

The Pastor And God's People

1 Timothy 5

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Tonight we move from the pastor as a preacher, as we saw in chapter 4, to the pastor and the people. The pastor is a preacher. The pastor is also involved with people. We kind of have a movement in the church today where the pastor becomes the chief executive officer, the CEO, the superstar. We're kind of living in the era of the megachurch kind of syndrome and the pastor's the superstar, but the New Testament really knows nothing about that. The pastor of the New Testament is not only a preacher and teacher of God's Word but he's a lover of God's people and has to be engaged, connected, and interact with God's people.

We have more than one pastor here at this church. I'm not the only pastor, but I do realize that quite often it's hard for me to get to know you, get connected with you, to meet you. On Sunday, I go to the back door, and not everyone goes out that back door. Maybe some of you know I'm back there so you go a different direction—you don't want Pastor Miller to talk to you—but I do love to meet people. I love to hear your stories. I love to pray with people and connect with people, so it's not just about me and the pulpit or any of our pastors teaching you, it's about us being examples to you and being one of you. You know, the pastor is not only a shepherd, but he is also a sheep. Even though I'm a shepherd, I am a sheep and I have sheep needs. I need you just like you need me. I need to be a part of a church and a fellowship, and your love and your prayers and your encouragement are such a blessing to me. I think it's interesting that the exhortation to Timothy moves from his preaching the Word, teaching, and exhorting (and there's a bit of that in our passage tonight) but moves to the people and how to relate to the people.

Tonight we're going to see that Paul talks to Timothy in his fourth charge about how he disciplines the church, relates to the church, and how he encourages the church. He deals with these three groups: first, all people (verses 1-2); the widows in the church (verses 3-16); the elders in the church, the spiritual leaders (verses 17-19); and his fourth and final charge (verses 21-25). I just wanted to outline that, but I'll give it to you now as we go through, and I believe that they'll appear on the screen tonight as well.

The first section is verses 1-2 and deals with how the elder, being Timothy, is to relate to the older people in the congregation. Notice 1 Timothy 5:1-2. He says, "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; 2 The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity." He gives these categories of the older men and the younger men, the older women and the younger women. He's talking to Timothy as the pastor, and he's telling him how he's to relate to these people in the congregation. The congregation is made up of these different people groups.

When Paul says there, "elder" in verse 1, he is not talking about a spiritual position of a pastor. He's not talking about a spiritual leader. It's not "elder" in the sense of presbyter in the sense of a spiritual leader. In chapter 3, we had the qualifications for the elders, and I pointed out that

the “elder” there is synonymous with pastor and with bishop, which means overseer; so they are what we today know as pastors. The word “elder” here (this is very important for you to get) actually means older person. I believe that a church should be made up of all ages. A lot of churches try to reach the youth, and that’s good, we should reach the youth, and it’s important to do that, but I believe that a church is not just young people, it’s not just old people, it’s not just middle-aged people, it’s all ages. Amen? The church should reflect all those ages. The young people should value and appreciate the older people, and the older people should love and appreciate and encourage and disciple the younger people. We should never fight with age groups, and that’s what divides a lot of churches today.

What Paul says to Timothy is pretty plain—you’re not to rebuke an older person. You don’t go up to somebody that’s twice your age and give them a tongue lashing or a stern rebuke but rather you entreat them. It’s a much kinder, gentler, word and concept. It’s actually teaching respect for your elders, and I like that. The older I get, the more I appreciate this, that you should respect older people in the church; and we as congregants should love, value, and appreciate the senior saints or the silver saints as I like to call them. Many of them have walked with God for many, many, many years and have so much to contribute to the younger generation. Sometimes we write them off and really they have so much knowledge of God’s Word, they’ve walked with God for so many years, that we need to love, respect, and appreciate them. Find someone that’s much older than you and take them out for coffee or invite them over. Get to know them and glean from them. Find out how God has worked in their life, how God has provided, guided, and taken care of them, and be encouraged by that. It’s so very important.

Paul is talking about his treatment of the older men in the church and says, “...intreat him as a father,” so this is the focus. You treat them with respect and love, these older people in the congregation. By the way, these are the older men, you treat them as fathers. How should you treat the younger men in the church? As brethren. You see, we are a family of God—they are like spiritual fathers, the older, and the younger are like our little brothers, and we’re to encourage them as well. Then, he moves (verse 2) to the older women as mothers. There are older women in our church that are kind of like moms to me and they pray for me. Some of them like to come up and give me hugs after church and say, “I pray for you,” and what a joy that brings to my heart! Many of them, I know, pray every day for me and my ministry, my family, and for my marriage. I don’t know how I would get along without that. I so appreciate that, but I’m to relate as a pastor, and we as a congregation, to the older women in the church—we’re to treat them with respect as though they were our own mother.

