

# Lessons From I Timothy

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## Handling Honorable & Dishonorable Elders

(I Ti 5:17-20)

### INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening,
  - a. Greetings...
2. Series of "Lessons From I Timothy."
  - a. Two weeks ago we looked at "Widows Indeed."
    - i. **I Ti 5:3** "Honor widows that are widows indeed."<sup>1</sup> (ASV)
  - b. This week we are going to be looking into "Handling Honorable & Dishonorable Elders."
    - i. **I Ti 5:17-20** "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages." 19 Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 20 As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear."
3. Paul, having just explained to Timothy about how the church in Ephesus was to help widows, now focus his attention on the elders within the eldership.
  - a. Specifically how to properly handle elders that are shepherding as they should and how to handle elders that are not shepherding as they should.

### I. Honorable Elders

- A. These are elders that "rule well"
  1. The word **rule** literally means "to stand before."
    - i. Thus these elders rule by leading the congregation not pushing it from behind.
  2. The word **well** holds the sense of morality.
    - i. Thus these elders are ones that stand before congregation and lead the congregation with morality.
- B. These morally leading shepherds are worthy of "double honor"
  1. The word **honor** is an interesting word.
    - i. It is translated several ways in the ESV & NKJV a few of them are...
      - a. Honor, value, price, money, sum, precious, proceeds...
    - ii. Thus to honor means to place a value on someone or something.
  2. The word **double** here has three possible meanings.
    - i. It could be referring to an emphasis on respect.
      - a. **Ac 28:10** "They also honored us with many honors..." (LEB)
    - ii. It could be referring to an emphasis on monetary gain.
      - a. **I Ti 5:18** "**For** the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,' and, 'The laborer deserves his wages.' " (emphasis mine)

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<sup>1</sup> All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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- iii. It could be referring to both types of honor.
  - a. The respectable and monetary types.
- 3. It seems, to me, that both types are under consideration.
- C. The morally leading shepherds are worthy of “protection”
  - 1. Elders can be falsely accused.
    - i. It is both the preacher’s job and each Christian’s job to protect an elder or elders from accusations of sin.
      - a. Good elders can be destroyed by a lack of back bone by a preacher and/or members who won’t stand up against those that might falsely accuse.
        - 1. Example: My Papa was asked by a gentleman to go with him to accuse an elder of sin. My grandpa told the man he was not a witness to this sin and could not go with the man.
      - b. **I Ti 5:19** “Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.”
  - 2. Elders can sin and do sin from time to time.
    - i. When sin is found the witnesses and the preacher are to go to the elder(s) and tell them their faults so they may have the opportunity to repent.
      - a. **Lk 17:3** “Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him”
      - b. **Mt 18:15** “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.”
    - ii. Example: I know a preacher who had to go to one of his elders and explain he had sinned and was in need of repentance. To that elders credit he went forward and repented.
      - a. **I Jn 1:8-9** “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
- D. Thus...
  - 1. Preachers in particular are to make sure they give elders that rule well the proper protection and respect due them and if needed, they make sure they are being supported financially for their labor.

## II. Dishonorable Elders

- A. These are the elders that “don’t rule well”
  - 1. Not every elder in every eldership will find himself “ruling well.”
    - i. **Ac 20:28-29** “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock”
- B. These elders are those that “persist in sin”

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1. They are not to be protected by the preacher.
    - i. **I Ti 5:20** “As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.”
  2. Unfortunately occasionally preachers will look the other way when an elder(s) is persisting in sin.
    - i. Sometimes “family ties” can affect judgment towards elders who persist in sin.
      - a. More than one congregation has fallen by the wayside because relatives of the elder in sin would not stand against their “family member.”
    - ii. Sometimes “friendships” can affect judgment towards elders who persist in sin.
      - a. This is less likely but still happens much more often than it should.
  3. Preacher can let neither family ties nor friendship stand in the way of rebuking an elder in need of rebuking.
    - i. **II Ti 4:2** “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”
- C. Thus...
1. Preachers have a responsibility to God over man and they are expected by God to stand up for righteousness no matter the circumstances.

### CONCLUSION

1. Brothers and sisters let us seek to always understand the Word of God and His expectations for us and His church.
  - a. When elders are once again appointed here in this fine congregation let us make certain we are ready to help them and honor them as we should.
2. Question: Are you striving to be the best Christian you possibly can be so that when we get elders one day you will be a blessing to them rather than a burden?
  - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
  - b. If not why not?
3. Invitation
  - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
    - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
  - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
    - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
    - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
    - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
    - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
    - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
    - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**