

1 Timothy 5:1-16

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[0 : 0 0] to the Word. Take out your Bibles and go to the book of 1 Timothy, 1 Timothy chapter 5. 1 Timothy chapter 5. 1 Timothy chapter 5, as we just continue to make our way through the book of 1 Timothy, we have come to this point. So if you remember, the book of 1 Timothy, much like the writings of Paul, are equally divisible. The first three chapters in this book in particular, lay out a doctrine for us. They give us a truth to adhere to, a truth to believe.

And then the remaining three chapters here in Timothy chapters 4, 5, and 6, give us the application of those truths. That since we believe this, then this is what we do in light of what we believe.

And I'm thankful that all of Scripture is that way. Scripture is not just there so that we can gain and collect information. Rather, Scripture is there so that it would change and impact our lives. Paul is one who is very clear in that. He gives you a great doctrinal or theological truth, and then he gives you practical applications as to how you ought to live it out. So we are in the middle of the applications of the great doctrines about the church. If you remember the theme of Timothy, is it the church? 1 Timothy chapter 3, verses 14 through 16. The church is the pillar and support of the truth. He says, I write these things so that you may know how one ought to conduct themselves in the church, which is the pillar and support of the truth. So that is, the church is called to lift up the truth in the world in which it has been put and placed in. God is the builder of the church. We know this. Christ himself says in Matthew 16, I will build my church. So we understand that it is Christ who builds the church. That is, he puts the members together. That's reinforced throughout scripture. Everyone that joins this body of believers, I believe, has been divinely ordained to be a portion of that body. That we are stones being built up to one another. We are a holy priesthood of believers for the glory of the Savior. That is, we're not here accidentally. God is building his church through Christ. But the church has a reason for its existence, and that reason is to lift up the truth. And as we lift up the truth, there are some applicable things that take place in that.

And we find one of those here in 1 Timothy chapter 5, verses 1 through 16, which is our text. But before we get into our text, before you stand and pray, or not stand and read with me, let's take a moment just to pray over the matters we just discussed. So let's pray.

Father, I thank you so much. I thank you that you've gathered us together here today. You've given us an opportunity to worship, to be reminded of how sweet it is to fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ. Lord, to be reminded through the songs we have sung, the songs we have heard, how deserving of our worship and adoration you are. But Father, we thank you that as we gather together as brothers and sisters, we also are those who have been called to put hands and feet to the gospel. So we thank you that we have had the opportunity and continue to have the opportunity to do physical things for the glory of the kingdom. We do pray for Enon Baptist Church. Pray, God, they'll meet later on today in a temporary building. I pray that you continue to bless that fellowship. We pray that you continue to help them to do missional work in their area. We pray for the rescues that are going on in Taiwan. We pray for that ministry that's going on in the red light district. Pray that you continue to honor those who are laboring there and that the fruit of their labor would be glorifying to you. We pray for Art City, for Kirk and Kathy and their kids as they minister there. Pray that you continue to walk beside them, encourage them, that you will be pulling people out of even a good way of life, calling them to the Savior. We pray for our own community. God, you give us a great opportunity to minister right outside our doors, so thank you for that. We ask that you'd help us to be people fully surrendered to you, given over for the sake of the kingdom and for the usefulness of the king. Be with us as we interact and we talk with people. May the words of our mouths and actions of our lives be different because of the relationship we have with you. So now as we prepare to read your word, we understand that our natural ears, our natural eyes cannot receive it. So we ask that by the power and presence of the Spirit that you would help us to understand your word with clarity and with certainty and that you would be glorified and honored through it. And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Take your Bibles with me. If you're physically able and desire to do so, I'm asking you to join with me as we stand together. We read the word of God found in 1 Timothy chapter 5 verses 1 through 16. Paul writing to Timothy as he is ministering in

[4 : 47] Ephesus writes, do not sharply rebuke an older man but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters in all purity. Honor widows who are widows indeed. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents for this is acceptable in the sight of God. Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone has fixed her own God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day. But she who gives herself to wanton pleasures is dead even while she lives. Prescribe these things as well so that they may be above reproach. But if anyone does not provide for his own and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than 60 years old, having been the wife of one man, having a reputation for good works, and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work, but refuse to put younger widows on the list for when they feel sensual desires and disregard of Christ, they want to get married, thus incurring condemnation because they have set aside their previous pledge. At the same time, they also learn to be idle as they go around from house to house and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies talking about things not proper to mention. Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach. For some have already turned aside to follow

Satan. If any woman is a believer, if any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, she must assist them, and the church must not be burdened so that it may assist those who are widows indeed. Let's pray real quick.

