

Dr. Robert Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistle, Session 6, 1 Timothy 5

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This is Dr. Robert W. Yarbrough and his teaching on the Pastoral Epistles, Apostolic Instruction for Pastoral Leaders and their Followers. Session 6, 1 Timothy 5.

We continue our study on the Pastoral Epistles, Apostolic Instructions for Spiritual Leaders, and for their Followers.

It's not just some guy named Paul writing, this is the Word of God. Back in our first lecture, I cited the proverb, I think it's 30 verse 5, every word of God is tested, he is a shield to all those who take refuge in him. And as we look at 1 Timothy chapter 5, it's kind of a little test of that statement, because there's a lot in chapter 5 that we may not think applies directly to us, and in a sense, it doesn't.

You can see from the NIV heading that chapter 5 is all under one rubric, and that is widows, elders, and slaves. And it may be that you don't have any direct contact with anybody by that description, so you could say, well why do I need 1 Timothy 5? But I think what we're going to see is that, especially if you are a pastor, or you're an aspiring pastor, I think you're going to see that there are a lot of things that either directly or indirectly affect most of us if not all of us. And most directly, I want to remind you of something that is, it's not going to be probably in any Pastoral Epistles commentary that you read, but Timothy is being charged by Paul to live, to train himself for godliness, and then to minister the gospel in such a way, minister Christ in such a way, that there is godliness among the people of God.

And something that the Old Testament is very clear about, and that we see reflected again and again, and even down to Jesus on the cross, we see the teaching reflected, honor your father and your mother. And on the cross, Jesus made sure Mary, his mother, was taken care of. Why did he do that? Well, he's a tender-hearted guy, but also because he was a son of the covenant, and the Torah, the guidance that God gives his people, and this is in the Decalogue, it's in the Ten Commandments, honor your father and mother.

In ancient times, as today, generally, women live longer than men. And also, a lot of times, because women have served so much in their lives if their husbands die, they are relatively at the mercy of their society. A lot of times, husbands didn't save up as they should have, and I'm not going to try to generalize now about marriages in antiquity and marriages today, just to say that every generation has the challenge of dealing with elderly people, and the majority of elderly people are going to be women.

It was true in the ancient world, life expectancies, it's true for us too. Furthermore, we all have parents, and if we have parents, then we are called to make their care as they age a concern of us. Now, we may have brothers and sisters, and we let them do it, and that may be okay, but it may not be okay.

You may find that God calls you to step in where your parents, or your siblings, who should care for your parents, maybe they live closer, or whatever, but sometimes we find we need to care for our parents, and statistically, if you are faithful in their care toward the end of life, you're going to care for a widow. That widow is going to be your mother. So, churches that are indifferent to the care of widows have a huge blind spot, because every church, the more people there are, the more widows there are associated with those people, if nothing else, in the form of the mothers and grandmothers of people that that church is connected with.

And I don't know about your society, but American society leaves that up to the government, pretty much. And there's lots of suffering going on by mothers and grandmothers who aren't cared for by their families, and sometimes churches and Christians are part of this cultural amnesia of what they owe the older women who cared for them when they were children. So, don't think that Chapter 5 is irrelevant simply because we're going to see so much in there about widows because it has application to our own setting.

But he starts out like this, Do not rebuke an older man harshly. Why would he say that? Well, it's because we've already seen in 1 Timothy there is some disorder, and Timothy needs to command the people and charge the people to put things back where they need to be. He needs to affirm true teaching and encourage ethical living, and covenantal life practices.

And there are people who are off in the weeds. They're not doing it right, and they need to be corrected. But, don't rebuke an older man harshly, he says.

But exhort him as your father, as if he were your father. Here again, behind the scenes, honor your father and your mother. So, that's where he begins.

Treat younger men as brothers. Treat younger men as brothers. So, not like they're punks.

You might think they're punks, but, don't regard them in a dismissive way. Respect them and treat them like brothers. Older women as mothers, which means affectionate, caring, respectful, and thoughtful.

And younger women as sisters with absolute purity. So, I make the observation here that pastoral leadership, which by extension, is discipleship outreach. When you're doing pastoral leadership, you're making disciples.

