



First Timothy

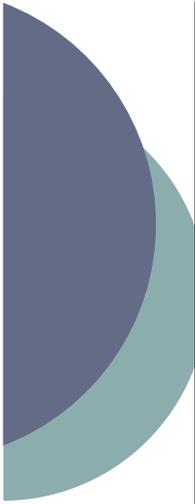
True Help

Take Care of Your Own

I Timothy 5:16

Lesson Twenty-Four

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum



First Timothy

A Study of the First Letter of the Apostle Paul to His Son in the Faith

True Help

In this lesson, we are going to study only one verse. It is such an important verse and has so much truth and guidance in it, we will dedicate a whole lesson to the study. It leads us to some very helpful ways of relating and helping others. Read I Timothy 5:16.

The first thing to address is why Paul spoke only to Christian women when talking about the family taking responsibility for widows. There are several ways of understanding this. First, all that Paul is saying in this letter is directed to Timothy and church members. So it would seem only right that men would be responsible for what is said. With that in mind, it could be that Paul is specifically speaking to women so that they understand that they, too, are responsible. Some think that Paul is speaking here to women who have financial security of their own and do not depend on their husband's income. Or, it could be that he is speaking specifically to women because they care for the home, and the widow might have to be cared for in the home; women caring for women. Very likely it is not one, but all of these.

Paul is adding a third instruction about care for widows. First, he said that older widows who were without any support, those "really in need," should make a vow to serve the church and expect the church to care for them. (Verses 9, 10) Second, he said that younger widows should not make that kind of vow, should marry again and make a home. (Verse 14) And here, third, he said that the first responsibility for caring for widows should be on their own family.

This speaks to the responsibility of family. In our world today families are separated by all kinds of things. Sometimes it is distance. Children grow up, move away, get married and begin lives away from their parents, brothers and sisters. Sometimes there is divorce in a family and the closeness once felt by everyone is no longer there. People get busy with jobs, school and many other things and are too busy to just be together. And, those reading this lesson can probably think of many other things that separate families.

In Timothy's day it was unusual for families to separate. Often several generations lived in or near the same house. Roman law gave the father responsibility for every generation of his family until he died. So, even grandchildren had to respect and be guided by their grandfather. Adult children were required to give honor and be obedient to their father. When people married, the wife continued to have some responsibility to her father. The closeness of family was very important to the people at Ephesus.

In verse eight, Paul had said that if you didn't take care of your relatives, and especially your immediate family, you were telling the world that you had no respect for your Christian

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faith and that person was even worse than someone who had never claimed to be a Christian. Now, he has said that it is only right that women who believe in Jesus should love and care for those women whose husbands died.

He said that this would free the church to give real help to those widows who were “really in need.” We learn at least two very important lessons from this verse. First, the church should understand that it is their God-given responsibility, and a normal outcome of their faith, to help, to give true help, to those who need help. What does this mean. Well, let’s look to Jesus’ half-brother, James, for an answer. In James 2:15, we read, “Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?” James contention was that if a person had real faith in Jesus, that person would give true help. True help comes, according to James 2:14-26, from living faith. And, according to James, “faith without deeds (helping those in need) is dead.”

The second thing we learn is that family is very important. It is important to those who are hurting. Depending on friends, or the government is all right. However, it is much better to be able to depend on your own family. We often refer to this as our “flesh and blood.” And, the meaning of that phrase, flesh and blood, is what Paul is referring to here. When we have children, we should understand them to be a gift from God, and part of us forever. Adam said, when he saw Eve, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man.” (Genesis 2:23) When we marry, according to the next verse, a man will “be united to his wife and they will become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24)

Family is not just about the ones who stay in the same house. It is about flesh and blood. It is about God bringing us together for relationship. This would also be true of adopted children and the relationships in second marriages. And, since God brings us together, Christians should consider family a God-thing and respect it that much. So, true help is a family job. Family members who are Christians should find Godly joy in helping other family members.

Paul’s specific subject here is widows. However, we can be sure that this applies to anyone in the family who needs help.

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

Lesson Goal: To show students that true help begins in the family.

Scripture Memory: “If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?” I John 3:17

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Student Worksheet—Following Through

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>What are Paul's three instructions about care for widows?

1.

2.

3.

Paul said that if you didn't take care of your _____, especially your immediate family,

you were telling the world that you had no _____ for your Christian _____.

>What are two very important lessons from this verse?

1.

2.

>Christians should consider _____ a God-thing and _____ it that much.

For Memory: "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?" I John 3:17

How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.