Father, bless your word. May you be glorified in it. We ask it in your son's name. Amen. You may be seated. 1 Timothy chapter 5 verses 1 through 16. I dare say it covers a topic and a discussion in such a manner that we would not do it if it was not recorded for us in the very word of God. One that at times makes us uncomfortable and at times make us feel like we're not being too politically correct. But my friend, just to be honest with you, I'm not so much concerned about political correctness as I am biblical accuracy. That's just the truth. And I would rather be biblically accurate and politically incorrect and be wrong according to the standard of the world, but be right according to the word of God. I have been reminded just this past week and listening to some pastors that I listened to when I was very young in the faith, how we used to have men who would stand in the pulpits and unashamedly call sin, sin, and call wrong, wrong, and right, right, and didn't care no matter how many people they were standing in front of, no matter how big the platform was, they did not care as long as they were true to scripture. But by and large, that day is almost gone. So our calling is to open up scripture and to see what the word of God teaches us and to adjust our lives accordingly, not what society teaches us. And just so you know, I'm not picking on widows, okay? Because while this text has a application to widows, a direct application, it has implication and application to all the needy around them. The most needy of the day when Paul was writing were the widows. So I want you to see this morning, the place of the church in a needy world. The place of the church in a needy world. For all of the desire to be isolated and to be independent and to be all about,

I, this world is a very needy place. That is, those who try to claim that they need no one always find an opportunity to call out to someone. And they call out in desperation at times. This past week, I had a conversation with an individual who was in need. And I expressed to that individual, it is not our desire to see people who are in genuine and legitimate needs to have their needs unmet. But it is equally not our desire to see them back in that same situation later. Because you didn't need us until you called us. And now all of a sudden you need us, but we don't want you to need us for that any longer.

We want you to grow from that. We want you to move beyond that. We want you to have the opportunity to come to us. As Paul would write later, let the one who steals learn how to work so that he would have something to give. Not let the one who steals work so that he can provide for his own, but let him learn how to work so that he'll have something to give. We want you to be productive. But here we see in the text before us, a place of the church in a needy world. The first thing that we notice about the church, because this text is all about the church, all of first Timothy is how we ought to conduct ourselves in the church, right? So it tells us how we ought to behave, the things we ought to do, even when the needs are brought to us. The first thing that we notice is that the church should be a place of respectful relationships. The church should be a place of respectful relationships.

[10:17] If you take just a moment and you consider the fallings and failings of just about every pastor you know, there's been a number of pastors here in the last, especially in the past couple of years, pastors of mega churches, pastors of large churches that have fallen off of great pedestals.

And there are a number of members that have done the same thing. They're just not quite as publicized as they are pastors and deservedly so. But if you take just a moment to think about it, each one of them fell as a direct result of relationships. Much harm has been done in the church because of disrespect for inappropriate relationships. But the church is to be a place of respectful relationships. Look at what it says.

Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father. Now, if we want to really understand this in context, we go back just a little bit in the fourth chapter and we see where Paul tells Timothy not to let anyone look down on his youthfulness. Timothy was probably about 30 years of age. I used to think 30 wasn't too young until I got very north of 30. And now I think 30 is pretty young, right? You're just a kid. I understand that. But anyway, he says, don't let anyone look down on your youthfulness in a society that respected age. In a society that really counted the gray hairs of a man as to being a crown, not rather a detriment to him. Timothy was one who was among them and looked down upon by many around him. In the Greek culture, it was the age that were respected and honored and seen as being those who were wise. And yet here's Timothy who is being left behind to pastor the church at Ephesus to put into place all of these practices to raise up elders, that is leaders, and to raise up deacons that would serve in the church and to be an instructor to teach these men and women how they ought to live. And so Paul tells him, don't let anyone look down upon your youthfulness.