And when you do pastoral leadership well, and you help make disciples, one of the

things that's happening is they are learning what they need, by your example, to disciple other people. So, you create a climate of how older men are regarded by a younger man, how younger men are regarded by someone that's older, like Timothy's older than some, and then how women are treated. We have what we call an ethos sometimes among a group of people.

And there can be an ethos in a church, like racial prejudice. There are churches where you see, hmm, the ethnicity here says nasty things about other ethnicities. That's not very Christian.

But it can also happen with age groups. You get younger churches, and they don't like old people. They're not going to turn down the amplifiers just because it hurts the tinnitus of all the old people.

Because they want to be what they want to be. And you get older people who hate young people and their worship styles. They don't want to go there.

And so, there are styles. There are styles of regard for people that get established in the church. And it starts with the pastoral leader.

And the pastoral leader and leaders need to be alert to, things that need to be adjusted and things that need to be changed, and they need to set the tone for a better regard. Also, pastoral leadership, it calls for humility. It calls for respect and affection for others.

If you're going to treat somebody as your father, that doesn't mean okay, father. It's not something that's obsequious and swarmy. It's genuine.

It's your father, and maybe you wish he had been. Maybe your father wasn't respectable. But you can treat older men like respectable fathers.

And it's amazing how in pastoral leadership, people often rise to the level that you give them credit for. If you treat them with indifference or you treat them, keep them at arm's length, if you don't trust them, if you make jokes behind their back, you don't pray for them, a lot of times people cause you a lot of grief. But it's amazing how when you do care for people, and God knows it, and you pray for people, and you demonstrate your care, a lot of times people reciprocate.

And you develop affection for people that maybe at first, maybe you didn't even like. So , this is an ethos. And this is what pastoral leadership calls for.

And this respect and this affection for others, at the end of the verse, after he's talked about women and mothers and women, younger women as sisters, there's that very important little qualifier, with absolute or with all purity. And, of course, this is in connection with younger women. We're talking here about Timothy.

He's a man. And men have central drives, and women have central drives. And they're God-given.

And so, they shouldn't be demonized or disparaged. They are a means of grace toward the fulfillment of the creation mandate. We have a drive to connect sexually with people of the opposite sex.

And the redemptive outcome, common grace-wise, is children, which are a gift from God. But the downside of this, since we live in a sinful world, is that our drives are not pure. We're very capable of being lured by things that are not healthy for us to want.

And so, we have to learn ways to direct our energies so that they are deployed in lawful and redemptive manners. Now, there is a strategy right now in Afghanistan. And, it's a strategy of women in public can only be seen with their eyes if they're even allowed in public.

And even the newscasters now, they have to wear, the burqa or whatever so that that's all you can see. But that's not a Christian strategy. The Christian strategy is not to cover everything.

The Christian strategy is for the heart to be cleansed by the word of God. Jesus didn't go around with a blindfold or putting blankets over people. Jesus was pure of heart.

Blessed are the pure of heart, Jesus said. And Paul is saying to Timothy, Timothy, be that pure of heart person. Be that person.

And we've already heard good conscience a couple of times. Through faith, our sins can be forgiven. And through communion with God and the practice of use of godliness, we can come to terms with our sensual drives so they are deployed in ways that honor God.

And we can regard women with relative purity. Now, he says absolute purity in the NIV. That word in Greek is just all purity.

I think he's saying all possible purity. I don't think absolute purity is possible. You know, we're sinners.

And we're conscious at least of the possibility of impurity. God himself, I think knows about impurity. But I don't think God is tempted or I don't think he entertains the possibility of being impure.

We're not God-like in this life yet. But we can be as pure as the gospel and the Holy Spirit makes us in the moment. And relative to God's grace, that is absolute.

We can be absolutely right with God at the moment and in the season we are in our ministries. This opens up a wonderful possibility of alliances, friendships, mother-son, and brother-sister relations in the church that are just as powerful for ministry in the church as a strong marriage is for a pastor who has a good relationship with his wife and communicates well and rejoice in each other's love and they have a clean conscience and they are sure they're not involved with dalliances with other men and women. So, there's a very strong presence of God and the joy of married love.

It's a very strong force and it generates joy for life and ministry in marriage. You can have something like that with older women and younger women in the church. Relationships of trust.

Relationships of valuing the prayer ministries of widows. And sometimes, I know there was a woman who until she was almost 100 years old in a church that I ministered in for many years, she still oversaw the ushers and the greeters. And she lived in a nursing home.

