

March 9, 2014

*PAUL'S LETTER TO TIMOTHY, PASTOR AT EPHESUS:
XIV. "Living Out Our Faith as a Family"
I Timothy 5:11 – 16*

Introduction:

Our series is on Paul's letter of counsel to Timothy to do remain at his post in the face of false teachers and teachings. Paul wanted his dear son in the faith Timothy to be a man of **T**_____

The principle: Know the **G**_____ so that you can see, understand, and **C**_____ the false! That is why **R**_____ and **R**_____ on God's Word are so important.

The vital importance of personal worship, prayer, time in His word daily... The spiritual disciplines give Jesus a place to **S**_____ His **T**_____ into our lives. Matthew 10:27

Jesus promises that when we walk in days that are difficult if we quiet ourselves before Him we will **H**_____ His **W**_____

Living the truth is a partnership with the Holy Spirit: Philippians 2:13, 14

We are called to live out the Gospel message of Jesus; the **P**_____ of God to **C**_____ a heart and **T**_____ a life. The first place the person of God is to access and **E**_____ the power of God is in our own heart and soul.

Our text calls us to treat older people with **H**_____ and **R**_____. Make sure no one is **O**_____ to **B**_____ in how they treat family members who are elderly.

He talks about practical living in His kingdom. The issue of the global poor

I. Practical Love in the Family of God:

I Timothy 5:9, 10

The term "list of widows"

Paul gives us a list of things that help us to see what it means to live out our faith in **P**_____ **L**_____ and **C**_____

The person who grows older and is a person of honesty, **F**_____ and **P**_____

The list of four demonstrations of "good deeds" demonstrating godliness

II. Don't Put Younger Adults on "The List:"

I Timothy 5:11, 12

Paul counsels him to not put the younger widows on the servant list

When she gets through her grieving process she should be counseled to marry and have a family

There is a clause that is very straight and pointed here about desires. It is just one word in the Greek language – it means, “be wanton, headstrong in their desires,” thus pulled away from following Jesus

Paul writes that sensuality, desire for **F**_____, **S**_____ and **E**_____ will control us or we will control desire!

For we who take following Jesus seriously, the Bible teaches us that we don't have to live at the beck and call of our **F**_____ **A**_____

III. Idle Hands, Time, and Minds are the Devil's Playground:

I Timothy 5:13

Paul's counsel here isn't confined to the female gender or youth ... Three deadly sins to the life and health of a church family:

B_____ **I**_____
Being **R**_____
G_____ **B**_____

These things obscure and nullify the true message of Jesus

We all need mercy, grace, and a Savior to set us free from inner prison cells of sin. The person who hasn't met Jesus yet needs a Savior from **S**_____. The person who knows the joy of sins forgiven needs a Savior from **S**_____ -**I**_____

IV. A Person Who Grows Older in Grace:

I Timothy 5:14, 15

The practical call here is to live the message of the Gospel so that as people look on they can see His **P**_____ and **P**_____ working in us.

Live a life that demonstrates that you've been **A**_____ with **J**_____

Let them see His transforming work changing your focus

Concluding Thoughts:

Discussion Starter Questions for Home Groups

- 1. Why is it so important to Jesus that we engage in the spiritual disciplines?*
- 2. What were your thoughts when you heard that all of us who follow Jesus in life are called to live out the Gospel message of His power to transform us over time?*
- 3. What were your thoughts about how the early church leaders employed the elderly to take care of those who were younger and who had need of help with their family responsibilities?*
- 4. What do you think of the truth that the man or woman of God does not have to live at the mercy of the desire for food, sexual expression, and esteem?*
- 5. Do you agree or disagree with the teaching that the three sins listed by Paul in the text tear apart a church family? Why do you believe that to be true?*
- 6. What were your thoughts about the call to put our relationship with Jesus on display to people in our sphere of influence?*
- 7. Read aloud together Colossians 3:1 – 17 and discuss insights that you have regarding what it means to live our faith openly before our friends.*
- 8. Read aloud together Ephesians 4:17 – 5:2 and discuss insights that you have regarding living out the Christian graces in a church family.*
- 9. Are there things from this text and the teaching Paul exhorted Timothy to do, which you want to think about and to put into practice in your own spiritual journey with the Spirit of Jesus?*

March 9, 2014 AM
Pastor Ken Hepner

***PAUL'S LETTER TO TIMOTHY, PASTOR AT EPHESUS:
XIV. "Living Out Our Faith as a Family"
I Timothy 5:11 – 16***

Introduction:

This morning we reengage in our study of Paul's letter to his son in the faith Timothy, whom Paul had commissioned pastor the church in Ephesus. Paul wanted Timothy to be a man of **Truth**, a man who knew God's Word so well that he could hear, recognize, and act to correct heretical and false teachings immediately when he heard them. At Ephesus there were false teachers everywhere who were trying to turn the people away from following Jesus in life.