Know who you are in Christ. There is this great confidence that we ought to have in Christ, something that we ought to be certain of from the youngest to the oldest, that when we are in Christ, we need our youth and we need our young adults to have a sure foundation in Christ. We would have a holy, bold assurance of who they are so that they would walk with their head held not in self-confidence, but in Christ's confidence, that they would know the gospel. But then he says to live in such a manner that you show yourself an example. But be careful because the pendulum can swing so far the other direction to say that I'm not going to let you look down upon me because I'm younger than you. I want to reassert myself. Now he says, be careful when you approach the older men. I tell this in pre-marriage counseling and I even tell this in marriage counseling. God has so ordained the relationship of marriage to meet the greatest needs of men and women. We find it in Ephesians 5, right, where it says, wives, be submissive to your husbands in all things. And some of you say, ah, it's not the greatest need.

It has a need for me to submit. Stay with me. And husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the church. The two great needs of each individual, whether or not you know it. And some of you say, ah, it's not me. Well, think about it for just a moment. You can go to the back and you can see any number of little boys and little girls back there. And all you have to do is walk around the hallway and unabate it and just see them in their natural setting. Every young boy wants to know, am I strong?

[13 : 45] Do you respect me? Can I knock you down? Every little girl wants you to know, am I pretty? Do you love me? The greatest need of men is to be respected and to be honored. God has instilled that in the hearts of every man. The greatest need of a lady is to be loved unconditionally and whole and perfect.

And so now the admonition to Timothy is, is know who you're talking to. Don't let them look on your youthfulness, but also do not disrespect them as they are a person. I've seen this and I've actually been tempted with this. It is a hard thing to be a young pastor. I became a pastor at the age of 26.

Some people told me you're much too young to be a pastor. In hindsight, I'd agree with them. I was much too young to be a pastor, but at the age of 26, I was a pastor for years. I was the youngest pastor in our association. Not so anymore. I'm by far not the youngest anymore, but I was the youngest pastor in our association. I get used to get invited to the young quote unquote in the ministry meetings. Don't get those invitations anymore. And used to go up and hang out with older pastors.

And there's this tendency that you notice these young pastors, they're all fire and brimstone guys. Why? Because I'm young and I want to prove to you I deserve to be here. These older pastors, a little bit more reserved. They understand they're in it for the marathon, not to short sprint, right? And they know they don't need to look down. They don't need to validate their position.

They don't need to see who they are. And by the way, this isn't just a text for pastors. This isn't just a text for pastors. This is a text for believers. He says, don't sharply rebuke an older man, but appeal to him as a father, the younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, sisters, and the younger women as sisters. What is he telling you to do? Is to live with a respectful relationship to everyone around you. The word to appeal means to come alongside. We actually, we get one of the names of the Holy Spirit. Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the helper, the paracletos in the book of John. Same word that is used here means that you are to come along beside them. He's telling Timothy, not that you shouldn't rebuke or correct. By the way, there will be a time if you live your Christian life long enough and you live it intentionally and you're living among other believers, there will be a time, and it's one of the most uncomfortable things for me, where you have to look an older saint in the eye and tell them they are wrong.

[16 : 21] It's not a matter of if you're going to have to do it. The question is how you do it. I've had to look men that had planted churches internationally that had served in the ministry much longer than me that had already retired out of the ministry and I was their pastor and he would look at me and say, and I'd have to look at him and say, but you're wrong. And that's a hard thing to do, but there is a right way to do it. He says to come along beside them and strengthen them in their walk.

That sounds a whole lot like discipleship, right? When he's telling Timothy, the older men, the younger men, the older women, the younger women, don't sharply rebuke them. Don't disrespect them. If they're wrong, then come along beside them and strengthen them in their walk. Encourage them to mature. How are we to respect and have those relationships with people around us? If you are maturing in the faith, praise be to God, but come along beside someone else and help them mature in the faith as well. Don't stand there and wag the finger and tell them they're wrong. Come beside them and show them how to get on this path of rightness. There is the respectfulness of this. This is one of the greatest joys that I've ever had as a pastor is to learn this reality. And one of the greatest joys we'll ever have, even yesterday, I was calling around and checking on a few of our members, making sure they weren't, I was getting ready to go out and drive the roads, you know, do what every man does.

