

# A YOUNG WIDOW SHOULD REMARRY

## 1 Timothy 5:11-16

Last week we left off at 1 Timothy 5:10, so we will begin our study today in verse 11. But I believe it would serve us well to go back and read the first ten verses as a refresher to what we have already studied.

### 1 Timothy 5:1-16 (NASB):

<sup>1</sup> *Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him as a father, to the younger men as brothers,*

<sup>2</sup> *the older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, in all purity.*

<sup>3</sup> *Honor widows who are widows indeed;*

<sup>4</sup> *but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God.*

<sup>5</sup> *Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day.*

<sup>6</sup> *But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives.*

<sup>7</sup> *Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach.*

<sup>8</sup> *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.*

<sup>9</sup> *A widow is to be put on the list only if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one man,*

<sup>10</sup> *having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work.*

<sup>11</sup> *But refuse to put younger widows on the list, for when they feel sensual desires in disregard of Christ, they want to get married,*

<sup>12</sup> *thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge.*

<sup>13</sup> *At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.*

<sup>14</sup> *Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach;*

<sup>15</sup> *for some have already turned aside to follow Satan.*

<sup>16</sup> *If any woman who is a believer has dependent widows, she must assist them and the church must not be burdened, so that it may assist those who are widows indeed.*

The following quotation is from Ashley Montague taken from "*The Triumph and Tragedy of the American Woman*," which appeared in the *Saturday Review*:

“Women have great gifts to bring to the world of men, the qualities of love, compassion and humanity (that is, beauty of spirit). It is the function of woman to humanize, since women are the natural mothers of humanity. Women are by nature endowed with the most important of all adaptive traits, the capacity to love, and this is their principal function to teach men. There can be no more important function. It could be wished that both men and women understood this. Once women know this, they will realize that no man can ever play as important a role in the life of humanity as a mentally healthy woman. And by mental health, I mean the ability to love and the ability to work. Being a good wife, a good mother, in short, a good homemaker is the most important of all occupations in the world. It surely cannot be too often pointed out that the making of human beings is a far more important vocation than the making of anything else, and that in the formative years of a child's life, the mother is best equipped to provide those firm foundations upon which one can subsequently build.”<sup>1</sup>

God has provided women with many special gifts and they are not only those mentioned here in this quotation. But such gifts are most likely not functional if a woman has not first placed her faith and her life in the hands of Jesus Christ. That is when one's spiritual and natural gifts are activated. Without Jesus Christ as her foundation on which to build her life, the old saying that “*God has no wrath like a woman's scorn*” can become a reality.

Now as we continue our study in 1 Timothy 5:11, Paul gives two reasons why younger widows should be excluded from this list we have been discussing (a list of widows the church should help). The first reason is stated in verse 11, which could be translated this way for clarification: “*Younger widows are not to be placed on the list because even though they pledge devotion to Christ they all too frequently are motivated by their desire to get married again.*” The kind of work Paul had in mind would be better served by older women (verse 9) with experience who had the time and qualifications for the work

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<sup>1</sup> Michael P. Green, ed., “Woman, Role of,” in *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: “Woman, Role of”.

Paul had in mind.

Younger widows might be considered, but for the most part the work required total commitment. If a woman were allowed to do this work and was constantly thinking about finding a man, her effectiveness would be questionable. And Paul does not find anything wrong with this type of thinking. In fact, he wants them to get married again. But he definitely does not want these women to commit their lives to the church and then run off and get married again, as he mentions in verse 12:

**1 Timothy 5:12 (NASB):**

<sup>12</sup> *thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge.*

Here Paul means that in spite of the work they have committed to do for Christ, they have backed out. Such young widows have a tendency to grow restless with desire. Because their thoughts tend to drift to finding a man to marry they are less and less committed to the promise they made to serve Christ through His Church. The emotions that lead women to this kind of thinking cannot be considered sinful because it is only natural for a young widow to think about getting married again. She has needs and desires that God placed within her that might only be filled by a loving husband. So if she finds Mr. Right, let her get married, but do not allow her to become a member of that list that performs special functions in the church.

Another reason that such young widows should not be placed on the list appears in **1 Timothy 5:13 (NASB):**

<sup>13</sup> *At the same time they also learn to be idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper to mention.*

Now even though Paul is not referring here to all young widows, he does mean that there is a very good likelihood of this happening and there is no sense taking a chance. Paul then continues saying that such widows soon learn to be idle. Such idleness is brought about by their going from house to house. This practice of going from house to house could very likely have been part of their duties in assisting and counseling families. But these *young* widows would then also take the time to gossip about various things in the neighborhood and the church, and allowing much of their time to be spent in sipping tea and sampling chocolates. Soon more of their time would be spent socializing rather than serving, and thereby creating problems for the church by doing more harm than good. Then in 1 Timothy 5:14-15, Paul writes:

<sup>14</sup> *Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach;*  
<sup>15</sup> *for some have already turned aside to follow Satan.*

Paul does not want young widows to stay unmarried. Paul wants them to be happy. And

not only does he want them to be happy, he also suggests they have more children and manage the house. It seems rather evident that Paul is looking out for the welfare of the church and at the same time the welfare of the young widows. If these widows were to practice the questionable behavior already discussed, not only would their reputation suffer, but they would dishonor God by giving in to temptations that Satan placed in their path.

At this point you might be wondering if there is anything a young widow can do in the church to bring glory to the message of Christ? The answer is a most definite “Yes.”

What could be more important and effective for the church and the individual than prayer. How many sick and elderly might there be in the church who could use a personal visit and prayer?

Then we see in verse 16 that Paul expects woman in the church who have a comfortable home with plenty of space, provide a home for a widow. She might also help the woman to find work and /or help her if she is in financial need.

The act of providing such care for widows glorifies God, and it provides a sense of peace and satisfaction within the person who provides such service, knowing that they have been obedient to the Lord’s command.

And finally Paul says that such provision will allow for the church not to be burdened with the care of young widows, and thereby able to care for those who are really widows, those who are over sixty. Paul then returns to what he said in verses three and four saying that needy widows are first of all the responsibility of those who are nearest to them: children, grandchildren, other relatives, and women of means who are capable of providing care.

Let them then do their duty. Not only is this morally the right thing to do, but there is also a very practical consideration. The church has its hands full as it is. It does not count many rich people among its members. Hence, it should not be *burdened* (weighed down with too heavy a load).

2 Corinthians 1:8 (NASB):

<sup>8</sup> *For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life.*

It is therefore the widows who are completely destitute, having no one to support them, that the church needs to help. If everyone does their part, it will be so much easier for the church to care for *these* widows.<sup>2</sup>

“When adult children face the challenge of caring for a widowed parent, it does not have to be a one-way street.

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<sup>2</sup> Baker’s New Testament Commentary.

Granny is a good example:

“Granny was Mary's mother. Mary's father had died years earlier and until recently her mother was doing just fine on her own. But with advancing age, she either had to move her mother to a retirement home or move her into her own home with herself and her family. It was obvious to Mary and her husband Dan that Granny needed to be brought into their home and be made a part of their family.

Having Granny in the home gave the grandchildren memories they would never forget. Did she put a strain on the family? Sure. But the blessings from having Granny live with them far outweighed any sacrifice that was made by Mary and Dan.

When Granny finally went home to be with the Lord, she did not leave an empty room behind. Instead, she left an abundance of great memories in the hearts of Mary's family.

“Who can you reach out to today and touch with God's love?”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Practical Illustrations – Volume 10: Thessalonians-Philemon*, (Chattanooga, TN: Leadership Ministries Worldwide, 2003), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 111-112.