In verse 2, this is an important one, “...the younger as sisters, with all purity.” It’s so common that many ministers have stumbled in the area of sexual immorality because they haven’t taken this to heart that the younger women in the church, Paul tells Timothy as the pastor, are to be viewed as your sisters. We need to remember that and keep that and relate to them in all purity. He starts in verses 1-2 with how to relate to the older men, the younger men, the older women, and the younger women. I know he’s talking to a pastor here, Timothy, but it applies to every one of us in the congregation.

This is a large section, verses 3-6, where now Paul begins to talk about how to treat and take care of widows—yes, widows. In the New Testament, widows played a very important place and part. Actually, in the Old Testament widows are mentioned quite a bit, how God takes the defense of the fatherless and the widows. In the New Testament, all through the New Testament, widows are mentioned quite a bit. There's the widow of Nain and also the widow whose son died and Jesus raised him from the dead. When Jesus talks about giving, we all know the story of the widow's mite. Remember that? This little widow that came in and put in her two little mites into the offering box and Jesus said that she's given more than all the rest of them. I think it's Luke 18 where you have a widow that presses the judge to give her what she needs, and Jesus uses that as an analogy as well for importunity in prayer. So, there's a lot said about widows, and God takes the concern and the care of widows very highly.

Let's break this down. We're going to go through it verse by verse. "Honour widows that are widows indeed. 4 But if any widow have children or nephews," a reference to grandchildren, "let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite," or to repay, "their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. 5 Now she that is a widow indeed," notice that term, "and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. 6 But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. 7 And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. 8 But if any provide not for his own," that is, his own family or household, "and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." The command is clear in verse 3, "Honour widows that are widows indeed."

That word "Honour" there we actually get our word honorarium from it. An honorarium is when someone serves another person and they give them a financial gift or some kind of recognition for the service that they rendered. The word actually means to fix value or to fix value upon. If I'm invited to go to another church or preach or I do a wedding or a funeral, I do that without charge or without fee. I've had some people call me, "Can you come and preach at our church? How much do you charge?" I laugh at that because, "...freely ye have received, freely give." You don't charge to preach the gospel. "Yeah, each sermon is \$39.95," you know, "plus tax," or something like that, "and if I preach a little longer, it's a little bit more." You just preach, and if they value and appreciate that and want to honor you for that, then they might give you some money for doing that.

I once did a wedding for a dear friend of mine, a young guy in the church got married and I did the wedding. He gave me a check and wrote it out. I went to cash it at the bank, I'll never forget that, and the teller...I just signed "John Miller" on the back, and she said, "Excuse me, you have to endorse it the same way it's made out to." I thought, Well, how's it made out? I looked at it, and this guy, just to really get me, made it out to, "The Most Holy Right Reverend J.P. Miller." I'm like, "Wait till I get my hands on him!" I had to write, "The Most Holy Right Reverend John Paul Miller." It's like, "Oh, brother."

We use the term honorarium because we place value on it, but the text here is conveying the idea of taking care of them monetarily. It's actually saying that there is certain classification—underline the word "classification"—of widows in the church that should be taken care of by the

church. Now, realize in Bible days they didn't have Social Security. They didn't have retirement or the government funds that we have. It was a different situation, but the principle still remains true. If a woman qualifies as what is called here in verse 3, "widows indeed," then she should be taken care of and supported by the church. This is what we have to discover in the text. What is a "widow indeed?" Not just a widow, but a "widow indeed." There were qualifications for her to be supported by and taken care of by the church.

It says in verse 4, "But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home," and my King James says, "and to requite their parents," or repay them or take care of them, "for that is good and acceptable before God." As we're going to see, a widow or an individual that's to be provided for must be destitute of family—no children, no grandchildren, no family to take care of her. We're going to see that's what a "widow indeed" is. She has no one and nothing to take care of her or to provide for her, but if she has children (verse 4) or grandchildren, "let them learn first to shew piety at home." Charity begins where? At home. If you don't show charity at home, then something's wrong. If you can't take care of your own parents, your own family, then something is wrong. This is really clear in this Scripture. In the fifth of the Ten Commandments, the Decalogue of Moses, it is actually, "Honour thy father and thy mother," right? You're to take care of your parents. It's so very important. It's the first commandment that comes to us with a command, so we're to take care of our parents.