She didn't use a cell phone, but she was on the phone every week she had her charts. And she kept that up until she was almost 100 years old. In the last several years, the bus brought her over from the nursing home and people would bring her in and they would kind of prop her up.

And she wouldn't sit. She would be propped up against a pew back in the narthex and she would greet everybody herself. And she prayed.

She was godly. She was humble. She was very self-deprecating.

She would always say, oh, I don't know if I'm going to be here much longer. She was saying that when she was 85, and then when she was 90, and then 95, and then 98. I think she lived to about 101.

But she was an example of an older woman who was very valuable in the ministry of that church. She sat near the front and no matter where you were in the sermon, if you stopped and asked a question, she would be the first one to answer it. She was right there the whole time.

So, treat older women as your mother. And then younger women as sisters. This is very difficult for a lot of men.

And it's a challenge that men have to face, especially if they've gone through a phase in their life where they've been involved in pornography, which is more and more common. Because that is debilitating physically and it's debilitating emotionally and morally. But the grace of God can cleanse us from that and can bring us out of the downward pull of that darkness.

And one of the symptoms that we're being delivered from that darkness is our ability to regard younger women, who may once have been objectified in vulgar ways, online or in print. We begin to see them for what they are in God's sight, which are women made in God's image, who deserve our service, who deserve faithful ministry and deserve our prayer, and who deserve our regard in a pure way that the gospel can bring about in the life of men, even in a dissolute culture like our own, which uses sex to sell everything. And I'm told, that year after year when they do studies, the word that's typed in the search engines the most is sex.

So, we live in a world where sex has been commodified and immorality in the West has been normalized. In fact, now, if you say immorality is wrong, especially if you say certain kinds of immorality is wrong, they call that hate speech. And it's being criminalized.

Nevertheless, the ideal that we have here is regarding members of the opposite sex in ways that God's word describes, he sees them. If he sees younger women, because we have God as our common father, we are members of a family, and we have the potential to regard them with the purity that we regarded a loyal younger sister. And this is a beautiful thing, and I think it's not an accident that he prefaces the next section, which is about widows.

I don't think it's an accident that he has verses 1 and 2 there, because verses 1 and 2 are kind of a summary of the healthy relations that should obtain between the various age groups and the two genders in the church. What's true for Timothy should be true for other men. Older men should learn to respect the younger men who respect them.

So, we have a positive vibe in verses 1 and 2 for both genders relative to all age classes. Now, if we get that in place, and it's being generated by the gospel, what happens to the widows? 5:3, give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. Now, there are widows everywhere you look, but some of them are not really in need when it comes to the resources of the church as a whole assembly.

It says in verse 4, that if a widow has children or grandchildren, they should learn, first of all, to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family, and so

repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. That is a life-changing verse for many families, and many families ignore it because it would require a change in lifestyle. It might require a change in location.

You might have to move to be near this person, or you might have to move this person so they could be near you. But I want to repeat what Paul says here. If you have, if there's a widow with children or grandchildren, this is one way that we put our religion into practice.

And we've already seen, by how Paul exhorts Timothy, how, I'll use the word, totalitarian, in a positive sense. God is totalitarian in his call to discipleship. He doesn't say, I call you to be wholly devoted.

Now, you put an asterisk next to the things that, you don't think are your skill set. He says, you come to me, and I'm going to make you responsible for some things, and you figure out how you appropriate my grace. I'll be there for you.

But, you've got to make some decisions. You've got to make some commitments here. You've got to do the work.

I will fill that work with more fruit and joy than you can handle down the line, but it may not seem that pleasant at the beginning. And certainly, assuming care for elderly people is, it feels like a death sentence, because it can bring such a change into your life. And the requirements of care can be so overwhelming.

Now, there's a lot written on this, and the one thing I would want to say is, we have to be careful that we don't just, like, go overboard. It can take a lot of forethought, and you can destroy your health, you can destroy your marriage by assuming more responsibility for somebody than you can give. I'm not against nursing homes and institutionalized care, because in our setting, sometimes people's needs are so great, and especially a downside of Western medicine is that people are living longer and longer and longer and longer, even if the quality of life is minimal.

