

# **Dr. Robert Yarbrough, Pastoral Epistles, Session 6,**

## **1 Timothy 5 - The Pastoral Epistles: Apostolic Instruction for Pastoral Leaders and Their Followers**

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All right, diving right in today. We're going way back, like Bible times back to this book, First Timothy. Specifically, we're looking at chapter five.

Okay. Yeah. And you know how we always say we're interested in, like, practical stuff- how faith actually works out into community? Right.

Well, this chapter, it's like a case study. I was reading Dr. Robert Yarbrough. He's this expert on pastoral ministry, right? And his lecture on this chapter just blew my mind.

What'd he say? Well, first of all, get this. The thing this chapter spends the most time on is caring for widows. Interesting.

More than anything else in all of First Timothy. Yeah. Why widows though? Like, why is that the big focus? I think you've got to remember back then women often outlived their husbands, way more common than today, right? So being a widow, it wasn't just like a sad thing that happened sometimes; it was like a whole social issue.

Yeah, exactly. And I bet that's why Dr. Yarbrough, in his lecture, says something like, churches that don't get how to care for widows, they're missing something huge. He uses the word blind spot, which is pretty strong.

Yeah. It's like whether you're a widow or your mom is, or you're in any kind of faith community, this stuff ripples out. Totally.

And he says something else that stuck with me: caring for your aging parents, widows especially. It's not like an extra credit thing in Christianity, you know? Right. He says it's core.

Like, that's how you know someone's following Jesus, partly by how they handle that. I mean, it goes all the way back to honor your father and mother, right? That Old Testament commandment. Yeah.

And Jesus was big on that too. Huge. So here in Timothy, it's getting specific.

Like, okay, how does that play out in the church? Okay. So let's get into those specifics. What does the chapter actually say about how this whole widow care thing works? First thing, it's on the family.

Kids, grandkids, they've got to step up for widows in their own family first. So it's not just dumping on the church right away. Nope.

Churches back up only if there's really no family to help. And this is wild. There was a whole system for this, even back in Ephesus, like 2,000 years ago.

A system. Like, did widows have to apply or something? Basically. To get on the church's official widow care list, you had to be 60 or older, show you were faithful to your husband, and have a track record of good deeds.

Ooh, good deeds. What counted as good? Dr. Yarbrough quotes the text. It's awesome.

It says stuff like raising kids well, being hospitable, literally washing people's feet. Like the foot washing thing Jesus did. Exactly.

Helping those in trouble. Basically being good all around. So character mattered.

Big time. It wasn't enough to just be a widow; you had to live a certain way. Okay.

That's widows over 60. But what about the younger ones? What'd they say about them? Now, this is where it gets interesting. The advice for younger widows.

Get remarried. Really? I did not see that coming. Me neither at first, but the lecture breaks down why.

First, it's God's purpose for marriage, right? Second, it gives a support system. Less chance of, you know, temptation or gossip. Right.

And third, maybe that woman later on, she becomes a widow again when she's older, and now she can help others. Wow. That's long-term thinking.

Totally different view than today, right? Like now it's all career independence. Yeah. Back then it was more about family.

Those roles God gives you. For sure. But there's a catch.

If a younger widow said, church, support me, and then got married, big no-no. Like breaking a promise. Exactly.

They took that seriously. So we've got widows covered, but the lecture also talks about church elders. How does that fit in? Well, First Timothy is about the whole church, right? Widows are part of it, but so are the leaders.

Okay. So how does it talk about them? It says elders who lead well deserve double honor, especially the ones who preach and teach. What's double honor, though? Basically, recognizing their authority and providing for them.

Back then it was a big deal. So respect, support, all that. Totally.

But here's the flip side. With that honor comes high standards. Yeah.

The text is clear. Elders mess up publicly. They've got to be corrected publicly.

No sweeping stuff under the rug. Oof. That's intense.

Right. And Dr. Yarbrough, he brings up that recent scandal, that whole denomination covering up abuse by pastors. Yeah.

Awful. He says, that's what happens when you ignore this stuff. It's got to be transparent, accountable.

So it's not just about the leader being good. It's about the whole church staying healthy. Exactly.

And that goes for choosing leaders too, he says. Don't rush it, or the church becomes part of the problem. Whoa, that's a lot to think about.

Right. And then there's this little detail. The chapter tells Timothy to drink some wine for his stomach.

Wait, what? Yeah. And it's like, even back then they knew self-care matters, even for leaders. So not an excuse to get wasted, though.

Definitely not. But it shows they saw the whole person. So we've got widows, elders, all this ancient stuff.

