

Pastoral Epistles: 1 Timothy 5

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Abstract

In this lecture on 1 Timothy 5, Dr. Robert Yarbrough explores Paul's pastoral guidelines for maintaining a godly church culture through familial respect and institutional integrity. He emphasizes the church's duty to treat congregants as family, requiring relatives to provide primary support for aging widows while reserving church assistance for those truly in need. Furthermore, Yarbrough outlines the stewardship of leadership, detailing the fair compensation of faithful elders, strict evidentiary requirements for allegations, and public discipline for sinning leaders. Ultimately, the session demonstrates how these practical administrative directives reflect the organic work of the gospel in everyday life and church governance.

Outline

I. Creating a Family Ethos in the Local Church (1 Timothy 5:1–2)

A. Relational Framework for Pastoral Ministry

1. Treating older men with respect as fathers rather than with harsh rebukes
2. Regarding younger men as brothers with mutual dignity and encouragement
3. Honoring older women as mothers with affectionate care and thoughtfulness
4. Exhorting younger women as sisters with absolute and pure motives

B. Cultivating a Godly Church Climate

1. Setting a pastoral tone that eliminates generational and demographic divides
2. Directing God-given emotional and sexual drives into lawful, redemptive channels
3. Countering cultural commodification of relationships through gospel purity of heart

II. The Care and Qualification of Widows (1 Timothy 5:3–16)

A. Primary Responsibility of Family and Relatives

1. Fulfilling the Fifth Commandment by caring for aging parents and grandparents
2. Warning against spiritual hypocrisy: neglecting family denies the faith and is worse than an unbeliever

3. Differentiating between "widows indeed" (godly, prayerful, lacking support) and self-indulgent widows

B. Criteria for the Official Church Care List

1. Minimum age requirement of sixty years
2. Track record of marital fidelity and Christian devotion
3. Reputation for good deeds: raising children, showing hospitality, serving believers, and aiding the afflicted

C. Guidelines for Younger Widows

1. Advising widows under sixty to remarry, bear children, and manage households
2. Preventing idle behavior, gossip, and breaking former pledges or faith
3. Fulfilling the creation mandate while shielding the church from slander and undue burden

III. Leadership Stewardship: Honor, Discipline, and Ordination of Elders (1 Timothy 5:17–25)

A. Compensation and Honor for Faithful Elders

1. Granting "double honor" (respect and financial support) to elders who rule well
2. Prioritizing those whose primary ministry is preaching and teaching
3. Grounding ministerial support in Scripture (Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7)

B. Jurisprudence, Allegations, and Public Discipline

1. Requiring two or three witnesses to corroborate any formal accusation against an elder
2. Publicly rebuking sinning elders to instill holy fear and maintain institutional integrity
3. Administering discipline impartially without partiality, favoritism, or corrupt compromise

C. Wisdom in Ordination and Personal Care

1. Avoiding hasty laying on of hands to prevent sharing in another person's sins
2. Practicing sensible self-care for physical well-being (e.g., Paul's advice to Timothy regarding wine)
3. Recognizing that while some sins and good deeds are obvious, others will ultimately be revealed in God's judgment

IV. Summary and Practical Implications for Contemporary Ministry

- A.** Upholding robust, practical outreach to those truly in need
- B.** Maintaining higher standards of accountability and non-favoritism for leaders
- C.** Exercising proactive, patient, and godly self-care and oversight in ministry