



1 Timothy

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Therefore I desire that *the* younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. 1 Timothy 5:14

Paul now continues to refer to the widows he has been speaking of. Some versions incorrectly state “younger women,” as if the verse is referring to all young women. This is incorrect. He has been speaking of the widows, and the conjunction translated as “therefore” continues to identify these widows now. Understanding this, he says “Therefore I desire that *the* younger widows marry.” In order to avoid the serious pitfalls which he has identified, Paul gives his will for them to consider. He does not state this as a command, but rather, as an apostle of Christ, guided by the Spirit, and with a detailed understanding of human nature, he explains what path he feels is best for the younger widow.

If they were to pursue a life of asceticism, and to openly renounce marriage in order to serve the Lord, and then if they failed at that high and noble calling, they would only bring discredit upon themselves, and upon the Lord, to whom they had made their vow. In order to keep from such a thing occurring, he would have them “marry, bear children, manage the house” according to the natural way of the world, fulfilling the role of a spouse and mother in a new family. In this, Paul definitively shows that a second marriage is in no way to be considered inappropriate or ungodly. Instead, remarriage in this case is to be considered the right and proper course. The natural state for a younger woman is to have children and to manage a home, and this is what Paul would recommend for the younger widows as well.

In doing these things, the widow will “give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.” The word translated as “adversary” is one which is used for the last of eight times in Scripture, all by Luke or Paul. It means to “lie opposite” and thus to be adverse,

contrary, or in opposition. Therefore, Paul is referring to those who would find a cause to slander the Christian faith because of the woman who made a vow to dedicate herself to Christ, and then who later took a path contrary to that vow. This would be one who fits the words of verses 11-13. In her specific actions, there has been a chance to bring accusation against the faith in general. The next verse will show where such an attitude is derived from, and why it is such an effective means of discrediting the faith.

Life application: Although Paul's words are not a command, they reflect both the intent of God, and a right understanding of human nature. A widow may feel she is somehow betraying her dead husband by remarrying, but this is not the case. Instead, after her time of mourning is past, she is following the correct and proper path to pursue a reestablished family life, and to fulfill the role of wife, mother, and manager of the house as is right and proper for the woman of God.

For some have already turned aside after Satan. 1 Timothy 5:15

Paul now gives the result of what he warned against in verses 11 through 13. Some widows had left their profession of devotion to the Lord which they made when they became widows. Instead, they had turned, growing wanton against Christ. This is exactly the reason for having implored the younger widows to marry, bear children, and manage the house. In this, there would be no opportunity for the adversary to speak reproachfully.

What is important to understand, is that the very reason for writing these words to Timothy was because this situation had already arisen. Instead of following Christ, they had "turned after Satan." This does not mean that there is a loss of salvation. It means that their lives would be judged according to their actions which were lived contrary to Christ. This is made explicit in the examples of 1 Corinthians 5, and which penalty is summed up in verse 5 of that chapter, and then, Paul again uses the same terminology in chapter 1 of this epistle. In verse 20 Paul told Timothy that he had handed Hymenaeus and Alexander over to Satan "that they may learn not to blaspheme." In both of those cases, no loss of salvation can be inferred. Rather, Paul's words indicate a corrective measure.

In the case of these widows, they had left the path of the Lord, and they had turned after Satan. In following that path, they would suffer both in this life, and they would suffer loss in the next, but a saved person is saved. To say that one must do something in order to "keep" being saved is to nullify salvation by grace through faith. Either salvation is by grace through faith once and for all time, or it is a false doctrine. And it is certainly not a false doctrine.

To grasp this, just be honest and answer the question, "Have you ever told a lie since coming to Christ?" The answer is probably "Yes." Pretty much every saved believer has. But is telling a

lie following after Christ, or is it following after Satan? Jesus said of the devil, "When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it" (John 10:44). If one were to say that Paul's words concerning these widows indicated a loss of salvation, then logically, he would be saying the same thing about himself. Whether one turns aside for a lengthy period, or one turns aside for a short period is irrelevant. If you have lied, you have turned aside after Satan. Doctrine matters, and doctrine is logical and orderly because God is logical and orderly.

Life application: Paul's words are often so easily misunderstood because they are taken out of the greater context of his writings. Keep things in context, study the entire body of Paul's letters, and use logic and order when considering the nature of God, the nature of salvation, and the consequences of being disobedient to the Lord. In having sound doctrine, you will also have soundness in your walk with the Lord.