It says, "Now she that is a widow indeed," and here's the description of a "widow indeed," "desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day." It reminds me of Luke 2 of the widow Anna who'd been widowed for some time. Everyday she went to the temple and prayed and waited on God. It was she that saw the Christ Child that came in, but notice that she's desolate. That means she has no family, no children, no grandchildren to take care of her or to meet her needs. Remember in Acts 6 there was the distribution to the widows, and the Hellenistic widows, the Greek widows, were complaining that they were being neglected in the distribution of the food. The apostles said that we need to appoint seven men over this matter so that they could feed these women, take care of and minister to them. It was a very important part of the early church and should be as well in the church today.

"But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." That's talking about a woman that's not spiritual. She's not seeking the Lord. She's not spending time in supplication and prayer, and she is spiritually dead while she's living. She wouldn't qualify as a "widow indeed." "And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless. 8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," which means an unbeliever. In the context it's talking about providing for widows, but it can actually be applied in a broader way that we should provide for our family and we should take care of them.

We do, as a church, have what we call a benevolent fund, and some of the giving that comes in at Revival Christian Fellowship is deposited into this benevolent fund. That fund is used for people who need help, but even then, we need to be discerning. As you study this passage,

you realize that the church isn't just to give out money willy-nilly to anyone, anytime, anywhere, anyhow. We get people all the time that want to come by and they need money. If I'm engaged with them, I ask them questions, "Well, why do you need money? Do you have any family? Did you lose your job? Do you have any friends? Why do you come to the church? Are you a believer?" and I share the gospel with them. A lot of times, it's interesting, they get angry and upset and they freak out because you asked them questions. Now, if a person's not willing to answer my questions, I'm not going to give them the Lord's money to meet their needs. If they're just there, "Hey, the church is an easy place to get some money. Let's go by there and let's hit 'em up and get some money to take care of these things," but we're to be discerning with the Lord's money and to make a distinction on who we help, how we help, and why we help. If you are a believer, then you should take care of your family. If you don't, then you've "...denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," or unbeliever, and that's really sad. Some people say, "Well, sin in the life of a Christian is different." Yeah, it's different. It's worse when a Christian doesn't obey God and do what the Lord has called him to do.

In verse 9, it starts to really break down the qualifications for the widows that should be helped by the church. He says, "Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, 10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work." These actually are the specific qualifications that a widow has to meet in order to be taken care of by the church or to be classified as a "widow indeed." First of all, she has to be destitute—no family—and then it says here that she has to be at least 60 years of age. Interesting that God gives a specific age, that she has to be at least 60, if she's going to be taken care of or put on the rolls and provided for by the church.

Then it says that she has to have had one husband, "...the wife of one man." That does not preclude a woman that has been widowed more than once. Maybe she was married young, maybe she was widowed young. It's perfectly biblical, legitimate, and right for her to remarry. Maybe her second husband died, maybe her third husband died—maybe you check out what she's putting in his coffee after that, I don't know. I'm kidding. It doesn't mean that she could have only been married once. Remember when we saw in 1 Timothy 3 the qualifications for the spiritual leaders in the church? The pastors, the elders? It said, "...the husband of one wife." In the Greek that phrase literally means a one-woman man. It means that he's devoted only to his wife. I believe that basically what this is saying, and I could be wrong, you don't have to agree with me, that she is a good wife. So, she's over 60 and had been a devoted wife to her husband—she's been a good wife—and then she was a devout person. She lived a devoted life to her husband, and she is devout. Notice verse 10, "Well reported of for good works," so she has to have a reputation for being someone who is serving the Lord and devoted to God. These are the stipulations.

Notice it's broken down. I believe that verse 10 breaks down the concept of a devout life, "If she have brought up children," so she's a devoted wife, a devout wife, and a good mother. She was devoted to her children. If she neglected her children and just abandoned her husband, then

she's not to be supported or taken care of by the church. She's to be one who "...brought up children, if she have lodged strangers," which means that she has had a generous hospitality. She's shown hospitality. She opens her home and her heart. "...if she have washed the saints' feet," she's served others in the church, "if she have diligently followed every good work." He lays it all out there. She has to be over 60. She has to have been devoted to her husband, and good works include that she has a devout life, she's been a good mother, she's a generous, hospitable homemaker, and she's opened her home to serve and to help others.

