

# 1 Timothy 5:17-25

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Preacher: Billy Joe Calvert

[0:00] Going to the first Timothy chapter five. Not very many verses this morning. We will see them. We will, I will try to be a very good respecter of your time. These are some matters that I'd like for us to see.

When we finish here, we will be having, after our dismissal, after our prayer, visitors, you are welcome to leave. I'll actually make my way to the back and I'm going to ask if our elders and deacons that are present here on this front pew, there are some blue pieces of paper. If we'll hand those out to our members, we will be doing our votes. On the deacon, the addition of deacons. Just kind of giving you this information as you turn to 1 Timothy chapter five. And we will be collecting those following. And then deacons and elders, I need to meet with you very quickly following that, if we can, so that we can get a count. And there's one other matter that I need to run by you.

You have your Bibles open. Let's stand if you are willing and physically able and desire to do so. Would you stand with me as we read together the word of God found in 1 Timothy chapter five, starting in verse 17.

[1:00] And going down to verse 25, which is the end of the chapter. The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

For the scripture says, you shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing, and the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

Those who continue in sin rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning. I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of his chosen angels to maintain these principles without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality.

Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily, and thereby share responsibility for the sins of others. Keep yourself free from sin. No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

The sins of some men are quite evident, going before them to judgment for others their sins follow after. Likewise, also deeds that are good are quite evident, and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed.

[2:13] Let's pray. Father, give us understanding and clarity, and may you be glorified through it in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. The text before us this morning, let's get a couple of things just out of the way.

Number one, this is not my text. This is the subtext of the text, so I'll give you these just so we can get it. Number one, this is not an endorsement for the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Rather, this is a speaking into the individual life of Timothy, and evidently the weight and the concern of why Timothy was left behind in Ephesus was so hard upon him.

There were a number of matters going on, so we're not speaking to that from this text. Don't look at me and say, Oh, the pastor's got to preach on that. That's not what we're speaking to, because in light of what Paul is referring to here that Timothy was addressing, there was some physical ailments that went along with it, so Paul is saying, Hey, let me help you out a little bit with that.

All right, so there's a medicinal. Number two, we see here just as a subtext that in this text, we find one of the greatest arguments for the authenticity of Scripture in the New Testament.

What do we include in Scripture? And that is that Paul puts side by side a quotation from the book of Deuteronomy and the book of Luke and refers to them both as Scripture.

[ 3 : 28 ] So even, that is, in the mid-60s A.D., the very early church history, Paul is already referring to the writings of Luke.

And this is in context where Jesus sends the disciples out and he goes and sends them out two by two and he tells them that whatever home they enter into to stay there, for the laborer is worthy of his wages.

So Paul quotes Luke and quotes Deuteronomy and refers to them both as Scripture. That's a great apologetic, by the way, for the authority of the New Testament.

Later on, we find where the writings of Paul are referred to as Scripture. If you ever wanted, and this is a whole sermon. We could spend like hours and hours upon this. Where did we get the canonization of Scripture?

That is, who gets to decide that these are the books of the Bible? Well, the authors themselves that were moved by the hand of God and they wrote the Word of God as they were empowered by the Spirit of God were already referring to the writings of one another as Scripture and putting them on par with the Old Testament writings, which were already acknowledged by the people of God.

[ 4 : 33 ] That's a great place to say amen. So we can believe what the Word of God tells us, right? So we can say this is emphatically true. So with those matters being settled, now let's see what the text does say.

I want you to see this morning, and again, I know I'm speaking very quickly and I'll try to get through this for the sake of your time and my time. I want you to see the church and its leadership.

The church and its leadership. It is telling, by the way, how often this reality of eldership is brought up in the pastoral epistles. Now we do know also, we'll be voting on deacons here in just a moment, that 1 Timothy speaks in reference to deacons as well.

Deacons are also mentioned with their origination in Acts chapter 6, we see the end of the book of Romans, Romans chapter 16, that refers to those serving in church, and the word there is deacons. So we have this kind of repetitive theme here of deacons, but within the context of 1 Timothy, the reality of elders are mentioned multiple times. So he left Timothy behind in emphasis to appoint elders, and then he tells them about halfway through, what are the qualifications for elders?

[ 5 : 44 ] And then he moves here again, and he brings up once again this reality of elders. And that is, if we're looking at what the church ought to be, or what it looks like to be the church, it seems as if Paul keeps referring to its leadership.

Now, in context, we're not talking about here dictatorship, or even authoritative leadership, because if you remember, when we preached through elders and deacons in their context, found in 1 Timothy chapter 3, that we defined elders, which is interchangeable with pastors and shepherds and overseers, we defined elders as the leading servants, or the servant leaders of the church, right?

