

Worksheet #7: 1 Timothy 5:1–16 (NKJV)

Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers,² older women as mothers, younger as sisters, with all purity.

³Honor widows who are really widows.⁴ But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.⁵ Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and 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, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

⁹Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, *and 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.

¹¹But 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, and not only idle but also gossips and 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.¹⁶ If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. Why must Paul advise Timothy to approach people within the congregation in different ways depending on their age and gender (vv. 1–2)?

2. Is the responsibility to “honor widows who are really widows” (v. 3) solely the responsibility of the pastor, or of the congregation?

3. When Paul says that a widow with no surviving children “trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day” (v. 5), does he mean that she is inherently more holy than the widow with children or grandchildren (v. 4)? If not, what is the point of the contrast?

4. How can Paul claim that to fail to care for one’s own family is to effectively deny the faith and be “worse than an unbeliever” (v. 8)?

5. What seems to be the intent for Paul’s qualifications for admitting a widow under the age of sixty to the church’s care in vv. 9–10?

6. What are Paul’s reasons for refusing younger widows as a matter of policy (vv. 11–15)?

7. What does Paul recommend for younger widows rather than receiving financial support from the church (v. 14)?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

8. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

9. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?
