



leadership manual

1 Timothy



Sermon Series Notes

“Widow Wisdom” (I Timothy 5:3-16)

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I. THE TEXT

v.6 Spiritual deadness

v.7 If you were ignorant before, today is your lucky day!

vv.9-11 The list seems to be a list of widows who received regular financial support from the offerings of the church.

v.12 The first pledge seems to be a pledge that they would remain single. This verse implies that the church had placed some younger widows on the list for regular financial support. These guidelines would bring about a change in that practice.

v.13 Because these younger widows were receiving financial support from the church, they had too much time on their hands. “The full life is always the safe life, and the empty life is always the life of peril.” (Barclay, p.114)

vv.14-15 Marriage and children would give these younger widows plenty to do again! Can I get a witness from all the moms with husbands and young children?

Evidently some younger widows did not receive Paul’s counsel, and they ended up becoming busybodies, their lives not lived in service to the Lord. By doing so they had actually begun to follow Satan.

v.16 Women are naturally created by God to nurture children (Titus 2:3-5), so they can more naturally care for widows in their family. Also, the women would be at home more than the men.

II. LESSONS

A. God’s Concern For Widows

* The text does lay down guidelines for the church’s financial support of widows, but the guidelines have the goal of being able to funnel the funds of the church so that only widows who are “really in need” (v.16) can be helped.

* Ex.22:22-24; Malachi 3:5; Deut.10:18; 14:28-29; 24:17, 19-21; 26:12-13a; Psalm 68:5; 146:9.

* Note what Jesus said in Mark 12:38-40

* The NT church is seen caring for widows. As a matter of fact, when certain widows were overlooked in the daily distribution of food, the apostles moved to have the problem solved Acts 6:1-6. See also James 1:27.

* Jesus showed his compassion for the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-15).

B. Family Responsibility Toward Widows (& Aged Parents)

* Children and grandchildren are to care for widows in their own family. "The inevitable fact is, with the rhythm of generations a dramatic reversal comes to us all. We who once held our helpless children in our arms and nursed them and provided for their every need will one day be held in their arms as they nurse us at the end of our lives" (Hughes, p.125). James Dobson describes this as the time when the parent becomes the child, and the child becomes the parent.

* To do so pleases the Lord. To not do so makes one worse than an unbeliever. To fail in caring for widows in one's own family means your faith is not genuine, and you are "worse than an unbeliever." What this means is that even unbelievers in the time of this writing knew it was their duty to care for their parents in old age.

* "A religious profession which falls below the standard of duty recognized by the world is a wretched fraud" (E.K. Simpson). In ancient Greek law sons and daughters were legally bound to support their parents, and anyone who failed to lost their civil rights. Demosthenes, a prominent Greek statesman and orator, said "I regard the man who neglects his parents as unbelieving in and hateful to the gods, as well as to men". Philo, a Hellenistic Jewish Biblical philosopher, said, "When old storks become unable to fly, they remain in their nests and are fed by their children, who go to endless exertions to provide their food because of their piety." Greek philosopher Aristotle said "It would be thought in the matter of food we should help our parents before all others, since we owe our nourishment to them, and it is more honorable to help in this respect the authors of our being, even before ourselves." And Plato said, "Next comes the honor of loving parents, to whom, as is meet, we have to pay the first and greatest and oldest of debts, considering that all which a man has belongs to those who gave him birth and brought him up, and that he must do all that he can to minister to them; first, in his property; secondly, in his person; and thirdly, in his soul; paying the debts due to them for their care and travail which they bestowed upon him of old in the days of his infancy, and which he is now able to pay back to them, when they are old and in the extremity of their need."

C. God's Expectation For The Church & Widows

* Give the people these instructions, so that no one is open to blame

* Have guidelines on who is to be helped financially

- Financial qualification: destitute, "left all alone"

- Spiritual qualification: godly testimony of good works. This testimony should not be unique to godly widows. These works are simply evidence of genuine faith, real Christianity.

- * Help widows through the offerings of the church
 - For us at CCSP it is primarily through our “special needs’ fund

- * Give godly counsel to younger widows

- The counsel is not “go get a man as fast as you can!” See I Cor.7:8-9, 39-40; God ordained authority should be considered before marriage; Church authority (Heb.13:17); Parental authority; In the first marriage, God is the authority who brings Adam’s bride to him (Gen.2:22). Thereafter, it is the earthly parent who brings their child to be married (Gen.2:24; 29:26; Ex.2:21; Deut.22:16; Joshua 15:16-17; I Sam.17:25, 27; Judges 1:12-13; Neh.10:30, etc.). Numbers 30:3-5 makes it very clear that the parent (esp the father) has the authority to nullify a foolish vow made by a daughter still under his responsibility. And Exodus 22:16-17 says that a father has the right to refuse his daughter marriage, even after she has slept with the person she was to marry; Finally, governmental authority (Rom.13). Once married, the wife must make her priority the children & the home (v.14 of our text; also Titus 2:3-5).