They are the servant leaders. We would define deacons as the leading servants. Now, that definition is very clear, because pastors, shepherds, elders, overseers, they are to be the servant leaders of the church.

Deacons ought to be the leading servants. That is, they lead others to serve greater. And there's a very clear distinction there that we see. Now, Paul takes just a few moments to speak about the church and its leadership, because it was of great importance.

If you were to go to the book of Acts, and you were to go through the book of Acts, and see, when Paul is making his way back to Jerusalem, that very fateful journey, which took Paul back to Jerusalem, where he was taken captive when he was in the temple, paying vows that the Jerusalem church said he should do, which, by the way, it's never good when the majority rules in Scripture just seems to get people in trouble a lot of times.

[ 7 : 26 ] You should do this. And Paul said, well, I think I should do that. Well, you do this. And he gets arrested. Anyway, complete side note there. I kind of get carried away on those. But anyway, so he's there, and he's paying these vows.

He's doing everything right. He gets arrested when he's in the temple. They told him they'd bring a Gentile into the temple, which he did not. But that trip, right, when he went to Jerusalem, ended up in his going to Rome, on the way, he stopped.

He did not stop in Ephesus, but he stopped on the way and called the elders from Ephesus to him. Remember that? And he told the elders from Ephesus that, make no mistake about it, ravenous wolves and sheep, wolves in sheep's clothing will show up, and they'll cause great harm within the

church.

Well, newsflash, here it is. Okay, and the way they did it was through the leadership in the church. The leadership, church leadership, is so important. And he spends a lot of time.

This is why Timothy is sent back there. This is why Timothy is there. He's raising up elders. And so let's just break it down very quickly. I won't give you everything I'd like to give you, but I'm going to give you a little bit of everything I'd like to give you because I'm trusting it's cold outside, and you're not in a real big hurry to go hang out outside, right?

[ 8 : 34 ] So if it's a beautiful day, it's like, I've got to get outside. Right now, the Lord has been good in giving us the cold weather so we can stand here. Number one, I want you to notice the calling. Number one, the calling. Look at what it says.

The elders who rule well. Again, we have this repetitive refrain of a multiplicity of elders. The elders who rule well.

We see this throughout the New Testament, this continuous refrain. Now, that does not mean there are multiple preaching pastors or preaching elders. It just means there are multiple leaders within the church because, again, it is of great benefit to a church when it can do that because it instills safeguards inside the body, which we'll get to in just a moment.

But we notice it says the elders who rule well. And some of you are pulling back, say, oh, I don't want anybody ruling over me. Well, the word rule literally means to lead. We see in the book of Romans, if you were to go to Romans chapter 12, in verse 8 in particular, Romans 12, 8.

But in Romans chapter 12, Paul is referring to those with spiritual gifts, which, by the way, he tells you that your gifts are given for the benefit of others, right? That if you have the gift of giving, you ought to give with generosity.

[ 9 : 49 ] If you have the gift of faith, you ought to take things out in liberality. So the gift you have been given in Christ, your spiritual gift, is not for your sole benefit. I believe that he spiritually gifts each and every one of us.

But you are given a gift for the benefit of others, that is, for the church. And then he tells it this way in Romans 12, 8, and those who lead with diligence.

That is, he refers to the leadership as a spiritual gift given to some, and he tells them to lead diligently. Now, the word lead, you need to understand, because this would make you feel a little bit better.

Now, this is why you have to stay with me throughout the whole text. Don't discount me right now. The word lead means to come beside and give aid. To be one who comes along beside someone and gives them aid to do what they are called to do.

Your mind should connect immediately to Ephesians chapter 4. And if you've been with me with any amount of time whatsoever, especially in the last three years, you would know that I defined my role and responsibility as a pastor from Ephesians 4, 12.

[ 11 : 03 ] To equip the saints to do the work of the ministry. To give you the aid to do what God is calling you to do. That's how you lead. You give assistance.

You give the aid. You come along beside. You do not run straight ahead. It is amazing. I do personality types and tests with everybody that I do pre-marriage counseling with and help them to understand kind of how they are made, how God wired them, what they look like.

There are some people whose personalities, they're kind of depicted in images and types. And that doesn't really, I tell them, I said, don't give a whole lot of attention to this. But there are those whose, you know, personality portraits are kind of one.

Mine is the guy with the sword held in the air and let's say, where let's go, right? That's my personality type. That's just how I'm made. But the danger in that is one of my natural personalities is that I'm the guy who says, I have a sword.