They can't really move, but they've got medicines that keep them alive for years and years and years, and it's not humanly possible for one person to, like, care for them. That one person would, like, die of exhaustion, because the person has to be cared for in a professional setting, where there are people, there's a whole staff. They've got machines to pick people up, and they've got medicines, and they've got different foods, and they've got doctors and nurses on call.

It's a very sophisticated operation. But if it's done right, it still requires advocates behind the scenes to oversee them. You know that person who's getting that kind of care benefits immensely if there's a Christian daughter or granddaughter or grandson

or son who will be there and be overseeing and managing things and making sure this person's not being neglected.

And then, of course, there are lots of settings. I could name local settings I'm aware of where women or men and women have taken a mother or father into their home and helped them to live in their home until they died or until they had to go into some kind of institution. But this needs to be a concern of Christian sons, daughters, grandsons, and granddaughters.

And I know for many it is, but I also know for many it's not. The widow who really is in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.

So, he's injecting a note of quality recognition here. There are two kinds of widows, and we need to pay attention and encourage godliness in widows and be wary of people who will want to game their widowship and use it for support when actually they're living lives that are not pleasing to God but taking advantage of people's sense of responsibility to care for them. And Paul says, give the people these instructions so that no one may be open to blame.

We can be blamed for neglecting widows. We can also be blamed for enabling widows who are unscrupulous or who are taking advantage of God's care. He'll say more about this in a minute, but for now, he says anyone who does not provide for their relatives and especially for their own household has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

That verse, when I was working on my commentary changed my life and my wife's life because we were living far from this area but as I was working on this verse I just realized how old my mother was and my stepfather. One thing led to another and we moved 350 miles I took a different teaching job and we began caring for my mother and my stepfather because they were no longer in a situation where they could live unless there was somebody living next to them that could oversee their lives. And it's especially my wife who left nursing.

She was nursing, but she left nursing because she realized she couldn't nurse and also really care for my mother and my stepfather. But those words, anybody who does not provide has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Those are very strong words.

And they speak to, again, God's desire for us to be all in and for us to trust him. I did not have the care for my mother in my future plans. And there were a lot of arguments I could make that, I've got brothers and sisters.

And I do. But in the end, it's just that mystery of what God requires of you and of me. And so, you have to take these warnings seriously.

And don't think, oh, I'm a Christian. I'm not denying the faith by going against what God directly tells me to do. That's never a good idea.

Ananias and Sapphira tried that. And it did not come out well for them. Read Acts chapter 5. So, no widow may be put on the list of widows.

And this tells us that in Ephesus, they had a list of widows. They apparently had more than they could care for. But they were doing this widow care.

And their list put nobody on it unless they were over 60. So that was the first qualifier. She needed to have been faithful to her husband.

And she needed to be well-known for her good deeds. So, she needed to be a serious, practicing, confessing Christian. Good deeds like bringing up children.

You know, the creation mandate again. It's a Christian thing. It's a Christian thing for a woman to love her husband and to want to have children to God's glory.

Showing hospitality. Washing the feet of the Lord's people. I think that's probably metaphorical.

But doing the servile things that have to be done in the church for the church to do its work. Helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds. Well, that's a pretty tall order.

But there are such women. And their husbands died. And the church owes them something.

When they have a track record of devotion and a track record of service. And a lot of women do... A lot of churches do a good job of this. And then a lot of churches, they're quite indifferent to this.

So, this is a very relevant challenge. Especially in an age where medical care is prolonging life. And more and more women are living without the support of the husbands that they had for 50, 60, or 70 years or more.

My observation so far is that Christians with aging parents bear responsibility for them. And if we are a younger woman who we're projecting out, we know someday statistically if we get married, we're probably going to be a widow. Or I was recently at a class reunion and I met a lot of the girls that I was in high school with 50 years ago.

And I was just reminded of how many widows there are from divorce. So many marriages break up and they break up later in life today. And women are fed up with men.

And they're not going to get remarried. They don't need men. But they go into old age and they're not going to have the support of a husband.

Now, for some of them that's liberating and it's a blessing. But whether you're a widow by death or a widow by divorce, you are responsible for the godliness of your life. And that's not a word of condemnation.

That's just a word of fact and a word of challenge. It's never too late to move in God's direction. It's never too late to establish a higher road of godliness and to get things turning up instead of being down or stagnant.