There's ice on the roads. Let's go see what they look like. And I was going to go do that. So I was checking on some people and a number of these ladies told me, I kind of laughed when I got off the phone and told my wife, I said, you don't need to tell me to be careful because everyone I just talked to told me to be careful. Don't put it in a ditch. Be careful where you drive. I said, all these mamas were looking out for me. That's okay. I need that. Right? That's the relationship you're to have. It's a respectful thing. He says, you ought to have this. And this is one of the things we ought to do, but look at what it says. In all purity. In all purity. That is, the intentions and the desires and the ambitions of the individual as he interacts with people, deacons and elders, as you interact with someone that is not your wife, is in all purity. Right? Men, as you interact with someone who is not your wife, it's in all purity. As a sister or as a mother. Ladies, you're interacting with other people around you in all purity. As a father or as a brother. It is the intention of the heart that says that we're going to do this with sincerity, with no ulterior motives in mind, but just the desire to aid and to help the brother or sister around me. It is to walk with intentionality. It is to have the type of ambition that would raise that person up to Christ likeness, not to me likeness. I don't need you to like me. I need you to be in love with the Savior. And it is to walk beside them to help them to get that way with all purity. The church is to be a place of respectful relationships. In all places in society, the greatest respect ought to be displayed in the church. It ought to be. It ought to be the place where we see one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. I have had the great opportunity to go to a number of major cities and big churches and small churches and different churches. Churches that don't look like ours. Churches where I am the anomaly that sticks out. Right? And I've had the opportunity to be in those places. But there's a oneness with brothers and sisters that are there. And to be respected.

I've also had the opportunity to be in churches where I wasn't so respected. Because I didn't belong. Because maybe I shouldn't have been there. And so we ought to be careful how we do that.

Right? The church is to be a place of respectful relationships. Number two. Oh, this is where we get to the nuts and bolts. That was the easy one, by the way. Number two. The church is to be a place of reinforced principles. It is to be a place of reinforced principles. Verse three says, honor widows who are widows indeed. This cover, this continues the scriptural mandate of caring for the widows. This is not a New Testament principle. It's something that was taking place in the Old Testament. We can go all the way back to the book of Leviticus and the book of Deuteronomy and see that God admonishes the nation of Israel to provide for the weakest of society and at times the neediest of society, which happened to be the widows. We see in the book of James that pure and undefiled religion is to care for the widows and the orphans in their time of need. Right? We understand these. God is looking for the needy and says, I want you to be a person of genuine heartedness that wants to care for these. So this continues the scriptural mandate to honor the widows and to care for the widows that are widows indeed. Now, if we want to extend the net of application, and I don't think we would be wrong in doing this, we would say that we can cast that net to those who have genuine and legitimate needs. We'll do that in just a moment. But look at what it says.

[21 : 27] While there is the scriptural mandate to care for the widows, continue reading because there's this semicolon there and then there's that word but. So don't miss that. I know that's broken in your chapter because they're in your Bible because there's a number four beside you. So, oh, that's a whole other verse. All right. But look at the punctuation. That's the same sentence. Okay. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents for this is acceptable in the sight of God.

What is this saying? That the scriptural admonition for the church to care for widows does not negate the scriptural admonition for the family to provide for itself. God does not replace the family with the church. The church is to strengthen the family. Okay. These are very intentional realities. There's five essentials and I've shared it with some of you and you're beginning to see it right now that I believe that we as a church ought to be a part of. And one of those is to enhance the home. And this kind of fits right into it. This is why you're beginning to see men's things and you're beginning to see marriage things that are coming to place. It has never been God's intention to say, well, if you're a member of a family, something happens to your mom or your aunt or anything, you don't have to worry about that. The church will take care of that. No, it is the reinforcing the principle that it is the family that has to serve first. The family is the building block, not only of society, but of a healthy world. This is why Satan gives so much energy to the destruction of the family. Adrian Rogers says that if the enemy can destroy the family, then he can dictate the world.

