

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 10



Let brotherly
love continue.

Be not forgetful to
entertain strangers:
for thereby some
have entertained
angels unawares.

Hebrews 13:1-2

CONDUCT OF CHRISTIANS IN THE CHURCH

Scripture Text: 1 Timothy 5:9-25

The choice of who should support the needy in Paul's day was between the church and relatives. It seems that governments of that time had no welfare programs. Care for the unfortunate is a product of love and is a peculiarity of God's people. Some governments have now taken over much welfare work. This is good and bad. Good, in that there are many needy ones who the church cannot help materially. But bad, in that the church has often been satisfied to leave it to them. There are some who are the government's responsibility. There are others who are the responsibility of relatives. But the church is responsible for its own. The church should provide for its needy ones, respect and support its leaders, and keep itself clean from sin.

MEMORY VERSE: *Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.*

—1 Timothy 5:19

DAILY READINGS:

- Mon.—Acts 6:1-7 Support of the widows.
- Tue.—Romans 12 Living in the body of Christ.
- Wed.—1 Corinthians 9:1-15 Support of ministers.
- Thu.—2 Corinthians 6 Faithful workers.
- Fri.—Titus 3 Living as Christians

Devotional Reading: Hebrews 13 Christian Obligations.

Qualifications of Accepted Widows

1 Timothy 5:9-10 Let not a widow be taken into the number—It is evident here and in following verses that support of needy widows is meant. The qualifications set for them are: (1) At least **threescore years old**—an age of settled character. (2) **Having been the wife of one man**—one at a time, true to a husband all of his life. Second marriage after the death of a husband is not prohibited here, being consistent with **1 Timothy 5:14** and **Romans 7:3**. (3) Having a record of **good works**—Christian deeds. (4) **Have brought up children**—not necessarily children born to her, and been a good mother to teach and train them for God. I have known a number of saintly women who did much to raise children for God who never bore children of their own. (5) **Have lodged strangers**—used hospitality (**Hebrews 13:1-2**). In times and places where public accommodations are scanty, this virtue is very necessary. (6) **Have washed the saints' feet**—participated in the ordinance Jesus established. This includes also a life filled with the deeds of loving kindness and humility which the ordinance symbolizes (**Colossians 3:12-14**). (7) **Have relieved the afflicted**—given help to the sick, poor, friendless, discouraged, or any needy. (8) **Diligently followed every good work**—this supplies everything remaining for well-rounded Christian practice. Such are the widows to be provided for by the church.

Widows to Be Rejected

1 Timothy 5:11-16 Some widows were not to be accepted on this list. **Younger widows refuse**. Why? Because, being young, they would desire to remarry and fail to marry in the Lord, as the Bible instructs (**1 Corinthians 7:39**) and thus turn from the obligations of this special position. They would **wax wanton against Christ**—throw off the restraints, literally live as they please. **Having damnation**—not that of hell, but blame

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and condemnation for having backslid from their commitment. They **cast off** their **first faith** or promise. They would learn to be: (1) **Idle**—being supported by the church, they would feel no need to work. (2) **Wandering about**—not **keepers at home** (**Titus 2:5**). (3) **Tattlers**—telling to all what they heard **from house to house** (**Proverbs 18:8**). (4) **Busybodies**—meddling, always managing the business of others but never their own. (5) **Speaking things which they ought not**—all kinds of evil words. Idle words are bound to bring in some evil. What a charge to young widows! But Paul spoke from what he had seen—**some are already turned aside** from duties in the church **after Satan**. He advises these widows to **marry** the second time, **bear children, guide the house**, and thus avoid just blame.

Duties of Elders

1 Timothy 5:17-18 Support—**elders that rule well . . . especially they who labor in the word and doctrine**. Those who care well for the spiritual needs of the flock and teach, explain, preach, and apply God's Word are to receive **double honor**—due respect and greater financial reward. Their work requires more care and expense than does one that holds a lesser position. Paul quotes Scripture as authority in **1 Corinthians 9:7-14** and **Luke 10:7**.

1 Timothy 5:19-20 Accusations—**Against an elder receive not an accusation**. He who assumes any service of leadership invites criticism of it. An elder must at times use corrective measures which may arouse resentment. No accusation must be received unless fully proved by **two or three witnesses**. If proved, the offender must be rebuked **before all** to keep the church clear of approving and fostering sin.

Elders' Duties Concerning Individuals

Partiality—So prone are we to let our human feelings guide our actions in spiritual work that Paul reminds Timothy that the Father, the Son and the elect angels are seeing his actions. He charged him to use no **partiality**, not to prefer one more than another, either in support given, in rebuke of sin, or in favors shown. God is no respecter of persons; neither should we be.

1 Timothy 5:22-25 Sudden approval—God ordains elders, or chooses and places them (**1 Corinthians 12:18**). Then by prayer and laying on of hands, Christian leaders formally acknowledge God's ordination (**1 Timothy 4:14**). This must not be done **suddenly**—not without knowledge of the man's qualifications and call nor until he has proven himself worthy (**1 Timothy 3:6-10**). To do so would be taking part in the sin of putting an unfit man into sacred office and also to being a part of any harm he might do there. **Keep thyself pure**—free from any action of defiling the Church of God with unholy hands and uncalled leaders. Also, here lays the responsibility to preach and live the truth before all men. Either the **sins** or the **good works** of some candidates are **open beforehand**—easily seen. Those of others **follow after**—are seen only after careful investigation. **Drink no longer water**—alone—**but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake . . .** Timothy's health was necessary to keep him serving the church as an elder. The water was very unsuitable for drinking, and Paul found it necessary to remind Timothy to add a little juice from the fruit of the vine to make the water healthier for his body. Paul did not advocate the drinking of intoxicants. This would be unthinkable. Read Paul's writings in **Ephesians 5:18** and **1 Corinthians 6:10**.

JUST A THOUGHT

The drinking man commits suicide on the installment plan.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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