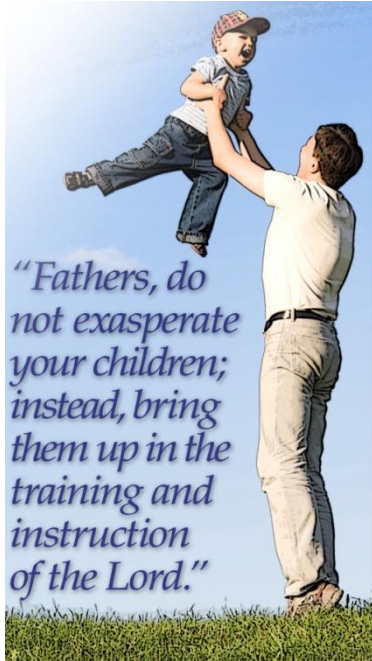


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 9



CONDUCT OF CHRISTIANS IN SOCIETY

Scripture Texts: 1 Timothy 5:1-8; 1 Timothy 6:1-2

As we study, we should bear in mind that even though the Book of Timothy was written to a young pastor and is primarily advice for the carrying on of his work, it states the basic principles for the individual Christian's success in the society in which he lives. The only difference is in the particular circumstance in which each is placed. So here, while Timothy may have viewed these instructions from one position and some of us from another, still, they have an application for every one of us.

Christian attitudes of kindness, love, and respect must be used toward all people. We must provide for those for whose support we are responsible. Who has the first responsibility in the care of needy ones and dependents? What virtue is most effective in producing right relations between individuals?

MEMORY VERSE: *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

—*Philippians 2:4*

DAILY READINGS:

- Mon.—**Leviticus 19:30-37** Respect and justice.
- Tue.—**Psalms 78:1-8** Teaching children God's Law.
- Wed.—**1 Corinthians 13** The love of God in action.
- Thu.—**Ephesians 6:1-9** The Christian household.
- Fri.—**Colossians 3** Holy living.

Devotional Reading: Titus 2 Christian doctrine and conduct.

Treatment of Others

1 Timothy 5:1-2 Rebuke not—In correcting faults, wrongs, or misunderstandings, in what manner shall it be done? Gently, tenderly, with the love one would show to one's own brother, sister, father, or mother. If in the church, they are brothers and sisters, born of the same Father. **Rebuke not . . . but entreat**—with gentle understanding, seek to persuade them to a better way. **An elder** here means an older man, not a church officer. The term corresponds to the term **elder women**. These are to be given the loving respect due parents; the younger ones deserve respect due brothers and sisters in a family. **With all purity**—Timothy, as a young minister, must be especially careful in his conduct toward younger women, to avoid temptation to himself, temptation to them, and suspicion on the part of others. This same standard of respect should be maintained by all toward any of the opposite sex.

Caring for Relatives

1 Timothy 5:3-7 Honor widows that are widows indeed—accept and support those destitute of other support. This, obviously, is speaking to the church. Then, to individuals again—**if any widow has children or nephews**, let them assume the support. Thus they **shew piety at home**, which is a first duty, and **requite their parents**—repay for the love and care they received in their helpless years. Best of all, they please God. Then, two kinds of widows are contrasted—**widows indeed** and those who live **in pleasure**, in luxury, ease, and self-indulgence. The first trust in God, while the others do not. The first live by continual prayer. The second are

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dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1), spiritually dead, while living physically. Material comforts and worldly pleasures dull the sense of dependence upon God. **These things give in charge**—teach to the people that they may obey and **be blameless**.

Today the increasing number of elderly people and the large number of working wives has brought a growth in the custom of placing elderly parents and relatives in nursing centers. Does this fulfill one's duty to them? How much weight should each of these bear upon the decision of what to do—The wife's job? The disposition of the aged one? Adults' desire for freedom? Finances? Size of house? What benefits may come to each household member when a dependent is cared for? To live in pleasure, in self-indulgence, and to please self is to be dead spiritually. This is true of an individual or a church or a nation.

Duty of Supporting Own Family

1 Timothy 5:8 A man must provide **for his own**—any relatives for whom he is the main means of support. **Specially for those of his own house**—his immediate family, wife, children, parents, or those under his roof. These are his first responsibility. Then he should reach to other dependents as far as he is able. To shirk his duty is to deny the faith, to sin against his Christian profession. **Worse than an infidel** or unbeliever, for even unbelievers generally fill their responsibility for their own.

This is part of the **nurture and admonition of the Lord** in which children should be brought up. Read **Ephesians 6:4**. This is part of our training them in respect for their elders, in faithful discharge of responsibilities, in self-sacrifice rather than self-indulgence. It is not fair to a child to let him grow up pampered and free from responsibility, then expect him to assume the duties of adulthood. The duties of our lesson are for adults and children alike.

Relation of Servants and Masters

1 Timothy 6:1-2 Should a saint be a servant under the yoke? Not under the yoke and bondage of slavery, but **under the yoke** of Jesus his Master. He should not rebel against serving those who have the authority over him. Such action would cause blasphemy or unjust criticism of **God and his doctrine**. We are not living in a day of slavery as when this letter was written, but this does not give reason for the saint to give less than his best to those for whom he is employed. He should give a full day's work for a full day's pay. The unsaved always watch Christians and expect a higher degree of patience and work ethics from them. If a master is a Christian also, the servant must not feel that his spiritual equality is reason for a lesser effort, or reason to take an advantage of him—**despise them, because they are brethren**. Rather, he must serve faithfully because his master is a **beloved** brother, a partaker of **the benefit** of salvation. Being united with him in Christ, he serves from love (**Galatians 5:13**). Work as unto the Lord and not to man. Read **Ephesians 6:5-9**.

JUST A THOUGHT

After a man makes his mark in the world, a lot of people will come around with erasers.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.

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