When you look at the fall of the Roman empire, what happened in the Roman empire's fall? If you study it, it was the breakdown of the nucleus of the home. Even when the church was getting stronger, the home was breaking down because by the time the Roman society fell, the church was already established. It was the national religion of the Roman empire, but no matter the church's strength, it was the home that broke down that led to the fall of the empire. In our own society, we don't have to go very far from that. We begin to see the breakdown of the home. What scripture does is it reinforces the principle that families have a responsibility to one another. It says they must first learn to practice piety in regard for their own family and to make some return for their parents in their, what is acceptable in the sight of God. It is acceptable in the sight of God for the families to provide for one another. It is a challenge. I understand that some of you say, well, it's beyond my control. Well, if my family won't do that or will not do that, and I'm not just talking about widows here. I'm talking about those that have genuine needs. We'll get to that in just a moment.

Well, then the church is never called to replace the family. Sometimes we can assist in spite of the family, but the goal of the church ought to be coming alongside that family and strengthening them so they can do what it is they're calling to do. If not, we are doing what has already happened in our own country. We are enabling a dependency on something that is not biblically accurate.

I can get into a lot right here and I can get real preachy on you and probably get a little too political and probably shouldn't do that, but one of the greatest tragedies that's ever happened is when we began to make people dependent on things that was never biblically mandated.

[24 : 48] We began to let government do what the family was supposed to do. And let's be careful that we as a church don't slide into that same world.

The family is the first institution. The family was in existence long before the church was. Right? God was building families all the way back in the garden.

You start building the church into the book of Acts. The family is in existence long before that. So it is the family. That doesn't say that the family should take place of the church, but the church should also not take place of the family.

It reinforces the principles that are honoring to God. So church, when we have the opportunity to help someone and we come along beside them and we minister to them because this is a neat world, then our desire ought to be, well, what about your family?

This is a principle I'm trying to learn myself, right? Because I think at times I feel like I'm going to offend someone and I need to get over those feelings because feelings are subjective to circumstances and need to just go on biblical truth. I'm kind of preaching to the pastor right here.

[26 : 01] We ought to challenge the family. So we see it is a place of reinforced principles. Number three, the church is a place for relief for the genuine. It's a place of relief for the genuine. It says in verse six, but she who gives herself, or not, let's go back now verse five. Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope in God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day. And then it goes down to verse nine, a widow is to be put on the list. And then it gives these stipulations. So what is he saying? When there's a legitimate need, a genuine need, then the church is to come alongside that individual. There's been much discussion among biblical scholars as to what this list is. What list are you putting this individual on? We'll get into that in just a little bit more, a little bit detailed. But for the time being, I want you to understand that the list was probably the list of recurring contributions that were given to these individuals. We see a similar list of this in Acts chapter six. Evidently, there was a listing of the widows that they fed each and every day, because that's why there was a complaint that arose among the Hellenistic Jews that led to the institution of what we call the deacon body. The church was going around and serving meals to the widows, and they were feeding them each and every day. And some of those that were on the list weren't being met. And so there was a list there. So more than likely, this list means these are the individuals the church is supporting. These are those that we're walking alongside. In context, these are the widows that are in desperate need.

They are legitimate needs. There's no family to meet that need. So we're going to come along beside them and meet it on an ongoing basis. They kept a list because they wanted to be intentional.

Because here's the reality, that when there is a legitimate, genuine need, the church is to be a place of relief. When this world comes upon, just this past week, I shared with an individual, we know that there are crises that come in individuals' lives, and there are times of desperation. I'm not against anyone crying out at that time of desperation, and I really need relief at this moment. What I'm against is when that crisis shows up every month. Listen, the water bill is not a crisis every month. You know what?

You know it's coming. Right? But the reality is, is there ought to be a place where someone can call to when there's a genuine relief. I know it, and I express it because I'm a living example of it.

My wife and I were married. We were married a number of years. I was a lineman with a phone company. She was pregnant with a man sitting beside her. She was three months pregnant with our second son.

[28 : 46] I got laid off. It was out of my control. Two planes decided to fly into the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon, and all of a sudden, everything collapsed. I lost my job, and I lost my job. I lost my insurance. Nobody was hiring. Some of you have been there. Some of you don't even remember. You don't even know what those days were like, but some of you were there. But for a young man who had a son at home and one on the way, and you don't have insurance, and the only jobs you can find are very temporary, and nobody pays anything, it was the church that paid our insurance so that we didn't carry the bill for the medical expenses. The church came beside us and said, I'll do that. But that was also a church that we never quit giving to every time I got a paycheck. And it was also the church I ended up being the pastor of later on, and we gave back more and more and more and more and more. See the difference?

