



BIBLE TEXT | 1 TIMOTHY 5:17-25

17 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. **21** In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality. **22** Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure. **23** (No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.) **24** The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later. **25** So also good works are conspicuous, and even those that are not cannot remain hidden.

DEVOTIONAL FOR 1 TIMOTHY 5:17-25

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One of the greatest feelings you will have as a parent is when you are approached by someone in a public setting and told how polite and respectful your children are. It gives you affirmation that all your work hasn't been for nothing. However, in my line of work, we often see people at their worst. You see how people have a lack of respect for authority and often you have to deal with the fallout where they have hurt and neglected the very people that may have raised them. However, occasionally you run into people who behave in a way that honors their family and gives you faith that there is still hope for younger generations.

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF 1 TIMOTHY

When you hear the word elder, there are several things that may come to mind based on your upbringing. For most of us, the word elder will mean someone who is older than you such as parents or grandparents. For others, it will also mean the leaders of the church. The one thing that should remain the same no matter what your definition of the word is that you should respect your elders. Through exposure to the world from social media and a lack of parental guidance due to a shift in household priorities, there has been a decline in respect by younger generations. This is evidenced by their treatment of elders privately as well as in social settings. 1 Timothy 5:17-25 addresses this and gives us guidelines on how we need to behave towards them.

As in previous verses where Paul discusses the proper treatment of widows in the church, in verses 17-25 he discusses the treatment of elders in the church. Paul tells Timothy to "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor" (1 Timothy 5:17). God tells us to watch our elders and leaders who speak the word to us and see the outcome of their lives so that we can imitate them (Hebrews 13:7). He goes on to say that we should obey and submit to our leaders for they have to give account for us (Hebrews 13:17). Elders often have a wealth of life experience and can be a great asset but only if you take advantage of the knowledge and advice they can provide. If you ignore them and disrespect them, then you learn nothing from the lessons and mistakes that they have made before you.

Paul goes on to describe how to handle sin and conflict with your elders. You are not to speak hastily based on your personal feeling or partiality, but instead based on evidence observed by you and two or three witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19-20). During times of confrontation and conflict, it is easy to feel wronged or attacked by another but once you gain perspective on the incident you will often see that was not the intent. If you and your witnesses feel that you have been sinned against, then you are to confront them in the presence of others to hold them accountable for their actions (Matthew 18:15-17).

Questions:

1. Do you have any elders in your life that have influenced you, if not how can you seek out the council of elders in your community?
2. Has there ever been a situation where you felt wronged by your elders, but after perspective, discovered that was not the intent? What did you learn from the situation?
3. Based on 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and 5:17-25, in terms of elders as church leadership, what are the overarching requirements of this position? Is it a big deal to be an elder of the church? What specifically does chapter 5 emphasize?