

Thursday, January 19, 2023 • Read 1 Timothy 5:3–4

Questions from the Scripture text: Whom are they to honor (v3)? Making what distinction? What would make her not “really” a widow (v4)? What should these children and grandchildren show? Where? By doing what to whom? Why?

What are we to learn from the fact that there are some widows whom the church is not to honor by putting them on the roll of receiving diaconal funds? 1 Timothy 5:3–4 looks forward to the second reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord’s Day. In these two verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **a true widow is one who has no children or grandchildren to take care of her, because the home (not the church) is the first place for showing piety.**

“Honor widows who are really widows.” The “honor” referred to here is material provision, as shown by the word “repay” in v4. Material provision is a great concern for a woman who loses the husband who had provided for her. Material provision for widows was the concern upon which the Spirit instituted the diaconate in the church (cf. Acts 6:1–7).

So, it may be jarring at first to read the second part of that, “who are really widows.” What makes one “truly” do be a widow? The answer appears in v4. The widowhood of her who has children or grandchildren is a providential gift to them: an opportunity “to repay their parents.” The widowhood of her who has no other means of provision is an opportunity for the church to take care of her as if she were their mother and grandmother. It is an opportunity for congregational obedience to the v2 principle in the context of money rather than the context of the mouth.

“let them first learn to show piety at home.” Just as the father/brother/mother/sister language of vv1–2 implies a certain manner of speech at home as a prerequisite to godly speech in the congregation, so a proper approach to diaconal aid in the church begins with a proper approach to diaconal aid in the home.

What is this proper approach? It is seeking to be a blessing, not only spiritually but materially, to every other person in the household. We have seen in our study of wealth how a righteous man desires to provide what he can not only for his current family but even for future generations. But now we see that the reverse is also true. It is “pleasing” (what NKJ translates “acceptable”) to God for children to be on the lookout for ways to repay their parents.

Proverbs frequently urges us to consider what gladdens a father or gladdens a mother. The head of the second table of the law is to honor father and mother. It is plainly obvious that repaying them however we can is something that pleases God. But in God’s ordinary providence, they are ahead of us in life, and we are not able to do them much material good for most of our own life. So, if the Lord takes father ahead of mother, He often opens a door for us to de-widow her widowhood. We have an opportunity to repay the father that we have lost by providing for his treasured wife, and we have an opportunity to repay the mother whom God has spared to us by being the consolation of her widowhood.

The church is not to take away spiritual opportunities. Because this may be received as hard, it is important for deacons to commend to the surviving family members the Holy Spirit’s logic in v4: you have an opportunity to please God by repaying your parents; there is a priority upon practicing your holy religion every day in your home before you make to practice it in the church.

Even before our parents die, let us seek to do them what good we can. Spiritual good. Material good. Every good. For, this pleases God. And with not just our parents, but with our entire household, let us take to heart this principle about our practice of godliness: let us first learn to show our godliness at home. Let us pursue that godliness that pleases God, rather than the desire to be seen by the church as godly.

Whom do you have in your home? How are you practicing your godliness in love and sacrificial service to them? Whom do you know in church who does not have anyone in her/his home? What opportunities are you taking, personally, to be part of God’s consolation to them in the place of family members?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for giving us homes in which to practice our godliness first. Forgive us for how sometimes we are slowest to repay those whom You have made to be greater gifts to us than others are. Forgive us for wanting to be seen as godly by the eyes of the church rather than keeping our eyes out for the godliness that You love. Wash away our guilt by the blood of Christ, and make us holy as He is holy, for we ask it in Christ’s Name, AMEN!

ARP128 “How Blessed Are All Who Fear the Lord” or TPH128B “Blest the Man That Feared Jehovah”

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

First, Timothy 5 verses 3-4. These are God's words. Honor widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, Let them first learn to show piety at home. And to repair their parents. For this is good and acceptable. Before god. So, for the reading of god's inspired and inherent word,

The honor and verse 3 goes two ways. First, it is.

The honor and verse 3 goes two ways. First, it is an extension of that honor that he's describing in verses 1 and 2. There's a special. Respect for. Gentleness dignity to be afforded to. Those who are widows. Widows in common society are a lower class. Widows. The church society or to be the upper class.

The ones who are Treated as the greatest nobility.