And it doesn't take very many months and years to establish an identity of godliness if you are godly. Because it's kind of rare. People going to church and people being generally religious are not rare.

But people being all in and people being really prayerful and people really making a difference like that older woman I mentioned earlier, that stands out in any church. And nobody would do it to stand out. But pastors and women's groups and men's groups, people recognize when somebody is going the second and the third mile and they care and they love the word of God and they bear the graces of godliness.

So, the fact that I may be a widow of divorce, doesn't mean I could never get the care of the church. For one thing, a lot of women are divorced and it's no fault of their own. Sometimes it's just men who go back.

But even if it was in part your fault, God forgives, the church can forgive, and the important thing is for the church and present or prospective widows to recognize these qualifications for being cared for as a widow. And I don't know which is more important, the care of the widow or people preparing either to care for them or to be cared for as a widow. The whole thing.

I think this is a very underrated chapter. The whole thing is a beautiful picture of the organic work of the gospel in one of the most practical aspects of human life, aging, and how frontline the church should be and how spiritually relevant the aging process is. Because over half of the people in the church are going to be women.

And a high percentage of all those women are going to be widows. And all these women are connected with men, either directly or indirectly. So, nobody in the

church should be indifferent to the teaching on widows in this chapter, which is massive.

There's more about widows than anything else in the book of 1 Timothy. And that's not because it's a weird book, it's because it's a very practical book. And it talks about life as we really live it.

Now, how about younger widows? Under 60. Don't put them on such a list. When their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry.

And that's a good thing to marry. But if they've gotten on a list, now they're committed to being a widow. And Paul says, don't tempt them to sell themselves short when it comes to the creation mandate.

Maybe they can't bear children anymore because they're just under 60, but they can still enjoy the fruit of marriage. They can still be a good wife to a husband who needs a good wife. And they can glorify God together.

And who knows, maybe they won't be a widow until their 90s. Because they were widowed at 52 and they got married at 55. And now God graces them with a husband who loves them.

And they go into extreme old age together. And it's a win-win. It's a win for the husband.

It's a win for the wife. It's a win for the church because she doesn't have to go on a list and take the aid that the church would have given her. Plus, she may be able to give aid to her own mother or grandmother or to other widows or other older women in the church.

Win-win-win-win. They bring judgment on themselves if they break their vow to be a widow because they've broken their first pledge. And some think that's the pledge to be on the list as a widow.

And some think that's the pledge to be a Christian. First, their highest priority is to be faithful to Christ. They've broken the pledge to be faithful to Christ by following their central desires.

When they had already committed to be a widow, I tend to think it's the pledge to remain unmarried and be a widow, not the pledge to be a Christian. Besides, and I think this is Paul's observation, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to.

So, they become gossips. So, I counsel younger widows, younger here meaning younger than 60. I counsel them to marry.

Now, in our Western society, that can be seen as disparaging. Why not counsel her to become a lawyer, a corporate executive, an airline pilot, or an army general? But, we're talking about the ancient world. And we're also talking about a world in which marriage is a good thing.

Western society tends to disparage marriage because it gets in the way of your career. But we'll see how that turns out for Western culture. I don't think it's turning out all that well right now.

It's a good thing for Christian women to find men to marry and vice versa. And then, if they're young enough to have children, to have children, creation mandate, to manage their homes. Now, see, there's the woman managing the home.

Husbands and wives manage together. She has her things. He has his things.

To give the enemy no opportunity for slander. If she falls in temptation and sleeps around, there's going to be ground for slander. Some have, in fact, already turned away to policy.

So, that's sad. He does it well on it. But Paul had evidently learned from experience that people exploit free care.

2 Thessalonians 3 says, if they do not work, neither let them eat. So, if we're able-bodied individuals in the church, there should be ways for us to offset the largesse that we may be dependent on the church for. There should be ways that we can, as Paul says in Ephesians, work with our hands to have the means to give to others.

That's what he says to people who have a temptation to steal. Learn to work with your hands so you can give to other people. Youthful desires should be channeled into the creation mandate outcomes.

Youthful desires are not wrong. Sexual desires are God-given. I want to underscore that.

Because I don't want, people to forget that we are made in God's image and we are made as men and women. And while sexual immorality is wrong, sexuality is a gift from God. And it is to be affirmed.