What's it mean for us today? That's the million-dollar question. And that's what we'll get into next time. So stay tuned.

You know, one thing that really hits me about this whole chapter is how straightforward it is. Like no sugarcoating the hard parts of taking care of people. It's like, this is life.

Deal with it. But in a good way. Right.

And what I find fascinating is Dr. Yarbrough ties all this practical stuff back to like deep theology. Right. It's not just being nice.

It's about reflecting God's character. Totally. He makes this point.

It's like caring for widows. It echoes that whole honor your parents thing from the Old Testament. Which is huge.

Right. Like even Jesus talked about that. Yeah.

So if something like this is rooted that deep in faith, what other blind spots do we have? Like, where else are we missing the point today? Ooh, that's good. And Dr. Yarbrough actually talks about that a bit. Like, nowadays we push elder care onto the government or nursing homes.

It's like outsourcing compassion. Totally. But this passage is saying, nope, it's personal, hands-on.

Which is inspiring, but also kind of overwhelming. I get that. He even mentions nursing homes.

Like sometimes families can't provide the care needed. Right. It gets really complex.

So then what? Do we just wash our hands of it? No way. He's saying, even then, stay involved, be an advocate, make sure they're not neglected, still connected to family. So it's finding that balance, honoring the responsibility, but being realistic.

Exactly. Needs wisdom, right? Yeah. Which reminds me, Dr. Yarbrough also says, don't take on more than you can handle.

Because burning yourself out helps nobody. For sure. And this chapter is not just about doing stuff.

It's about the kind of person you are, both giving and receiving care. Oh, good point. He makes a distinction, right? Widows truly in need versus maybe those taking advantage.

Oh, yeah. Like, don't enable bad behavior just because someone's a widow. Discernment, as always.

Right. Love doesn't mean being a pushover. He even uses that line, worse than an unbeliever, talking about neglecting family.

Harsh, but true. Yeah. Faith is about what you do and doing it smartly.

Speaking of doing, this is when we swing back to elders. Wait, how'd we get there? Remember that whole double honor thing? Respect, providing for them? Well, it's not one-sided. Elders got to live up to it too.

Right. High standards and all. Exactly.

And that's where Dr. Yarbrough brings up those abuse scandals. It's like, you've got to be transparent, or this stuff happens. Source material is blunt.

Sin publicly. Get called out publicly. No hiding.

It's about protecting the whole church. And choosing leaders carefully in the first place. Rushing that process, Dr. Yarbrough says, makes the church guilty too.

Oh, heavy stuff. Then there's that little bit about Timothy's stomach, told to drink some wine. Still weird to me.

But it's like, self-care matters, even way back then, even for leaders. Again, not permission to party. Uh-huh.

No, but it's holistic: mind, body, spirit. So we've got widows, elders, all this ancient stuff. How do we bridge that to today? That's what I'm wondering.

And that's what we tackle next. So don't go anywhere. This chapter, it's almost like instructions for building a community that actually works.

One that takes care of people, especially the ones who need it most. Exactly. And it's like, caring for widows and elders, it's not some lesser thing compared to other ministries.

It's saying, no, this is essential. This is how you love, how you serve practically. Which is so countercultural now, right? Everything's about youth being productive.

Totally. It's like, time to rethink our priorities. Everyone has value, no matter how old they are or what they're going through.

And it's not just a burden, right? Dr. Yarbrough talks about it as an opportunity. Yeah, for spiritual growth, for connecting with God in a real way. And he points out this interesting thing: the qualities of someone who's good at caring for widows.

It's almost the same list as qualifications for being an elder. Makes sense, right? It's not just skills; it's character, godliness, compassion, integrity. So it's not just checking boxes; it's about having the right heart.

That's where it starts. And then that love, it shows up both ways, practical and personal. Reading needs, but also really connecting with people.

Seeing the person, not just the widow or elder label. And knowing we're all in this together. Everyone matters.

That's the vision. Beautiful, but also kind of scary, you know? I get it. Makes you step out of your comfort zone, face your own biases.

Give up your time, resources, even your own wants sometimes. But maybe that's where the real change happens, when we actually step up and let God work through us. That's it, right? It's not rules; it's an invitation to live differently, better.

Rooted in love, service, real connection. So, wrapping this up, I gotta ask: if this is how much they focused on widows and elders, just in one chapter, what does that tell us about what a church should be about? How do we live this out now, today? Big question. How do we make care and compassion just part of who we are? Not an extra thing, but built in.

That's for each of us to figure out. Thanks for being on this deep dive with us. Hope it got you thinking.

We'll see you next time.