D. Widows Who Live For Pleasure

* Specifically, these are widows who had made a commitment to Christ, then later allowed their sensual desires to overcome their dedication to Christ.

* They become idlers, gossips, & busybodies. You won’t see these women regularly serving in children’s ministry, Women of Heart, etc. They are out with their girlfriends, planning the next cruise together, getting involved in relationships with men that pull them further away from the Lord...

* They are dead even while living. This suggests to me that they may never have been truly born again. The prodigal; See Eph.2:1ff

E. Learning From The Examples Of Godly Widows

1. They are women of faith (Luke 4:24-26 ; I Kings 17:7-16)

* When they hear the Word of God, they respond with action

2. They give, despite their desperate circumstances (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4).

3. They are persistent/persevering, not allowing circumstances or sensual desires to pull them away from their devotion to the Lord (Luke 2:36-38; 18:1-8).

* Aunt Blanche’s poem about my grandmother

My Aunt Blanche’s poem about her mother (my grandmother) for her 84th birthday.

I Think of Mama

Through all these years, 84 in all ,
 She’s been the greatest as I recall.
 The earlier part I can only say,
 Is what other’s said along the way.

She's kind and good to everyone,
She worked so hard from sun to sun.
Cooking, washing, cleaning, even chopping weeds,
Always there caring for all the needs.

Just think of ten little girls and boys,
From daylight to dark with all their noise.
Complain, no not Mama, she went right along,
Doing her chores and singing a song.

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."
Working right on and singing this song,
Doing her chores as the day went along.

Didn't seem no bother to her each day,
If we stayed inside or went out to play.
We never seemed to be in her way,
She would work around us all through the day.

Our house seemed to be the center of all,
The neighbors' children came to play games or ball.
Mama never seemed angry and didn't seem to mind,
Everyone said, "Oh, she's so kind."

Through all of life she's always been there,
To bind our wounds or wipe the tear.
It hasn't been easy for her, now I know,
When it seemed too rough, to God she would go.

So many times her prayer was this song,
She sang so sweet as the day went along.
"Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

Yes, Mama, in this year of 84,
I think of the times in the years before.
I've had a good life it seems from the start,
So "Happy Birthday" with all my heart.

4. They are busy, but not busybodies

a. Faithful wives/mothers

- Article "domestic affairs"
- Personal story of when our kids were young

Friday Before Mothers' Day At The Hodges: (Notes from my journal)

11:00 a.m. – Called home, the night before we had a new couple from church over for dinner. Had hogfish... Wendy put the oil she had used for cooking the fish into a plastic Tupperware container and left it on the counter. Hayden poured it all over himself and the floor – that she just mopped yesterday!..."Hogfish Hayden!"

Earlier that morning, Tanner unscrewed the hinge on my office chair (at home)...all the springs and brackets fell off...covered with GREASE...

The night before, Tanner had a bloody nose in bed...went through the mattress pad, all over the bedding, had to be soaked and washed...

12:30 p.m. – I go home for lunch...I changed Hayden's diaper (when will he ever be potty trained!!!???)...

Just before I arrived home for lunch, Wendy had stepped around the corner, having left Jairus in the highchair (he was fussy!). She returned to find the "headless" Jairus dangling dangerously from the strap that is the only thing that saved his life. On top of that, Wendy rescued him, it was very obvious he had a tremendous bowel movement!

4:30 p.m. – I come home from visiting someone in the hospital. Wendy had been sewing earlier that afternoon when she heard this loud crash. Hayden had pulled the glass pitcher of Gatorade off the kitchen counter, and was now surrounded by shattered glass (on the tile floor!!!) The glass pitcher catastrophe took place right beside the earlier Hogfish Hayden oil spill, so the floor had to be mopped all over again!

While Wendy was cleaning the pitcher paraphernalia, Jairus came crawling through the dining room, where the sewing essentials were still out. He spilled a box of straight pins all over the floor!!!

Wendy figured she would get Hayden involved with the cleaning business of the day, so she gave him a bottle of window cleaner and told him to spray the tub (harmless she thought!) After cleaning the sink, Wendy checked on Hayden's progress. The bottom of the tub was blue. He had emptied about half the bottle (by spraying!!!!).

While Wendy is getting ready to go out for the evening, Jairus practically emptied the cabinet below the sink...

I had a wedding at 6 p.m....the TAG!

That evening Jairus did not go to sleep for hours...

b. Servants in the church

- Washing the feet of the saints, etc.

- Note: Once the kids are grown, these women do not look to live for pleasure, they continue to serve.

CONCLUSION

* Some of us need to consider what sacrifices the Lord might have us make to care for our elderly parents or grandparents, especially widows. Consider every option before you place them in a nursing home. And if they are already in one, would it be possible to take them out, and you care for them? Some of us need to stop living for pleasure and find a place to serve the Lord by serving others, especially widows & orphans, the poor & needy. Push Brother to Brother, Women of Heart, Men of Arms, etc. Some of us are in distress, and need to learn a lesson from godly widows. Cry out to the Lord, continue to give of yourself and your possessions, & persevere in faith...