The principle is: **Know the Genuine** so that you can recognize and act to **Correct the False!** That is why I am so intent on having you all as attendees of Cedar Grove Church to be men and women, teens, and children, who are reading and thinking about God's Word to us in the Bible! I want you to have the ability to discern false teachings when you hear them. That is why daily **Reading** God's Word and investing time in **Reflection** on what we have read is imperative to spiritual life and health.

Daily time in God's Word, worship, prayer, interceding, serving others in love are all spiritual disciplines that the people of God must engage in! Paul told Timothy exactly why they need to spend time alone with Jesus in spiritual disciplines. It is a vital investment of time because when we do so we give the Lord Jesus a place to **Speak His Truth into our Lives.**

Jesus desires to have a time when you and I are quiet before Him so that He can whisper to us, lead us directly. Jesus said in Matthew 10:27 *"What I tell you in the darkness speak in the daylight. What is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roof tops."* Jesus says when we are walking in days that feel spiritually dark or difficult; if we quiet ourselves we will **Hear Him Whisper** His love, direction, and His desires for our lives. Do you have a time alone with Jesus regularly when you quiet yourself enough to hear His whispers of love to you?

Paul expresses the truth that our spiritual life is a partnership with the Spirit of Jesus. Paul writes in Philippians 2:12, 13: *"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence – continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."*

As a man of God who loves Jesus, my Raina, and all of you dearly, I am called to live out the Gospel message of the **Power** of God to **Change** a person's heart, to **Transform** a life over time as I choose to submit to the presence of the Holy Spirit!

The first place the man or woman of God is to access and **Experience the Power** of God is in his/her own heart and soul. We are called to be being changed from the inside out, through the death of our own self interest and welcoming the life of Jesus to reign in us each new day.

Paul writes in Romans 1:16 *“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.”*

The paragraph that we studied last week shares with us truths that we really need to hear in our culture. We are commanded by God throughout His Word to treat people older than us with **Honor and Respect**. That is not something that is an automatic in our culture here in North America, but it should be. Paul writes in I Timothy 5:7, 8 *“Give the people these instructions too, so that no one may be open to blame. If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”*

Timothy was to give the people at Ephesus these instructions so that no one would stand before the Lord Jesus someday at the great white throne of Justice and be **Open to Blame** because of the way that they had lived. What we say that we believe must be followed up with living out those values, otherwise our beliefs are just words spoken with no heart in them!

Then Paul gets really straight and to the point. If anyone does not provide for his own family, and especially the members of his immediate family he has denied the faith even lives in his life and is worse than an unbeliever, an infidel who cares for only himself! It is the responsibility of the family to make sure that the older persons in our families know for certain that they are **Loved and Cherished** by us.

James 2:14 – 17 the exact same instruction is given from a different perspective. James writes: *“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 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? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”*

Raina and I have gotten to travel to a lot of places in the world that are inhabited by predominantly very poor people. The global reality is that it isn't wealthy people who give to help poor people to live. It is actually the **Poor** who take care of the **Poor**. I stand in awe of how people who have so little are prepared to sacrifice for those in their spheres of influence who have even less than they do.

This calls into question a larger reality in my mind, which we are faced with as we think about the global community that we live. The question is, how do we live out what it means to be a follower of Jesus today, when there are so many of our brothers and sisters on the other side of the world who have so little to eat and to wear? How do we demonstrate that we **Care About** their circumstances?

