

W O M E N ' S B I B L E S T U D Y

Equipped

F O R T H E F I G H T

Honoring Elders

**1 Timothy 5:17-25**

Lesson 8

In our last lesson, we took a look at loving others. Since we are members of God's family, we are to treat each other in ways that bring Him honor and glory. However, we know that there is no such thing as a problem-free church because where there are people, there will be problems. This week, we will see that Timothy had some problems with the elders of the church and he needed Paul's counsel to guide him.

The first issue at hand had to do with financially supporting the leaders who labored in the teaching ministry of the church. Paul instructs that they should be paid well in proportion to their usefulness. If the pastor is faithful in feeding and leading his people, the church ought to honor him by faithfully paying him adequately and generously. Paul then instructs Timothy on disciplining elders. If an accusation is made against an elder, at least two or more witnesses must first be able to verify the charges. If the leader is found to be in sin, Paul says to apply any necessary discipline in order that all can hear, learn and move on in forgiveness. Lastly, Paul reminds Timothy to be careful about raising up leaders too quickly. The best practice is to let people prove themselves before laying hands on them and presenting them as leaders.

When problems do occur, our first response should be to look to God's Word for the loving solution. By no means are we to forget that Satan is all too willing to discourage and come against those who love and serve the Lord. There is nothing the enemy delights to do more than to cause believers to walk away from their calling. Instead of allowing the enemy to use problems in the church to divide us, we glorify our Lord by honoring those He has appointed as elders.

**Open your Bible and begin with a word of prayer**

**This Week's Scripture: 1 Timothy 5:17-25**

*"Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. <sup>18</sup>For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages." <sup>19</sup>Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. <sup>20</sup>Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. <sup>21</sup>I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality. <sup>22</sup>Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure. <sup>23</sup>No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities. <sup>24</sup>Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later. <sup>25</sup>Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden." NKJV*

**This Week's Memory Verse:**

***"I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality."***

**1 Timothy 5:21**

1. According to verse 17 of this week's scripture, who should receive "double honor"?

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a. Why should "double honor" be given (v. 18)? \_\_\_\_\_

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b. According to Hebrews 13:17a, how are we to respond to those who rule over us?

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c. Who ultimately benefits from this submission, according to Hebrews 13:17b and are you willing to submit? Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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*“Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness, the nourishment of the mind with His truth, the purifying of the imagination of His beauty, the opening of the heart to His love, the surrender of the will to His purpose.”*

– William Temple (1881-1944)

- 2. What guideline is given in verse 19 regarding an accusation against an elder? \_\_\_\_\_  
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- a. What guideline is given in verse 20 regarding accusations against sinners?  
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- 3. Clearly, verse 20 does not give us the freedom to throw accusations at a fellow believer in the midst of others. Read Matthew 18:15-17 and answer the following questions.
  - a. How are you to first respond when someone sins against you (v. 15a)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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  - b. Why are we to respond this way (v. 15b)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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  - c. If they do not repent, what is the next step (v. 16)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - d. What is the last step if there is still no repentance (v. 17)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Group Discussion**

We should take note that addressing sinful behavior in this specific order was so important that Jesus Himself commanded it. Just imagine how someone’s character could potentially be destroyed if matters were handled out of order. Have you ever been on the receiving end of a false accusation? Have you ever been an accuser and found that you misjudged? Share your thoughts. \_\_\_\_\_  
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*"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."*  
– Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968)

4. Throughout history, the human race has always had a propensity to judge people by their appearance, their ethnic background, their level of education or anything that is different from what would be considered normal in society. What does verse 21 of this week's scripture tell us about this topic? \_\_\_\_\_  
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a. How does James 2:1-4 reinforce this instruction? \_\_\_\_\_  
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b. What does Mark 12:31 say is the solution to partiality and prejudice? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. Verse 22a gives us wisdom in order to dodge possible difficulties within the leadership of the church. What does this verse tell us about "laying hands" or appointing leaders?  
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a. Looking back on our previous study of chapter three, what would happen if you were hasty in picking a leader who was not yet ready (1 Timothy 3:6)? \_\_\_\_\_  
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b. The end of verse 22 tells us to keep ourselves pure. What does Jesus tell us about this subject in Matthew 5:8 and what promise does He give? \_\_\_\_\_  
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c. How should this verse comfort us when we have to deal with difficult situations?  
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