The other form of honor. Is the owner of providing materially for the widow? And this was, of course, the honor of her husband. This privilege is pleasure. And his duty. But now her husband is gone. And there is a number, a role a list. Of those widows who are being Maintained by the church.

Not just, Maintain so that they have enough to eat. You remember the daily distribution in which the Deactivate begin. But maintained that she Can continue to be a woman. Of dignity and not be. Uh, brought low in earthly terms. By her widowhood. Although she is brought low in. Affliction.

But a widow who is truly a widow, as we're going to see not so much. And the part of being truly a widow in this passage, but in Um, the forthcoming passages in the rest of the chapter. She is actually brought not low but high, but up. By her bereavement by her widowhood.

For a true widow is Who has learned that the lord is all her pleasure. And by his taking, her husband, to be with With him. Assuming here's a Christian husband. Or relieving her. Of the grief of living with an unbelieving lesbian, He directs her attention entirely to himself. More on that.

When we come to consider verse 5 and following next week, This week. However, It may be shocking to the church to know. That there are women, who could lose their husband. And, He would ask. Uh, the church for financial help. And deacons would say no. Not because they aren't needy but because they have children and grandchildren.

Honor with those who are really with us. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn. To show piety at home. And so, She may be. A widow in that, her husband has died. But she's not truly or really a widow. If she has children or grandchildren for the lord has spared to her.

Those who should be. Taking care. Of her.

And the principle. Behind. This is one that we have seen throughout the book of first Timothy That the first place that we were to show godliness is at home. That before an elder may be. An elder in the congregation, or a deacon may be a deacon in the congregation.

You must first be a godly husband. And a godly father. And the godly head of household. That this is the first place of demonstrating his godliness. And that if he does not excel in these Then he is not even to be considered for the pastor. And of course, just last week in The opening verses of chapter 5 we saw.

That this is not merely instructing. Uh, type of relating or communication respect within the congregation. It's presuming that by god's grace. These things have first been done in the home. And it does have to be by god's grace, doesn't it? When you think about, Godliness in interaction between husband and wife and parent and child.

And master and servant. You remember, especially i think the end of ephesians 5 in the beginning of Ephesian 6. That just Right there, in that big argument in the last third. Of Ephesians. That is. Um, the discussion. Consideration of darkness versus light which begins, which is picked up in chapter 5 and spiritual war.

Uh, which goes into in chapter 6. And so, There is the grace of godliness. That is first and foremost shown at home piety. Our religious devotion to god and the Acts that flow from it. Uh, is to be first shown at home. And when god gives, A family the opportunity to take care of their mother.

The church is not to take that away from them. Or let them. Take it away from themselves by trying to put it on somebody else. We consider people body and soul, and we understand. The necessity and weightiness and spiritual. And the lord and his providence is giving something heavy, but something good and heavy.

To a family. When the father dies and the husband dies. And the goodness of it, then is to be communicated by the church. Since this is, A principal or a policy that is shocking in. The ears, and the mind of, A culture and a church culture in which spiritual things.

Are not first and foremost. The providence of god is not to be is not generally considered and what it is considered. It's not necessarily considered to be good or we don't see Him giving spiritual opportunity to believers. Left and right and everywhere. Um, It is important that the church build a culture.

Of seeing. The goodness of god and providing spiritual opportunity, and that the home Is the first place for it. Let them first learn to show piety at home. Now, i think that we have at times sometimes, In our home done. By god's grace fairly well and remembering. Not necessarily acting upon.

But knowing That the most important thing in a child's life. Is learning to live before the face of god, that the spiritual training of the child is more important than anything else. Nutrition. Physical safety. Uh, let alone ridiculous, things like that. The child be amused or not be annoying to me right now.

But one of the things that perhaps we have not thought enough about Is that this does not. Cease to be the case. When a child is converted. Or learns to behave, manageably. The most important thing in every one of our lives. All day every day. Is living well before god showing our godliness at home.

When you guys are in the midst of school and everybody is annoying. Everybody else. And The few that just happened to be working really hard. In a particular moment are very self-righteously indignant that everybody else is bothering them. And it's not necessarily all the same people. Clicking on any particular view.

Just saying. The most important thing. For you. And you're doing your school is To do it well to the glory of god to be considerate. Of your brother and sister to be patient with the provoking brother and sister. For the one who's provoking. The, the most important thing is to be thoughtful.

