

# A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF 1 TIMOTHY

## BIBLE TEXT | 1 TIMOTHY 5:3-16

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**3** Honor widows who are truly widows. **4** But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God. **5** She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, **6** but she who is self-indulgent is dead even while she lives. **7** Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. **8** But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. **9** Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband, **10** and having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work. **11** But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry **12** and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith. **13** Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not. **14** So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. **15** For some have already strayed after Satan. **16** If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows.

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## DEVOTIONAL FOR 1 TIMOTHY 5:3-16

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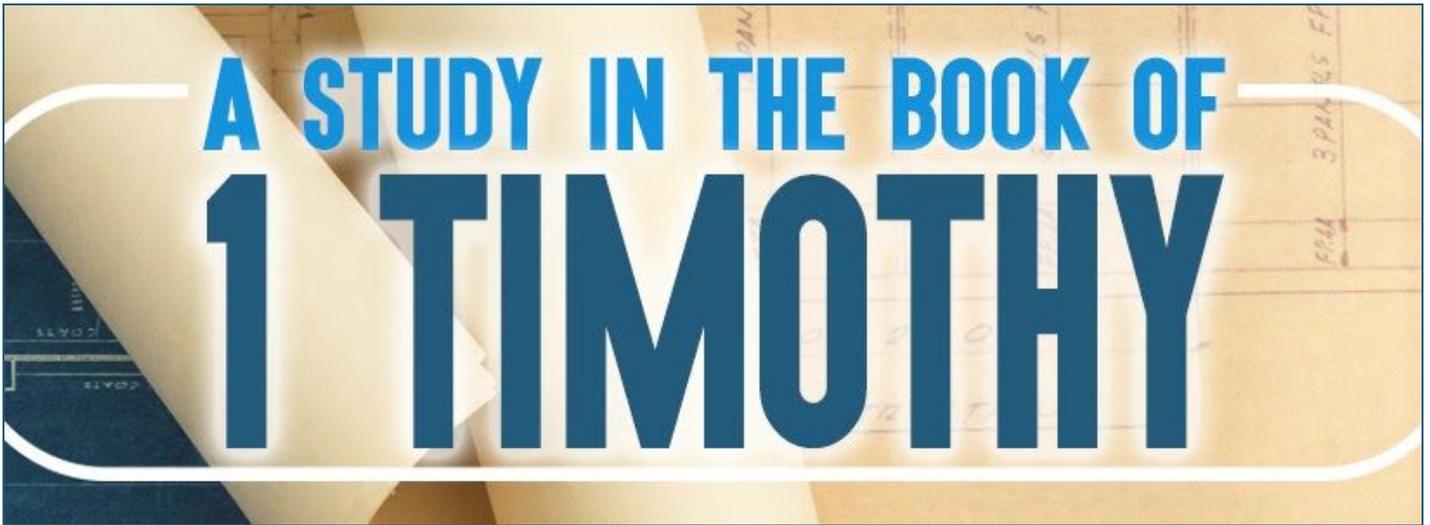
When I started to pray through how to begin this devotional, I could not wrap my head around verse 3. "Honor widows who are truly widows." In my mind, a widow is truly a widow. But as Paul is explaining this deeper to Timothy, it helped me understand.

Verses 4-7 states that a "true" widow (per this passage) is not someone who has children or grandchildren who will care for her. The problem with our culture is that family has been dispersed all over the known world. Children move away to further their careers, go to college, or start a life of their own. Grandchildren are even farther removed in today's culture. Back then, family was everything. When I say everything, I mean they lived in the same small shed as everyone else. We are talking little living space. The average house was probably more like our storage sheds where we store our "extra stuff". It was easy to take care of a widow because she lived with you. It was a natural thing for the children to take care of their parents. This is not as natural in our culture. It could mean that a widow has children who send her money, but what about the relational piece when it comes to family? The church needs to step in and "care for" the widow in that way. In our culture, a woman can become a widow with children still living because they could be living on the other side of the world.

A "true" widow has a personal relationship with Jesus (Luke 12:31). She is leaning on Christ to fill any voids in her life. The primary concern in this passage is to identify which widows should be provided for by the church. There seem to be two qualifications: 1) not having other family (1 Timothy 5:4-8,16), and 2) godliness.

Paul also states that a widow does not live to simply please herself or become comfortable. She is one who was faithful to her husband and family. A widow is respected by everyone because of her faith. Before the church considers helping, it needs to be established if she has found the favor of all people (similar to the early church in Acts 2). Paul brings up qualifying questions to consider. A widow is one that has no desire to be married again. A widow is one who is content with her lot in life.

Obviously as believers, we want to be generous like Jesus. It should be our constant prayer: Lord please give us guidance and wisdom that only you can provide (Proverbs 2:6)! We, as a church and believers in Christ, need to meet the needs that are put before us. Jesus gave his life for us. It is a small price to give our possessions to others. Let us humble ourselves before the Lord and remember all we have is His and we are called to steward it well (Matthew 25:14-30).



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## Questions:

1. How can we use this as a guideline for our own lives?
2. If there are people you know around you with needs, are you willing to help them? What keeps you from being more generous?
3. Is your heart hardened over this topic of giving? If so, reach out to someone in your Journey Group or another believer to pray with you over this.