But it's to be challenged in positive directions. And Paul's already mentioned marriage, and now he's mentioned marriage a couple of times and a couple of connections. And he affirms it.

The Bible affirms it. Our society does not affirm marital commitment because it gets in the way of individuality. So, it affirms sexual expression, but it affirms it in a way that is destructive to morals and to the character of the individuals.

Because when we sleep around, it tears boards off our character house. In addition to exposing us to actual physical, pathological diseases. Furthermore, it's very clear from Scripture that looking at the man's responsibility in this, because the Bible puts the responsibility on men, not on women.

When a brother has sex with someone who's not his wife, he's defrauding somebody else. You don't have a right to a woman who's not your wife. I don't care if she's consenting.

And I don't care if you're married or not. If you're a Christian, then you are to be reserved for that one woman who is to be your wife. And we've got a culture where often even in Christian youth groups, people figure out ways to have sex.

And it's not right. And it's not healthy. And if you want to destroy yourself, that's not a good thing.

But when you are destroying other people, you're supposed to love your neighbor. You're not supposed to fornicate with them. And there's a lot of that goes on in our culture, and it's a good thing.

I mean, lots of money is made off of it. There are resorts you can go to. You can go on sex trips, movies, TV, entertainment, night clubs, all kinds of ways where people just kind of live out their fantasies, and lots of money is made, and lots of people have lots of fun, and it becomes a way of life.

Furthermore, I'm told that it's like habit forming. I guess that's why it's called a vice, or it used to be called a vice. That kind of living used to be called a vice, which is kind of a nice term for bad behavior that will destroy you in the end.

Well, Paul is at sea with sensual desires in this negative light. He warns against indulging of them because they lead in that direction. But if you look at it from a Christian point of view, they're one of the best things that ever happened to people because sexuality is such an important part of our character, and humanly speaking, it's one of the tokens of heaven on earth.

You know, good food, three times a day we eat. Good relations with members of the opposite sex, and especially our spouse, are something that is repeated daily through our communication with each other. There's the sexual experience between husband and wife.

These things are affirmed in the Bible, and we need a healthy regard for these things in the church. So youthful desires should be channeled. Paul, in encouraging the widows to marry, he's not saying something negative.

He's saying something very, very positive and encouraging them in the direction that

God will bless. At stake in all this is judgment. Verse 12, they bring judgment on themselves.

That's pretty serious. Also, community destruction. Verse 13, this picture of gossips going around and spreading nonsense that's destructive of the community.

And then satanic deception. Some have already turned away a foul Satan. The pastor should thwart all this by his positive encouragement of the widows and those who care for them.

By establishing structures that they can have the list, they can determine who's on it, who's not, and so on. This is part of his spiritual oversight. If you want to know what 2:12 means, don't allow them to teach exercise authority, this Widow Care Administration is part of the exercising authority.

Somebody needs to be in charge of that. Somebody's accountable to God for the widows of the church, and it starts with the pastor leader. If any woman who is a believer has widows in her care, she should continue to help them and not let the church be burdened with them so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

So maybe it's a daughter with a mother and a grandmother. Maybe it's a woman in the church who's relatively wealthy, and she's caring for several widows. Paul says if that's going on, good.

Because there are certain widows who have no other resort except the church. So, if people can do it on their own, more power to them. People can't just paw it all off of the church if they can do it themselves.

Widows who are really in need are the widows who qualify. They're 60, they're godly, they don't have support from other means. Now we come to elders.

The elders who direct affairs in the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. In my denomination, we call these teaching elders. We have pastor leaders who are not ordained as teaching elders, and they're called ruling elders.

And so, they have spiritual authority in the church and pastoral care responsibilities, but they're not the called and ordained teaching pastor who typically has gone to seminary. And different churches do this in different ways. But some churches think that you have here implied teacher elders or overseers who preach and teach and overseers who are able to teach, but that's not their specialty.

And sometimes you see in churches, you'll see pastors of administration or pastors of assimilation or discipleship pastors who establish things and they teach some, but they're not really the teaching and preaching pastor of the church. I think there's a lot of flexibility in how we live this out in church orders in different parts of the world today. But it gives a reason why pastors are worthy of honor and one verse from the Old Testament, do not muzzle an ox while it is treading up the grain.

The second is from the New Testament. The worker deserves his wages. And I think this is proof, number one, that Luke was written by this time because this comes from the gospel of Luke.