Here's the contrast in verse 11, "But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry." The sin isn't that they remarry, the younger women, because that's perfectly legitimate, perfectly right, and actually encouraged by Paul here. The sin is that they make a commitment to serve in the church—they make a commitment to be devoted to Christ—and that commitment is neglected. They focus more on, "I just wanna get married. I just wanna do what I wanna do," and they don't follow through on their commitment. Notice the description (verse 11), "...for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; 12 Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. 13 And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers, also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." They just have too much time on their hands and become idlers, and their mouths begin to move and they cause division and strife.

In verse 14 Paul says, "I will therefore that the younger women," here it is, "marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." Here's some very detailed, specific instruction for younger women: get married, have children, guide the house and don't be influenced by satan. "For some are already turned aside after Satan. If any man or woman," I want you to notice in verse 16 that he's addressing this to both men and women, "that believeth," so if you're a man or a woman and you're a Christian, you believe, if you have a widow—a mother, a grandmother, a family member that needs your care and attention, "let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." Basically, what he's saying is, "Take care of your own family. Don't let the church be burdened with that. Don't let them have the responsibility of that."

I realize that we have a government today. We have government that takes care of us and so forth. We have Social Security and retirement and those kinds of things, but these principles still basically stand true. I believe that as a church, we should take care of each other. I believe that we should pray for and encourage each other. If someone's hungry, we should feed them. If someone needs clothes, we should clothe them. If someone needs a place to stay, we should open our homes and invite them in.

Do you know what the word "hospitality" means? You say, "Yeah! It means throwing a New Year's Eve party with all the people you really like. Having all your friends over." No. The word "hospitality" literally means loving strangers. We don't like that. It means to love strangers. It means to open our homes and our hearts and to reach out to people that we don't even know; so in the church, we need to reach out to one another, encourage one another, and seek to provide for one another. If you have family, then you should take care of your own family.

We move to the third division, that is, how to treat elders. First, how to relate to the older men, younger men, older women, younger women, specifically widows in the church; and now the third category is how to relate to the spiritual leaders, the other elders. "Let the elders that rule well," the word "elders" here in verse 17 means spiritual leaders. It doesn't mean old in age. It means that they are pastors, overseers, presbyters or bishops. "Let the elders that rule," the word means to stand before, so they oversee, they rule. They're not dictators but leaders. "...that rule well be counted worthy of double honour," there's the word "honour" again, by the way, the same word we got earlier in verse 3, "Honour widows that are widows indeed." Again, we get our word honorarium from it.

The word "honour" there means not just to honor them but to take care of them financially and materially. So, those that are spiritual leaders in the congregation—they rule, they lead, and they do it well. They're doing a good job—should "be counted worthy of double honour," some translations actually have double pay, "especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. 18 For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, the labourer is worthy of his reward. 19 Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. 20 Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

Go back with me to verse 17. Paul's talking about Timothy's relationship to other pastors and spiritual leaders and the elders of the church. He says that those who are doing a good job and those that are ruling well should get double honor. They should get double pay, and especially those, he specifies, "who labour in the word and in doctrine." This is a biblical truth, that those who labor in spiritual things by the congregation should have their physical needs taken care of. It is a biblical principle that is clear. I'm going to cite the references there from verse 18. I like that statement that they, "labour in the word and doctrine." In other words, these are the men who lead the church. They're doing a good job, and they're laboring. Now, the word "labour" means to toil until the point of being weary. It's wearisome toil. That's a way the word could be translated, wearisome toil. They actually work hard. They labor hard in the Word of God and in doctrine; so they're devoted, they're set apart, to spend their time studying and digging into God's Word.

Again, this is something that I think is being lost in the church today. We look at the pastor as being the man who just does all the committee meetings and financial meetings, goes to all the potlucks, you know, hangs out with everybody, goes to the hospital, and is the jolly fellow that kisses babies and things like that, hugs us in the foyer; but the pastor's number one calling and responsibility is not just to interact with the people but to labor in the Word and in doctrine. It's the study of God's Word. It's giving himself, devoted to, and studying the Word of God. That's so very important, and do it to the point where you actually become weary, "...and doctrine," his teaching and his preaching. What is he preaching? The Word of God. He's preaching the Word of God. It's so very important.