I'm knocking everything down. You follow if you can. But that's not leadership, right? That's independency, which I have a tendency to be. To go out here and blaze my own trail and to go my own path.

[ 12 : 08 ] And if you're with me, great. If you're not, that's on you. I'm just being honest with you. That's my type. But that's not healthy leadership. Because healthy leadership, biblically, is to come along beside.

If nobody's following, friend, listen, you're not leading. That's the reality. You may be cutting a great trail, but you're not leading anyone. So we understand this, that the calling of the elders is to come

along beside other people and to lead them down the path that God is creating. Because there is but one trailblazer who is the forerunner of the saints. And the book of Hebrews tells us that is Jesus Christ our Savior. He is called the trailblazer in the book of Hebrews. There's only one who has the sword who's cutting the path. And we are all to walk in that path. But it is the leaders of the church who are called to enable you to walk that path. But look at what it says.

The calling goes a little bit further. They are to rule well and to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. That is, the calling of the elders is to come along beside and aid people to walk in the path that God has for them.

[13:15] And the greatest way to lead them to do that is by the word and through the word and in the word. The best thing that I, as an individual, can ever do as a pastor, and I had to come to this reality, to enable you to do what God is calling you to do is to preach to you consistently the word of God.

Because God can say in an instant what it would take me in a lifetime. He says, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

I'm very humbled in reality that some, a lot of people come to me and say, well, pastor, your memory is so great and you can rattle off all this stuff. And it's amazing.

You don't ever use notes. And I tell them, I say, but you don't really know me. Because outside of this world, I forget everything. Outside of this world, my wife has really had to discipline me to start keeping a little folder and keep a calendar.

I told her the other day, before you made me keep a calendar, my days were a lot less busy. But now, all of a sudden, I'm reminded of everything I have to do and I'm supposed to be doing. I didn't like that. This is the first year ever I've ever kept a calendar.

[14:17] I'm like, man, my days are busy. They used to be so easy. Because I would just cast it off and forget it. Because that's not where I'm gifted. But this is where God called me. In his grace and his mercy, he has grace and mercy extended towards you.

And enables me to freedom of thought at times. Which, when I step down from here, and those that know me well, will know that I forget a lot of things when I walk away from this area. But, that's not God's calling.

What the reality is, is that we are to do it through the word. Those who preach and teach. This is the calling. The primary source of leadership in any church is the preaching and teaching of the word of God.

We do not lead by personality. We do not lead by persuasion. We do not lead by programs. We do not lead by performances. We do not lead by popularity. We lead, friend, listen to me, by the word of God and that alone.

Programs go out of style. Personalities fade away. Performances will fail at times and opportunities. We lead through the word of God for it endures through the ages.

[15:24] This is the calling. Listen, we are in a congregation in which there are four of us. After next week, well, we've already given the title, but next week we'll actually ordain it.

They are recognized as elders. Guess what, men? The primary way to lead is through the word. Here's the calling. Number two, we notice the charge. The charge is given to the congregation. Which, by the way, this is a text. I probably won't do it next week, but this is a text. If I'm ever called on to preach the congregational charge to elders in the election of pastors, this is the text that I use. I won't do it with you next. Wow, that was loud. I'm so sorry. That's usually why I use the lapel. I won't do it next week because you're already hearing it this week. But we notice here, look at this charge. The elders who rule will be considered worthy of double honor.

Now, this is where pastors get very uncomfortable. And this is where it makes you sweat just a little bit because the word there, the implicitness of the word there is there to be worthy of their pay.

[16:25] That's what it clearly says. And we take that in context because if you go back and it says to honor widows in the early pages or the early verses of chapter five, the implication there is that you will help widows financially.

The ones who are widows indeed. Now, this does not mean you pay the pastor twice as much as what everybody else is making. That's not what it's saying. It says that he's worthy of the honor which he receives.

And that is consistent with scripture because Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter nine, 1 Corinthians chapter nine, verse 14, Paul says, the Lord directed those who preach the word and teach the word to get their living from the word.

Now, that's a hard thing at times to wrap your mind around because I said, well, there's so many other things that I would like to do. So many other things that I think would be easier to do. You say, I don't know, pastor. You have it pretty easy. You only work, what, two, two, three hours a week, something like that.

It's not that bad. And so it's a pretty good gig. And I'm just joking. Remember, Timothy was an elder that was told to drink a little wine for his stomach. Okay.

[17:27] It's the only worker, by the way, in scripture, wherever find it in scripture. The only worker we're ever told is given a prescription for something that's making him feel bad is Timothy the elder. That's a little telling, right?

Anyway, so let's go on. It says they're worthy. This is the charge of the church, and I believe of the local church, to care for those who lead among it.