The worker deserves his wages. And the word *graphe* in the New Testament writing translates scripture here. That word cannot mean an oral tradition.

And if it's bracketed with the saying from the Old Testament, then it is saying that the New Testament verse is scripture too. So, this is Paul calling scripture both Old and New Testament. Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses.

This is the Old Testament mosaic. Jurisprudence of witness. Facts are established by two or three witnesses.

God bears testimony to himself by multiple witnesses. Jesus says various witnesses attested to who I am. John the Baptist, my miracles, the Holy Spirit, God, the Father.

This is how we establish facts in the household of God. And Timothy's in this hothouse of evidence where there's opposition. There's going to be controversy that he has to handle.

How do you know when and how to charge somebody? Well, if somebody just accuses somebody, it doesn't mean anything. It's got to be corroborated. So don't go by hearsay.

But those elders who are sinning, there may be elders that somebody brings a charge against and it may be true. Well, reprove before everyone that the others may take warning. Recently, there was a very large denomination in the United States where it was determined that there were thousands, well, 790 pastors who were guilty of sexual abuse.

And it was known to leaders in that denomination, but they didn't do anything about it.

They kept it quiet. They did not reprove them before everyone that others might take warning.

And there will be a lot of fallout from that. Paul says, when elders who are publicly known as officers of the church transgress in chargeable ways, I don't mean they drive three miles an hour over the speed limit or they drink two milkshakes and they add to their weight and they're not caring for their body right. I'm saying when they, unscrupulous business practices, lying, gossiping, sexual immorality, stealing, they're to be reproved so that everybody sees the integrity of the leadership of the church.

And then Paul puts an exclamation point on it. I charge you, there's that command again. I charge you in the sight of God in Christ Jesus and the elect angels, keep these instructions without partiality.

Do nothing out of favoritism. It's really tempting in pastor leadership to favor those who support us. And the problem is humans being what they are, sometimes people will favor the pastor, and then later on they want a favor from the pastor.

And that's okay as long as they're not asking you to sin. By what they're saying, would you overlook that or would you cut me some slack here or would you help my son get the contract to do this work at the church because he's got a new business? I support the church a lot.

There are ways that a pastor can be corrupted by the apparently innocent requests of his supporters in the church. And it is very hard to be impartial as a pastor leader. But this is part of the pastor epistle's vision.

And it's very serious because this is in the sight of God in Christ Jesus and the elect angels. Now that is really serious. And so, I think it speaks to the level of difficulty of being an impartial pastor leader and being deeply committed to all the people in your care but being alert to the ways that they might want to twist, distort, and take advantage of their relationship with you for their own benefit.

Now this kind of goes back to 1 Timothy 3. Don't be hasty in the laying on of hands. When an overseer was appointed, it seemed that there was a public recognition of it. And this is still true today in many churches that when somebody is listed as a pastor or a deacon or whatever they're called in that church, the pastor leader, then there's a laying on of hands.

Paul says don't be in a hurry to do that. Don't share in the sins of others. The implication is if you are hasty, you may appoint people who are still more in their sin than they are in their pursuit of God.

And because you endorse them, you're going to be a party to their errors. You're partially responsible for that. Keep yourself pure.

Now that's not having to do with the younger women and sisters. This has to do, again, with promoting people into service who are going to bring shame on the name of Christ and shame on the name of the church. So, we just talked about respect for the elders and handling the elders well.

Now he's talking about handling the younger, probably. Handling the people that are aspiring and that you're going to lay hands on. Don't be in a hurry to do that.

Then self-care. He's concerned about Timothy's health. Timothy has quit drinking wine.

And Paul says a little wine would be good, Timothy. And we can debate the medical merits of this statement. But I think the principle is very clear.

Pastors need to be alert to their own physical needs and conditions and not be destructively ascetic. Ascetic means you deny yourself. And probably with the idea, that the more I deny myself, the happier God will be because doesn't God want us to be miserable? And, of course, God does not want us to be miserable.

And he's already said good food is good. Good food would include good wine and the judicious use of God's creation bounty. But it's easy not to stop with a little wine.

That's why he says a little wine. It doesn't say you've got stomach problems. So I want you to drink a bottle of wine every night.