Remember in Acts 6 where, again, the widows were neglected? The apostles said, "Let's pick seven men who will be over these things because we want to do something. We want to be devoted to the Word of God and prayer. We want to make sure that is the priority of our focus—

the Word of God and prayer.” I believe the church will flourish when the spiritual leaders of the church are devoted to God’s Word and prayer, and that should be central in the ministries and life of the church. Notice what he cites for this point, the Scriptures (verse 18). Why should they be worthy of double honour, double pay? “For the scripture saith,” he’s quoting from Deuteronomy 25:4, “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.”

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 9, used the same passage when he was talking about the church supporting the minister and their giving to support the work of ministry. When he cites this passage from Deuteronomy, he asks a question. Does God care about oxen? And the answer is yes! Now, this passage in the book of Deuteronomy is actually all about oxen, that when you have an ox tied to the grinding wheel and they’re threshing out the wheat—so they have the threshing floor and the ox would go around and round and round and would roll the big weight, and it would thresh the wheat—the ox was to actually not be muzzled. Do you know why? So that that ox, who’s threshing that wheat, can reach down and take a bite. It’s kind of like if you work at McDonald’s, you ought to be able to have a Big Mac kind of a thing. You shouldn’t have it taken out of your salary or have to pay for it—if you’re working, that is, as long as you’re not just sitting around eating hamburgers all day. So, if that oxen is doing his job and working hard, he ought to be able to munch a bunch, you know. He ought to be able to reach down and take a big bite of grain. God cares about oxen. So, the New Testament picks that up and makes it very clear that it’s not just God’s concern about oxen but those who labor in the Word and doctrine and preach the Word. They should be provided for and taken care of as well. There’s nothing wrong with a minister having a job on the side if he’s a tentmaker and doesn’t want to take a salary from the church, but there’s nothing wrong with the church, and the congregation, taking care of its pastors and ministers. So, he quotes from Deuteronomy 25:4.

There’s a second reference in verse 18. It says, “And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.” Where does that come from? It actually comes from the lips of Jesus Christ in Luke 10:7 when Jesus commissioned 70 of His disciples to go out and to preach. When He commissioned them to go out and to preach, He said, “Don’t take your wallet with you. Don’t take your moneybag. Don’t take an extra coat.” He said, “Take one walking stick, and go. You don’t ask for anything, but whoever opens their home, go to that home and just eat whatever has been given to you. You don’t demand more, ask for more, or say, ‘I want more,’ you just take what’s provided for you.” Then He makes this statement, “...for the labourer is worthy of his hire,” or reward.

Remember that, too, by the way, when you’re paying the person that does a service for you. If somebody works on your automobile, you ought to gladly pay them. If someone paints your house, you ought to pay them for it. If someone mows your lawn, you ought to pay them for it. You don’t try to rip them off. You don’t try to get what you can from them. If someone renders you some service, then you own them. You should give to them. A laborer is worthy of his reward. No Christian ought to ever be found not paying somebody that, “Hey, I ripped them off! I got this and I didn’t have to pay them!” That’s not the way that a Christian should function. You should pay those who serve you. And, if someone is preaching and teaching the Word, and you’re instructed in the Word, then they are a laborer that’s worthy of their reward. That

comes from the very lips of Jesus, as I said, in Luke 10:7.

In verse 19, “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.” It’s so important that this be followed in the church. In the political realm and in our culture today just recently, we’ve been kind of aware of the situation where someone can bring an accusation against somebody and there’s no corroborating witness, yet people believe the accusation that’s being brought against them. Well, this is what the Scripture is actually saying, that if someone has an accusation, you’re not to believe it unless it be in the mouth of two or three witnesses. In Matthew 18:16, Jesus said if you’re going to approach somebody about an offense they have, you should take a witness with you, “...that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.”

There have been ministers that have had their ministries ruined by false accusations—by lies that have been promulgated about them—and that’s tragic. Now, a minister is a human. He’s not above reproach. He can make an error. He can fall, and there’s times that they need to be rebuked. There’s times they need to be disciplined. There’s times they need to be dealt with, but we need to make sure that the accusation that’s being brought against them is legit. A pastor ought to do all he can to live above reproach so that no accusations come, and if they come, they don’t stick. That’s what it means to be living above reproach, but be careful that you don’t receive an accusation against an elder unless it’s in the mouth of two or three witnesses. D.L. Moody said that a lie can run halfway around the world while the truth is just buckling its boots on, so a lie takes off pretty quick. It spreads really rapidly, and the truth is trying to catch up.