The kingdom of God on earth isn't confined to where and how we live. It requires us to think far beyond our nationalism as citizens of the United States. So last week I shared with you a challenge for you to consider. In 14 days we will have our next global hunger offering. What if we did an African pastoral family food fast? What if we ate only what they can feed their family; one meal a day and gave \$10.00 per day to those who are hungry on the others side of the world? I promise to only eat one meal per day for the next 14 days and to give \$210.00 to the World Hunger fund offering March 30! Will you follow my lead?

I. Practical Love in the Family of God:

I Timothy 5:9, 10 *“No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as brining up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.”*

There is a “list of widows” that Paul references that you and I need a little bit of history to be able to rightly understand. In the days of the early church there was a ministry that was done by older persons who were single. These persons were then given a stipend or helped with their living expenses by the leadership team of the church. They weren’t sitting around idly and cashing a check. They were aiding the apostles and pastors in the ministry of the Church family!

The ministry was to serve the church body in practical caregiving for the family of believers. So when an older person, over sixty years of age, was alone and put on the list as a practical caregiving person, when a young mother was sick and had small children, one of the women moved in with her and cared for her and her children, cooked and cleaned for her for a few weeks while she recovered.

The following list of things, in verses 9b and 10, is a picture of how people who are growing older are learning to live out the kingdom of Jesus over a lifetime. Their lives demonstrated that they loved Jesus deeply and served Him with honor. This list of things also outlines for us what the church as a family of believers does as we live out what it means to know and walk with Jesus. It enables all of us to see what things that we can engage in that put our walk with Jesus on display in **Practical Love and Caregiving!**

The person is known in the body as one who has been faithful to his/her spouse for a lifetime. In a day when marriage is taken so lightly by so many, the person who has lived a life of **Honesty**, **Fidelity**, and **Purity** is someone the church of Jesus should feel really good about helping with their physical needs for food, clothing, and a warm home.

The person is well known for doing good deeds such as:

- Investing lots of time and energy that it takes to do a good job of bringing up children, their own and those of others in their spheres of influence. A safe neighborhood hangout for children is a Godsend in our world today as it was back then.
- Inns in the first century world were notoriously dirty and known for the immorality that took place there. So Christians often struggled to stay in them because of the sinful things that were all around them. A person who practiced showing **Hospitality to Strangers** was a messenger of love in that culture.
- Washing the feet of the saints, from the filth of the dirt roads, which was an act done by slaves. The list of elderly caregivers did practical acts of humble serving love for their brothers and sisters, because they loved Jesus, were faithful to Him and sought to live out His kingdom ethics with a **Heart of Serving Love!**

- The person is well known for choosing to **Engage in Helping people** who were walking in days of trouble and heartache. It is a precious thing when our hearts are breaking and someone we love walks up to us, puts their arms around us, and empathizes with us.

II. Don't Put the Younger Single Persons on the List:

I Timothy 5:11, 12 *“As for younger women, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ they want to marry. Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge.”*

The younger widows who had lost a husband went through a time of great grieving. During that time some of them made commitments to Jesus to remain celibate for the rest of their lives and to become part of the practical caregiving team of ministers. Their hearts were in the right place for sure, but over time there will be other longings in their hearts and lives, and being celibate for a lifetime isn't what they really want anymore.

Paul counseled Timothy to not put a young widow on the list, and to make them all to be aware of the covenantal promise that she made during her grief process. She was making a vow to be yoked to Jesus for the rest of her life. When she desired to get married again and have children she would inevitably be breaking that vow. The Bible very clearly teaches us that it is better not to make a vow to God than to make one and then break it!

When she gets through her grieving process, walk her through a time when she is counseled to fall in love again and marry and have children because she will have desires that will awaken in her and she will desire to have a family. Paul wrote to Timothy that there is only one place where it is acceptable to permit one's sexual desires to have free expression: That is in the context of a family, a man and woman in love for a lifetime having children together.

There is a clause that Paul writes to Timothy that is really straight and to the point about fleshly desires and open, amoral sexual expression. *“For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ they want to marry. Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge.”*

When Paul writes in this text that the younger woman's sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, he uses a Greek word to describe it that is powerful. He writes, *katastreniasosin: “they become wanton, headstrong in their desires, and it pulls them away from devotion to following Jesus.”* This points out a truth that every man and woman of God in this fellowship must grasp. Sensuality, the desires of our physical body for **Sex, Food, and Esteem**, will either control us or it will be controlled by us!