This church does a fantastic job at that. I just want to reaffirm that. But it is the charge that is given to the church. The church carries that concern. This is a local church issue. Paul knows that.

Now, there are times where local churches need other churches to come along beside them. We're doing that with two churches now. But it is a reality that we understand. So it is a charge given to the congregation to show that honor, to show that worthiness of what they do.

But it also is this. It says those who rule well. So the charge is also given for the church to have discernment. Understand that?

[18:25] It doesn't say that all elders are worthy of double honor. It does not say that as long as they teach you something, they're worthy. It says those who work hard at preaching and teaching. And it implies discernment.

Surely there will be those who are worthy. But in the same vein, friend, listen to me. There also will be those who are not worthy. And it is the responsibility of the local congregation to live in that discernment.

This is why, congregationally speaking, you are to walk in so great fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ in the word of God that you can have such discernment between the two.

It implies the discernment of the local congregation to be able to make such decision. And then he speaks later about the laying on of hands. We'll get to just a moment. And that the congregation is charged with the responsibility.

See, there's this great checks and balance, I believe, in the New Testament and in all of scripture in particular. And that is there are those who lead, who come along beside and help.

[19:33] And then there are those that the leaders are accountable to. You say, well, who are you accountable to? Well, the congregation. Well, who's the congregation being led by? The one who's accountable to them. See, we believe in the leadership of the elders and we believe in the congregational decision, discernment, because together we have the mind of Christ.

I am first and foremost, the very first act I ever did as pastor of this church was join the church. I am a member of the church first. So I'm a part of the congregation, right?

I'm just happened to be the one that God has called to stand up and to be the preaching, teaching elder of the church. So here's the charge. Number two, number three, we see the correction, the calling, the charge and the correction.

Look at what it says. Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Just this week, I received a phone call of someone who had heard an accusation against me.

You say, well, you're looking around looking for them. It was not internally, okay? Just so you understand that there's nothing new under the sun. He said, I don't mean to call you with this.

[20:40] I just feel like you ought to know. And I said, well, I appreciate you calling me. He said, I don't know what we ought to do. I said, well, I'm going to do what I always do and we'll just continue on. It comes with the territory. It's part of it. Ever since God called me to the ministry, one of the things I was like, I really don't know if I want to be a pastor is because I had been a church member.

I had been a deacon. I had been a youth leader and I had sat in enough meetings to know what members think about pastors. I had heard enough discussion of what, and I never wanted to be that guy. I had heard what people outside of the world thought about churches and pastors.

And I get that. When you put yourself in that position, the moment you, by the way, men, the moment you are recognized as deacons, the moment you are recognized as an elder, then all of a sudden the moment the expectation begins to grow just a little bit.

And everybody has expressed that concern. And then all of a sudden the opinions of people all of a sudden change. But here's the quick question. What's the difference when we're all members first? It is that we see them differently and we understand them differently.

But it says, do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. Do you know that this is also the same principle that applies of receiving an accusation against any brother or sister in Christ?

[ 21 : 52 ] Don't let anyone come to you defaming another brother or sister in Christ unless they come with another witness. I shared this with the deacons and elders already.

I had an email over the Christmas season. Someone blasting the church. An anonymous email sent to me through our website. Which, thank you, Stephen. The contact us works really good.

And it came to me by way of that. And it was about your church is so ungodly. And I had one major issue is that they did not capitalize the G in God. So they must have been referring to a little God, not the big God.

And we serve the big God. But anyway, other than that. And how we didn't do things right. And how all this other stuff. And someone did something. And my reply back to them is, I do not concern myself with someone doing something. Until you tell me the name of who did what, then don't respond back to me.

Because someones always do something. But this is what I have found. Someones always have names. And unless you're willing to bring me the name and to bring me the witness along with the name, then we're not walking in biblical ground.

[ 22 : 55 ] I will not receive that accusation. You say, what authority do you have to do that? The word of God. And neither do you. If someone comes to you and says, oh, did you hear about so-and-so? Ask them for a witness.

For another testimony. Ask them to bring two or three testimonies to testify to the same reality. I'm not just speaking about me. I'm talking about any brother or sister in Christ. Because this is the same premises for any accusation you receive.

And if they cannot provide such, then tell them you will not receive it. Because all of a sudden, bitterness is like worms.

And begins to take root. Begins to run rampant. You know how much harm the enemy does when we are walking on untested grounds. But there are those times.

Again, this is a charge to church. But there are those times when the witnesses are provided. Those who continue in sin, it says. And it's now referring to elders. Leaders.