It was a genuine, legitimate need. We didn't ask for it. They approached us. It was pretty obvious. My wife was pregnant, and we had a little one, and everybody knew. The guy who helped me get the job was also a part of the phone company. He knew I just lost my job, and he happened to be a deacon at the church. See, I'm not against that. The church ought to be a place of relief, because woe be to the church that cannot provide for those who have legitimate needs within it.

If the people of our church go outside of our church to have needs met, then we're in the wrong. We just are. And the question comes up a lot, and some of you say, well, we're giving all this money to churches in East Tennessee. We're giving it to a church in Utah. We're giving it to a church, or we're giving it to a ministry in Thailand. Why don't we take care of our own? I can assure you, my friend, the one thing that I primarily concern every month when I look at the budget, I look at it multiple times throughout the month, probably look at it more than anybody besides Miss Lynn. She looks at it all the time, but I look at the budget every time. The one thing I want to know is, are we taking care of those within our body? Church membership matters, and I want to make sure that if there's a need, I cannot tell you what we've done to meet the needs around us, because some of them are present, and I would never bring embarrassment to an individual. But we try to take care of every need that we know that comes up in this body first. The excess of that, we're ministering elsewhere, because that's our concern. The church ought to be a place of relief for the genuine, and if it's not, then we're doing something wrong. Fourth and finally, the church is to be a place of responsibilities acknowledged. And this is where the application really hits it, right? The church is to be a place of responsibilities acknowledged. Verse six has kind of an implication of those widows who had been put on the list. Now, if you ever want to know if someone calls me, what my thought process is like if they're bringing a need to me, how do I think? This passage of scripture kind of best quantifies how I think through that. But she who gives herself to want and pleasures is dead even while she lives. I read of a church that one time, anytime someone came to the church and asked for help, they had them fill out a piece of paper. On that piece of paper was, now it was not our ethnicity. When was the last time you went and had your hair done? When was the last time you had your nails done? When was the last time you bought cigarettes? When was the last time you did all this extra stuff? And if it had been any time recently, the church would say, we can't help you.

You say, well, that's judgmental. There are necessities and there are wants. But she who gives herself on over to want and pleasures, and in context, he's talking about the widow who's, well, I need the church to take care of me, but I want to live however I want to live.

I want you to take care of me at this level. He said, well, she's dead even while she's living. And if we read further in scripture, we'll say that that's not only true of the widows, that's true of every individual. Every individual who says, well, this is how I want to live and these are the ways I want to do them, we're a living dead person. But look at what it says. In case we think we're picking on the ladies too much here, look at verse 8. But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith in his worst than an unbeliever. So here is the responsibility. It is to labor and to work.

[33 : 11] And to provide for those of your household. You know what Christ used to call me to himself? As a 20-year-old young man with a wife and a child and a house and all these car payments, for the first time in my life, I realized it was my responsibility. We've been married since I was 18 and all of a sudden, you have to provide for them. That's your job. Nobody bails you out of this.

So I had to surrender that and say, Lord, I can't do it on my own. I don't know how to do it. And he broke me and said, you're right, you can't. So I surrendered and I gave up and I let him. Now I want to labor. Now after my surrender, I also got laid off. So I mean, there you go. Put it all together. It doesn't always make it easier, right? He said, I'll show you you can't. You'll lose your job. I'll show you how I can do it.

But it was still my responsibility. Every day, I still went up and found something to do. Every day, I still had to go to work. Every day, I did things I don't like doing. I don't ever want to do them again. But I had to do them. Why? Because if you won't work, you've denied the faith. Listen, accepting Christ makes you a better worker. It does. Causes you to labor and to work. And then he goes on talking about the widows is going to be put on the list. And he starts talking about all this.

And he gives all these stipulations. He said, what are all these stipulations about? Why? Because let's go down further here and see if we can get this direct application, okay? Not only do the men have the responsibility to work and the labor and to provide for their own.

By the way, husbands and men, that's your responsibility. Unequivocally, in Scripture, that's your responsibility. Not only that, but look at that. Those who are on the list. You say, what is this deal about?

