A. In this chapter Paul described how Timothy was to behave toward different age groups & genders within the church.

1. He was never to prefer or cater to one group over another in his work.

2. Preachers have a great temptation in this regard.

3. But perhaps we can all learn a little something from Paul’s instructions to Timothy.

[Paul used family designation to illustrate the actions & attitudes Timothy must have toward church members.]

I. OLDER & YOUNGER MEMBERS (5:1-2)

1. He was expected to treat them with the respect the Lord commands.

2. The life experiences of older Christians coupled with their knowledge of the Word combine to give them a wisdom & dignity worthy of respect.

Paul 5:1-2 – Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.

A. Timothy was to consider those Christians who were old enough to be his father or mother as though they were his father or mother.

Eph 6:2-3 (Ex 20:12; Deut 5:16) – “Honor [to prize, i.e. fix a valuation upon; to revere] your father & mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: 3 “that it may be well with you & you may live long on the earth.”

Deut 27:16 – ‘Cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt [despise, dishonor, make light of] ‘And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’

Prov 20:20 – Whoever curses [to be trifling, light (as if not important), swift to curse. YLT: “Whoso is vilifying”, which means to spread negative information about] his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in deep darkness.
Prov 16:31 – The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness.

Quote (source unknown): “It is a shameful disgrace of unrighteous impertinence [rude, inclined to take liberties, inappropriate playfulness] for the young to speak degradingly to, or of, the elderly; & for the young to manifest a selfish concern for themselves without regard to the happiness, contentment & welfare of the aged men & women entitled to their honor.”

B. Timothy was to consider those Christians who were closer to his age as if they were his actual brothers & sisters.

1. In our day & age, that advice might not be properly understood.

   a. Siblings are not always taught how to treat & to love one another, so they become competitive, jealous, resentful, easily angered & offended.

   2. Paul was referring to the natural relationship between siblings, which is characterized by love, affection, closeness, caring, sympathy, patience, tolerance, & protectiveness.

   From Pride & Prejudice: One of the Bennett sisters was finally asked to become the wife of a highly respected young man. She said to her sister, “How can bear to bring so much happiness upon my family?” (She understood the responsibility of maintaining that happiness depended on her character & future actions).

   She turned to one of her sisters & said, “How I wish, dear sister, that you could be as happy as I.” The sister responded, “It is impossible. For until I have your goodness, I will never have your happiness.”

   a. Being an evangelist didn’t give Timothy some right to disrespect Christians twice his age.

   3. Will elderly Christians make mistakes, even sin? Yes, as we all do – though generally less often, even rarely.

   a. And yet instead of a stern rebuke (“telling them off” or “setting them straight”) Timothy was to exhort them in kindness, gentleness & with a tone of respect for their age & experience.
3. Timothy was not to view his spiritual brothers as rivals nor his sisters in Christ as objects of illicit affection.

   a. To do so would be to depreciate those relationships & bring disgrace on the family of God.

[By observing these relationship principles Timothy could achieve the best results from preaching of the word.]

II. WIDOWS INDEED (5:3-10)

1 Tim 5:3-10 – Honor widows who are really widows. 4 But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home & to repay their parents; for this is good & acceptable before God. 5 Now she who is really a widow, & left alone, trusts in God & continues in supplications & prayers night & day. 6 But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. 7 And these things command, that they may be blameless. 8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, & especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith & is worse than an unbeliever. 9 Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, & not unless she has been the wife of one man, 10 well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

A. Timothy was to make sure that widows who were “really widows” (“widows indeed” – truly or in reality) were being honored.

1. This is not to say that all widows in a local church should not be honored, but Paul was referring to a certain type of widow.

2. The widow indeed was worthy of special honor from the church because of her circumstances & her character:

   a. She was all alone (no family support)

   b. She trusted in God & continued in prayers night & day rather than seeking her own pleasures.

3. And the special honor she was to be shown was in the provision of her daily needs.
a. The immediate family has the primary obligation in this matter (5:4, 8, 16).

b. But secondarily the matter becomes a church obligation IF she was a woman of exemplary character (5:5-6, 9-10).

4. Paul did not tell Timothy how these widows should be relieved.

a. They might be given a living wage, or taken into a private or a nursing home.

b. Each local assembly would have to decide what is best in each case.

5. What about the care Christians provide for their aging parents & grandparents?

a. Certainly we must honor them by providing what is best for them.

b. Some homes are not arranged well for the care of the elderly.

c. Some elderly people do not want to live with their children.

d. There may be sickness or handicap where professional care is needed.

e. Each family has to decide how best to provide for the needs of aging family members.

f. But overall, the object is to “honor” them: to prize, value & revere them.

[Also, we shouldn’t go beyond this text without pointing out the clear distinction Paul made between the work of a family & the work of the church.]

III. YOUNGER WIDOWS (5:11-15)
1 Tim 5:11-15 – But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, 12 having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. 13 And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, & not only idle but also gossips & busybodies, saying things which they ought not. 14 Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. 15 For some have already turned aside after Satan.

A. These instructions regarding younger widows were given in contrast to the “widow indeed.”

1. Paul was already beginning to see a sharp contrast in the behaviors of older & younger widows.

2. The older widows were more likely to be trusting, serving & prayerful in their lives, serving spiritual goals.

3. The younger widows, due to the weakness of the flesh, were more likely to become idle & careless in their duties to Christ.

B. The safest course of life for a young widow is to remarry & start a new family.

1. It is not only an honorable choice, but it will protect her from many temptations.

Herschel Patton: “The modern humanistic, women’s liberation philosophy says younger women should seek self-sufficiency in the business & social world, apart from marriage, family & spiritual values. The fruit of following this philosophy has been immorality, divorce, abortions, neglected children & the loss of souls.”

[How Christian wives & mothers manage their homes is a testimony to those who are outside the church, & that testimony may be good or evil.]

CLOSING

The instructions Paul gave Timothy would certainly not make him popular in our American culture.

But these are timeless, divine principles that must be applied…

• If we are to advance the kingdom of God in our lifetime, and

• If we are to save our soul’s in the end.