“Them that sin,” and in the context it would seem, and I can’t be dogmatic about it, but “Them that sin” would seem to be the elders or the pastor that sins, they do need to be rebuked “before all,” so public sin should have public rebuke. It should be brought before the congregation, and they should be rebuked. Some say the “Them” in verse 20 is a reference to the false witnesses—those who would bring a false accusation against a spiritual leader—that they should be rebuked. I think a better interpretation is, “Them that sin,” are the spiritual leaders, and they are to be rebuked before all. He gives us the reason in verse 20. Why? “...that others also may fear.” There is a time for there to be discipline upon a spiritual leader, and they do become disqualified from their ministry that they have held.

It’s interesting in Acts 6, when Ananias and Sapphira sinned and God smote them, they actually fell over dead and were carried out of church. You talk about radical, right? Aren’t you glad God doesn’t judge us like that today? No one would make it through a song service. We’re singing and all of the sudden people are slain in the Spirit but don’t get back up. They get drug out of church. The Bible says they were all fearful, “Wow! That’s radical!” God was judging their sin because God wants to maintain purity in the church.

There’s one last section, in closing, verses 21-25. This is not a particular group. He does deal with the ordination of elders in verse 22, but it’s one of the charges that you find in 1 Timothy. There’s five charges, this is charge number four. He says, “I charge thee before God, and the

Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. 22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. 23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." Some of you are going, "Praise God! That's a great verse!" That is a verse every wino has memorized, too, by the way. I'll come back to that.

"Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. 25 Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid." As I said, verse 21 is the fourth charge in the book of 1 Timothy. The first charge is in 1 Timothy 1:18-20. The second charge is in 1 Timothy 3:14-16. The third charge is in 1 Timothy 4:11-16. This charge means a solemn charge. It's the word used for being brought into a courtroom and given a solemn charge. Notice the witnesses are "...before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels," again, a very solemn charge that God is watching, that God is concerned, God will judge you. Pay attention to the solemn charge. It means to be put under a responsibility, "...that thou observe," the word "observe" means to guard or to watch out for, "these things," what things? The things that Paul had just explained and described to Timothy, and you do it "without preferring one before another," in other words, don't show any preferential treatment. Don't show any respect of persons. In the church, there's no place for showing respect of persons.

In verse 22, Paul says, "Lay hands suddenly on no man," what does that mean? It's actually talking about ordaining men to ministry. When they were to ordain a man to ministry, seeing the evidence of a call and the gifting on a man's life, they would actually pray for them by laying hands on them. There wasn't any transferring of a gift, it was a recognition of a gift that was given by God. When you lay hands on somebody, you're actually saying that you're joint participants with them, that you're endorsing their ministry, you're one with them in their ministry. If you're going to put somebody in the ministry, if you're going to ordain them to ministry by laying hands on them, recognize them, you better be sure that God has called them. You better make sure that God has gifted them. You better be sure that they have a servant's heart and that they are called by God to do that ministry. He's actually saying, "Don't be quick, don't be rash, don't be in a hurry to ordain and call someone to ministry." Don't "lay hands suddenly," or quickly, "on no man." My philosophy is, and in light of this verse I think it's biblical, that men who are called to ministry ought to be first proven. They ought to show evidence of Christian character and devotion to God and to His Word, that they meet the qualifications for an elder in 1 Timothy 3, that they love their wives, are above reproach, are men of purity and devotion who know the Word and are able to teach and meet those qualifications.

If you come to the church, we don't want to put people into ministry quickly. We want to get to know you. I get people all the time, "Hey, you know, can I do this? Hey, can I do that? Hey, I just came to your church, would you like me to preach for you next Sunday?" I don't even know who you are. "That's okay, I'm a preacher." They show me a little clergy card, you know. It's like, "I've got to get to know you first." I've had people say, "I'm a prophet. Can I speak at your

church?" I say, "We're a nonprofit corporation." I've had Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah all approach me, all wanting to preach. Don't lay hands on anybody suddenly. Even in our Children's Ministry, even in our ministries of church, we don't want people being ushers or Sunday School teachers or greeters unless we know who you are, and you know who we are, you are called and God has put His hand on your life. You can't just put anyone in any ministry, you have to make sure that they're called by God. So, "Lay hands suddenly on no man."

