

BIBLE TEXT | 1 TIMOTHY 5:1-2

1 Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, **2** older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.

DEVOTIONAL FOR 1 TIMOTHY 5:1-2

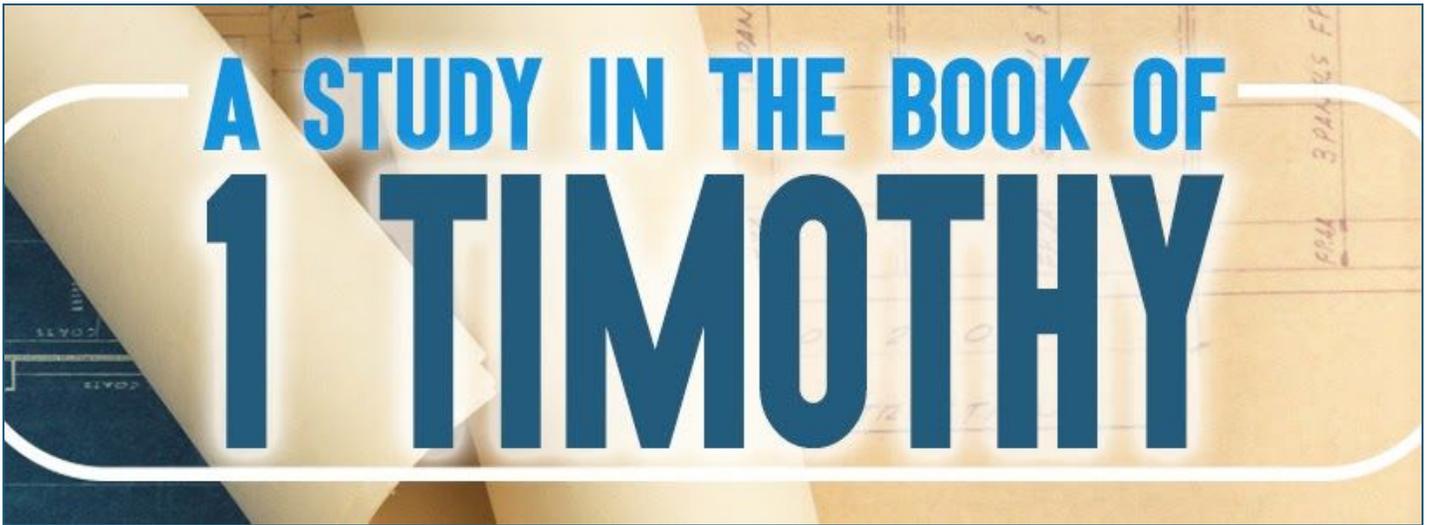
AUTHOR: CLAUDIA OLIVER

When I began to study the scripture for this devotional, I kept questioning myself. This is too straightforward. I must be missing something. I read, I watched other pastors, and I listened to commentaries, all of which lasted maybe 3 minutes. I will be honest, I was struggling with what to say. Then, I was reminded to "Keep it simple, stupid!"

Paul is giving Timothy instructions for the church and how he is to treat people in the church. He is to give proper respect to older men as they have more life experience and are presumed wiser. He is not to rebuke them harshly, but should appeal to them gently. He is to treat younger men as brothers. I think of rough housing, laughing and relating together. Timothy can be more direct with them and treat them as equals. Older women should be treated as mothers with special consideration and respect. Additionally, Timothy should accept a little "mothering" from older women. Younger women should be treated as sisters, in all purity. The conduct of Timothy toward younger women is to be pure and above reproach, not flirtatious or provocative.

God showed me 2 important things while working on this. First, this simple, straightforward text can also be the most difficult to obey.

Second, the word "rebuke" is found throughout the Bible (i.e. Job 13:10; Luke 17:3; Mark 8:32). Proverbs 27:5 says, "Better is open rebuke than hidden love." In each of the previous verses, "rebuke" means to convey in a less aggressive manner; to show someone their sin; to expose, to convict, to show wisdom with caring words. However, in 1 Timothy 5:1, the word "rebuke" is translated differently. The Greek word means to aggressively beat someone up with your words; to be sharp, insensitive, to strike. Timothy is not to "rebuke" the older men in this manner! In fact, we



are all called to share the truth of God's Word and to admonish one another, but to do so gently, in love (Ephesians 4:15; Galatians 6:1).

Although Paul is talking to Timothy in these two verses, they apply to all of the church. Me included. We are called to respect one another, encourage one another, and treat each other as brothers and sisters.

Questions:

1. Why do you think a straightforward text in God's word can be the most difficult to obey?
2. Since we are the family of God, how are we to treat one another? Use Scripture to support your answer. Do you respect all age groups and both sexes?
3. What biblical concept is straightforward, but difficult for you to obey? Share this with your Journey Group.