Forget your problems. I think any commentary will say that the alcohol in wine would kill certain organisms and make the water safer to drink. So that's what he was saying.

Because he has frequent illnesses. I actually knew a German man. He's with the Lord now.

But he did a lot of surveying in an African country. And the water and the food weren't always safe for Europeans to eat. And he said after they ate, they would always have a drink of schnapps.

And that's kind of a high alcohol content. But he swore that it helped keep them from getting sick. I don't know if that was true or not.

But that would be the idea. Now, one glass of schnapps after a big meal, not a glass, but a shot, it's not going to make you drunk. But it might help purify the contents in your stomach.

And that's what Paul is saying here. The sins of some are obvious in the summary of the chapter. Reaching the place of judgment ahead of them, the sins of others trail behind them.

In the same way, good deeds are obvious, even those that are not obvious cannot remain hidden forever. So, what he's saying there is, Timothy, stick with what I'm telling you. In the long run, it will pan out.

You'll see the wisdom of it. To conclude, good pastoral care upholds a high level of practical outreach. Verse 16, about widows.

Let not the church be burdened with them so that the church can help those widows who are really in need. Pastoral care that's good promotes, and upholds a high level of practical outreach. That's one reason why pastors should be hospitable is because they show an example of caring for other people in a personal way.

Number two, while elders deserve honor, they also require scrutiny and direction without favoritism, and they are held to a higher standard. So that should be made clear to prospective elders. Because I do know that some men can't help but see it as an honor.

I'm on the list for the elder election. And the more we think like that, the less right we have to be an elder. Elder is a responsibility.

It's going to be a lot more responsibility than being a baseball coach. Being a baseball coach turns out to be kind of fun. Being an elder is deeply rewarding, but it's not fun at the level of being a baseball coach.

In fact, there'll be a lot of lonely hours in prayer, and sometimes in counseling people, or in discussion of issues. Maybe some sleepless nights, late-night meetings. Maybe your own wallet will be depleted because you'll see needs that you can address that you don't want to bother the church with.

I mean, being an elder is a sacrifice. It's not some CEO position. And it requires a higher standard.

So people should have that made clear. Again, the pastor's example is very important. If the pastor is putting himself at God's disposal and the people's disposal, there's less temptation when people think, oh, I want to have a cushy job with lots of rewards and honor like he does.

He'll be setting the tone for service and for Christ-like self-sacrifice. And when he invites somebody else to think about this, because they've shown an interest, they'll be able to

see, hmm, I'm not sure I want that. And if they do desire it, it would be more likely, because they really do see it and they just feel that call from God, I want to be an agent of gospel service in this church.

And yes, it will cost me, but that's the most fulfilling thing in the world. There's nothing more fulfilling than being right with God. It's more fulfilling than fun.

It's more fulfilling than driving a jet. It's more fulfilling than a motorcycle. It's more fulfilling than traveling.

The most fulfilling thing we can do in the world is to find a place of service and worship and enjoyment of the gifts of God and service for God and to live that out and to enjoy the seasons of rest and, evenings at the lake or whatever. I mean, there are lots of occasions for pleasure in life in many places of the world. But even if we're in a place of the world where there's poverty and there's oppression and there are no vacation trips and we're eating one meal a day, even in those places of the world, God comes to us.

He visits His people and He makes service fruitful and He makes our sacrifice joyful in His presence. So, it's a great thing to become an elder or to care for widows. Thirdly, Timothy should be proactive in leadership, enabling, and self-care.

Self-care. How people live for evil or for good is an ongoing pastoral concern. And we need to have that long-term vision that Paul sets for Timothy.

Things will pan out to be what they really are. And so, in the moment, we need to be living with the sense of abandonment for the future that God will determine. You know, sins are sins.

Good is good. Go with what we can see is true at the moment and leave the flaw for God. Don't become just a pragmatist.

Oh, yeah, it says it's a sin, but look how it works. If we do this, the world will accept us. Or this is really hard.

Let's not do this because it's so hard. No, if it's good, it's good. And in the long run, in God's wisdom and God's grace, we'll see things for how they really are in God's sight.

That's all the time we have for 1 Timothy 5. Thank you.

This is Dr. Robert W. Yarbrough and his teaching on the Pastoral Epistles, Apostolic Instruction for Pastoral Leaders and their Followers. Session 6, 1 Timothy 5.