Do you know what Jesus did before He chose His disciples? It says He went to a high mountain and spent the whole night praying before He called the twelve. Here's Jesus, the Son of God, He's gotta pick twelve guys and spends all night praying to God the Father that He would have wisdom in choosing the right person. It's interesting, and part of God's divine plan and purpose that of those 12, one of them was Judas Iscariot. There will always be people who disappoint us. Let me say this, that you always want to make sure that you keep your eyes on God, not on men. You can love and respect your leaders, but you don't worship them, you don't venerate them. They're to be honored, but they're not to be worshiped or put in a place where God alone is to be put. You never want to do that because all of our leaders have feet of clay and any one will disappoint you at some point in time, so you need to keep your eyes on the Lord.

I meet people all the time that have been offended by some pastor or some stumbling leader and, "I don't go to church anymore." They let someone else keep them from serving or loving God. That's a real tragedy. You gotta be careful to keep your eyes always on the Lord; and if a man is a true spiritual leader, he will be pointing you to keep your focus on Jesus Christ. So, he says, "Lay hands suddenly on no man," because if they go awry, you become "partaker of other men's sins," and I love the end of verse 22, "...keep thyself pure." It's so very important. A pure and holy minister is a powerful weapon in the hand of God. Remember when Samuel the prophet, too, by the way, was going to quickly anoint Eliab to be the next king of Israel, but he was mistaken. It wasn't the outward appearance but that God looked on the heart.

When Paul says, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities," it is so clear that this is for medicinal purposes. This is for medical purposes. Now, it is true that the Bible doesn't flat out completely forbid you to drink wine, but it does forbid drunkenness. In this case, Timothy evidently had stomach problems and the water that he was drinking...and he was practicing abstinence because when you read the qualifications for a spiritual leader, it says, "Not given to wine," or one that tarries long at the wine, so no doubt he had practiced abstinence. He was drinking water, and it was not healthy for him. It was detrimental to his stomach problem, which by the way, and this is a footnote...I gotta wrap this up. I really wanted to spend a little more time on this verse, believe it or not, and that is, that God's servants and God's people can get sick. Notice that Paul doesn't rebuke Timothy for a lack of faith and say, "Man! What a lousy Christian you are. If you just had more faith and you just spoke your healing, you wouldn't have a bad stomach." No. He actually prescribes medicine for him. He actually says, "...but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities," which indicates not only can Christians get sick but, secondly, there's nothing unscriptural or unspiritual with taking medication. If God has given doctors and doctors can

prescribe a medicine that can help you, thank God for that! God is the Healer of our bodies, right? If God provides the medicine, then you can take it and be healed. So, he tells Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake and his often infirmities.

In closing, Paul describes that "Some men's sins are open beforehand," it's clear what they're doing is wrong and they will be judged for that (verse 24), but there's some that won't be exposed for their sin until they stand before God on judgment day. There are some people that keep it covered, but God sees and God knows. He's actually saying in these closing verses to Timothy that God sees, God knows, and you'll have to answer to God someday. In verse 25, "Likewise also the good works of some are manifest," or seen right now, "beforehand," it's obvious that God is using their lives, "and they that are otherwise cannot be hid." What does that mean? It means that there are others that are doing a good work. They're being used by God, and no one knows it, no one sees it, no one recognizes it. They get no honor, they get no recognition, but guess what's going to happen? God sees it, God knows, God will honor them, and God will reward them. Amen? That's the most important thing. You never serve for the recognition and appreciation of men. You always serve for the recognition and the appreciation of God. God is the One that rewards you. You don't give up serving the Lord because you don't get your picture in the foyer, "The Servant of the Month" at Revival Christian Fellowship and everybody claps for you and you get to wear a big badge and everyone pats you on the head.

Do you know the human body is real sensitive, too. When you pat it on the back, the head swells. Now, it's great to encourage those that are being used by God, but it's also very, very, very dangerous. I do appreciate people saying, "Oh, Pastor Miller, thank you," and all that stuff, but I also have to make sure that I let it just pass by me and I don't start believing everything I hear. God knows my heart and that we stay humble, and what we need to really look for is that day when we hear those words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant...enter thou into the joy of thy lord." You may not get any recognition, you may not get any veneration, but God sees, God knows, and God will reward you. Amen?