Of your brother or sister prefer them ahead of yourself. Submissive to your mom. Cheerful. And diligent in your duty. Seeking to, Seeking to make the most of the time. Etc. And then when somebody has a need, You see it as And assigned moment from god. An opportunity to, to give to help even to sacrifice.

But you don't often have opportunity to repay your parents. You come into the world way behind them. They are physically and financially at a great advantage at first. And if the lord spares you both, And you get an opportunity to repay your parents. Then you see it? That's a way of saying thank you to god, who gave you?

Those parents? And thank you to the parents. For whatever extent to which They took care of you and helped you. And in most cases, it is very great. With. Similar by analogy though. Infinitesimally smaller by Intensity. To our desire to repay christ. You remember, when he said, love one, another as i have loved you and he gives the new commandment and jump 13.

And immediately he says, where i'm going, you cannot come. And he talks about going to the father and how they cannot follow him. Now though. Follow him later and the two are related. Because the lord jesus is not only just washed their feet. But he is about to go to the cross the next day.

And the spirit giving someone. Life. Honest to see and i'm heart and mind to know the lord jesus and to trust the lord jesus. To realize who he is, what he has done. We want to repay. But we can't. First of all. Can't reach him. Second of all, if we could, what could we do for him?

The time of his neediness is over. But he is united to his church. And the time of their neediness is not over. And so he gives away to repay him. Love one another as i have loved you. Obviousness. Even a cup of cold water. Given in his name. Any good deed.

Done to any of his littlest ones. He receives just unto himself. And so there's that motivation, that Here is an opportunity to repay one who i really don't have the ability or access to repay. Ordinarily. Well. Similarly, with the widow. Here in Verse 4. This is how. Her children and her grandchildren.

Should think. About her bereavement. Here's an opportunity. For me to repay one who has done so much given so much. Poured out her life, sacrificed her life for me. I am not able to sacrifice my life for her in the way. She had sacrificed her life for me. But i am able to give a couple hours of my day.

I am able to give Yeah. Certain percentage of my income. To take care of her. I am able to set her up. Not merely to make sure she is. Fed. And Um, and clothed. But that she can live with the dignity that a queen and Israel shouldn't have.

And so, Let them first learn to show my idea at home. And he adds to the repayment of parents, the pleasing of god. For this is good and acceptable before not So, you're not only repaying your parents. You are. Provoking him who loves to reward on the principle of grace.

What you do, that is pleasing is not meritorious. In itself. Jesus as a meritorious. But, What you do that is pleasing, the lord loves to reward for the sake of his son. And we love to, please him. Who has made us into his redeemed, us. So, that's Setting. That's setting the context and the tone.

For the next couple of passages in this chapter. In which we're really going to be thinking about the kind of life. That finds its pleasure in pleasing, the lord. And how that applies to not just with us families like in today's passage, But widows themselves. And then, Uh, The kind of life that aims, not at pleasing self.

But pleasing the lord for a younger woman, The training years. So that when she does come to me, 60 years old, like a true widow in this chapter. That she will have the heart and mind and not easily. Fall out of it. But more on that. In in weeks to come Lord willing.

Let's pray. Lord, we pray that in our house. The first thing. Would be to show piety. That we would love you that. Our religion would be something that. You have produced by your spirit from our hearts and so fills. The day-to-day. Hour to hour. Of what we do. That would not be something that is merely outward for show whether Um, At times when Uh, we are gathered for worship as a family.

Or just when we are gathered with the congregation. But that we would be mindful of you and seeking to do what pleases you. And that this would be our piety. Lord help us to. Develop this skill of mind. Where we see the spiritual opportunities, you are giving us. In situations that the flesh or the natural man would call hard.

But with your spirit presents as opportunities for godliness, We thank you for providing for them. Forgive us for being. So dull of sight. That the spiritual cataracts of our fleshliness. Keep us from seeing The chances that you are giving us. To repay and to please you Help us father.

Give us clarity of vision from your work. And give us warm hearts. That are always remembering how good you have been to us. The sacrifice that could never be fully repaired. So that we might have from your spirit lying to us your son, the pleasure. That we would take pleasure in doing whatever we can for you.

You pray that you would. Help us to heed your word. And be shaped by it. For we are so needy of it to put o. Lord, you are so kind and good. And powerful. To. Accommodate provide for us what we need. Do so we ask him jesus name. Amen.