[ 23 : 53 ] Those who continue in sin. Rebuke in the presence of all. That is, church. This ought to be very comforting to you. The leadership of the church is not beyond rebuke from the church.

This is the accountability factor. When that accusation is well founded. When there are witnesses and eyewitnesses to the reality. When the sin has been found out.

Then correct the sin. This is, again, the biblical principle of Matthew chapter 18 of church discipline. You say, oh yeah, we got to get rid of that guy. Wait a minute. Matthew 18 says that you correct him and rebuke them for the purpose of restoration.

Maybe he's not the pastor or the elder any longer. But you're not trying to demolish a brother.

You're trying to restore a brother. And you do it publicly. Too often great harm is done in churches.

And in associations. And in conventions. And in a wide way around the world. Because sin is left unchecked in the pulpits and the podiums of our congregations. Though there is ample evidence of it.

[ 24 : 53 ] But they will not do it. Or they try to hide it behind the curtain. It says to do it publicly. To call it out. Why? So that others. May fear.

This is the charge that's given, by the way, to elders. Is when you put yourself in this position. If there are well-founded things against me. And there are matters that need to be addressed. And the charge to you, congregation, is then address them.

And address them publicly. So that everyone else. Because it is not my feelings that are so important. It is the holiness of God that is a reality. To understand that the standard is not belittled just because the man happens to be up there.

Or the individual happens to be up there teaching and preaching. It is the holiness of God. The charge that I give to pastors and elders at their ordination. Is that you ought to reflect the holy character of God.

And it is a congregation that holds you to it. And if you don't, then they are called to publicly call you out on it. That's the reality. So we have the calling, the charge, the correction.

[ 25 : 56 ] Number four. And finally, the caution. Look at the caution. He says, do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily. Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily.

He sent Timothy to Ephesus to appoint and raise up elders. But he said, but don't do it too quickly. Don't just say, oh, there's a need. We have this great void. Let's do this.

Let's find somebody. Let's ordain them. By the way, this is one of the few times in scripture that it tells us ordination takes place with a laying on the hands. Timothy is being referred to as having hands laid upon him by the elders.

What does it say? Don't do it too quickly. Just now. My 19th year in the ministry. Can I say that next Sunday will be three men that I ordain as elders.

I was convicted of the reality at about seven years into the ministry. You say, oh, couldn't you have found men before then? I could have found them. But don't do it too hastily.

[ 27 : 07 ] Don't just ask the church to do it quickly because we got to get ourselves in alignment. Why? Because if we're not careful, he says, we will share the responsibility for the sins of others.

Be cautious about who you lay your hands upon. Lest you be found to be endorsing their sins and therefore carrying the responsibility for their sins that have went unchecked.

And to keep yourself free from sin. He says, I know this is going to be difficult and hard and it's going to cause some discomfort in you. That's why he gives the admonition in verse 23.

But then he declares in verse 24, he comes right back to it. The sins of some men are quite evident. He says, some you'll notice. Going before them to judgment for others, their sins follow after.

What's the takeaway from that? Sin will always ultimately be revealed.

Either today or someday, the reality of that will be seen. Likewise, also deeds that are good are quite evident and those which are otherwise cannot be concealed. There will be a day of recognition.

[ 28 : 09 ] But it is the caution given to the church to be careful about who we lay hands upon. What has happened in the American church is we have not heeded that caution.

We've said, oh, that guy's good at this or he's good at that or he has a great personality or man, look at that. He can really bring people in. Let's ordain him, let's anoint him, and let's trust him. And by doing that, I'll just be honest with you.

It is the congregation abdicating their responsibility of holding charge of what goes on. You are the body of Christ.

I'm one part. Just one part. You have the mind of Christ, and I do along with you because we are members. These are congregational issues that flow through the word of God to the people of God for the glory of God.

And may we walk as a holy, healthy church with the leadership that he's called us to do for his glory and honor. Let's pray. Father, we thank you so much for this day.

[ 29 : 23 ] Thank you for the opportunity we've had to be together. Thank you for the things that have been declared to us.

Thank you for the challenge of your word. Lord, I know we've been a little long today, but Lord, we pray that your spirit has spoke to our hearts and minds. May we be a responsive people.

Much has been said here today. Maybe hearts have been broken even before I started preaching. Maybe there's something they need to share with someone. Would today be the day they do that? Maybe we need to say, Lord, we want to see you before we cast any votes or before we make any decisions.

May we meet with you. Lord Jesus, we ask that we would have your mind in all things, that it would be for your glory and honor. And we ask it all in your name. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[ 31 : 24 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.  
[ 34 : 55 ] Thank you.

Thank you.  
Thank you.  
Thank you.  
Thank you.