 15-16; 4:1, 3-5, 6, 13, 15, 16).
5. Jesus, God wants the church to refuse financial support for younger widows because their normal and natural desire to marry will cause them to forsake their commitment to Christ to serve the church as widows, 5:11-12. The job of church leader takes place before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels, therefore, it must be done without prejudice or partiality, 5:21 (other places this appears: 1:1, 2-3, 12, 13-14, 15, 16; 2:5-6, 5-7; 3:13, 16; 4:6).
6. Mosaic Law, when God justified paying pastors generously He justified it by quoting the Mosaic Law: Deuteronomy 25:4 advises the farmer not to muzzle his ox while it's doing its work, which teaches us that those who work deserve to benefit from their labor, 5:17-18. When God instructs the church on how to deal with an accusation against an elder, He points to the Mosaic Law: in Deuteronomy 19:15-19 God did not allow Israel to receive an accusation of sin against anyone unless it was accompanied by two or three witnesses, so it must be in the church, 5:19 (other places this appears: 1:3-4, 7, 8, 9-10).