[35 : 02] They can't be less than 60 and the younger's widow give themselves over to this and they break this vow. That's because the implication from the text is that if the church put you on the list. Now, I think we can extend this because Jesus says, don't worry, you'll have the needy with you always.

Remember when he was anointed before? He said, you're going to always have the needy. So it's not only going to be widows. It's going to be the needy in society. It's going to be people around us. They're always going to come to you. But if you were on the list of ongoing support by the church, here's the implication. That by being on the list, you were making a commitment that you would serve in the church. You didn't get on the list and do nothing. The church would support you, but you would support the church. That's why he says that they would break their pledge when they got married. It's not wrong for a younger widow to get remarried, but they're breaking a pledge.

Why? Because by being on the list, they had pledged themselves to remain a widow and to continue the ongoing support of the church. Someone, right? I read a book recently and his name is passing me on spiritual disciplines. And I love how he put it. God calls no man to idleness.

You say, well, I can't do too much, but as long as we're on this side of glory, we can do something, right? God calls no man or woman to idleness. Service is a spiritual discipline and God doesn't want the leftovers. He wants the priority. So what is going on here is the church is saying, you have a responsibility to move and to act and to be active. Your responsibility is not just say, man, I'm in need. I need you to take care of my needs. And would you help take care of my needs?

The responsibility is we don't mind coming along beside you. Remember the paraclete word and walking beside you to help strengthen you at this time. But as we walk beside you, guess what? You're going to walk with me, right? You're going to walk a little further. You're going to walk a little further.

[36 : 59] What I'm not going to do is give you something and let you stay there. Because that's not doing you any good or me any good. And that's called enabling. There's a book back there. And I know the library is not really in existence, but it's still on the shelf back there. It's called When Helping Hurts. It's a great book. It's when you think you're helping someone and really all you're doing is hurting them. You know when it hurts is when you're not calling them to walk beside you.

So church, if we want to be a church that meets legitimate needs, then we need to be a church that says, now walk with us as we do it. We don't mind meeting your need, but let's walk together.

You have responsibilities. This is something that I'm coming, and thankfully I got that call this week, and there are going to be connections that come alongside it, and I'm thankful that I'm studying this passage because here it is. You're calling me. I didn't call you. I had to learn this.

So therefore, I get to determine the responsibilities that come to what you're asking of the church. If you're not willing to accept those responsibilities, then that's not on me.

He says that if any woman who has a believer has a dependent widow, she must assist them, and the church must not be burdened so that it may assist those who are widows in deed. See what it's saying here?

[38 : 26] Paul says we want the impact of the church to go beyond the limitations. If there's a man or a woman in the church that can meet that need on their own, let them do it. Let the church meet what the people can't. That's the call of the church. Here we see that this is the place of a church in a needy world.

I know that's a lot of application, but friend, listen to me. Let's bring it to conclusion this way. We will never be that place without an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ. We will never be that. We ought to be those who are so desperately dependent upon our Savior that we have the wisdom that only He can provide. As a church, we ought to be that, and as individuals, we ought to be that.

If you don't know that, I encourage you to know it today. See, this type of love, this type of respect, this type of calling and walking alongside, you can't walk alongside someone until you're walking alongside the Savior. So the first person you need to find out if they need help is yourself, and then you need to be in prayer for those around you who need help as well, and I mean spiritual help. For the greatest thing, if we give them bread, but we never introduce them to the Savior, we've done them the greatest of disservice. Jesus would feed the multitude, but He'd also reveal Himself to them. So let's be those who know the Savior, meet the needs, but talk of the Savior often.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You so much for this day. I thank You for Your love for us, for Your challenge to us, for Your calling of us to Yourself. So, Fathers, we walk faithfully before You and with You. May we be a church that keeps its place in a needy world for the glory of the King. Lord Jesus, search our hearts, search our minds. Help us to know where we stand before You, and Lord, help us to move forward in the confidence of that relationship if we have it, and if we don't, may we be those who fall before You and say, oh Lord, we need a Savior.

Lead us to the remainder of our time together, and we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

[41 : 26] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[46 : 26] Amen. Amen.

Amen.

Amen.

Thank you.

Thank you.