In our world today, the message is being sent and received that the apex of relational living is sexual desire and expression. The foundational thought seems to be that we are enslaved to or at the mercy of our longings and desires. Everything we see coming out of the entertainment industry, and now in our news media as well, is indoctrination about free and amoral sexual expression as normal living as a human being. We are now calling heroes of our culture people

who openly flaunt their free sexual expression. The more numerous the partners and the more immoral the sexuality the more heroic!

The Scriptures teach us a vital truth that our culture seemingly completely ignores because the world that we live in, our cultural mindset or way of thinking, is dominated by human thinking and the intrigues of the devil. Culture is not founded on revealed truth of God as found in the Word of God. It flatly rejects God and His truth!

But for we who take Jesus seriously we find that the Bible teaches us that we don't have to live at the mercy of the desires of our body or our fleshly selfish nature's fixation on appetite satisfaction in selfish and sinful ways. The Lord Jesus defeated both of them for us and we may partake of His victory every day as we come to meet with Jesus at the Cross and surrender to His Spirit's presence and power for living!

III. Idle Hands, Time, and Minds are the Devil's Playground:

I Timothy 5:13 *"Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to."*

The truth is that what Paul writes here about young widows isn't confined to the female of the species, nor is it the sole ground of youth. Anyone who is not taking seriously the Holy Spirit's conviction to put to death self-interest, to permit Him to deal with our fleshly leaning to the world's values can be involved in these three deadly sins in the church.

Being Idle is choosing to waste one's time doing things that on the scope of eternity will be absolutely meaningless. The truth is we all need something meaningful in life to be giving ourselves to. The enemy is the author of idleness and wasting time doing things that don't really matter in life. But Pastor Ken you don't know how important it is to me to get the fifteenth level of my video game!

Restless is a word that portrays one who isn't settled inside, who is constantly looking to something outward to give them a sense of peace. Here Paul writes they go from house to house looking for something to get involved in.

Gossiping Busybodies are people who pry into other people's lives looking for the some juicy tidbit that they can go and share with others. Gossip is cancerous to relationships. There are people seemingly in every group of people who are in the pipeline and have heard all of the latest news that disparages those about whom the people are talking.

These three things active in a local church body will tear it apart over time. The fact is that negative words tear relationships apart. Whoever wrote that little ditty: "Sticks and stones can break my bones but words will never hurt me," was an idiot! Negative words always get back to the one targeted by them and they do hurt! As soon as a church family degenerates into wasting time, gossiping, and speaking negatively about one another, the message of Jesus has been utterly obliterated in that house!

The message of Jesus is that we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Every person on this earth needs to experience God's mercy and grace. We all need a Savior to set us free from the inner prison cells of sin. The person who has never met Jesus yet needs a Savior to set him/her free from **Sins** through experiencing forgiveness. The person who has met Jesus desperately needs a Savior to set him/her free from **Self-Interest**.

The person who speaks negatively about others is one who has not yet had his/her self-interest confronted by the Spirit of Jesus. There are two ways to better yourself in life. One way is to look around you and find someone who you judge yourself to be superior to and speak in harsh and critical ways about that person. The other way is to submit to the **Person of the Spirit of Jesus Daily** and permit Him to transform us from the inside out, making us into better people!

IV. Practical Application: Seek to Be Pure and to Honor Jesus Together:

II Timothy 5:14, 15 "So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan."

The pastoral epistles are intensely practical and the reason for writing is to encourage godly living so that people who do not yet know Jesus will look on and see that the lives of God's people in Christ Jesus are being transformed over time by the **Holy Spirit's Presence and Power** living in them.

Paul wanted Timothy to lead the Church of Jesus at Ephesus in such a way that the lives of the people there didn't give the devil, through human instruments, to slander the church by pointing out how the members were in sinful lifestyles! The clearest way for a church to have the testimony of Jesus marred in a community is when the people who are a part of that church go into the community and live no different from those who make no profession of faith in Christ Jesus!

He is pointing to people who have lost their spouse in life as the first audience for this instruction. He wanted the elderly persons in the body, people who were over 60, to be on the widow/widower list, and for them to get involved in doing good deeds in the body as they assisted the pastoral team. He wanted the younger people who have lost a spouse to marry and have children together, to raise up sons and daughters of the kingdom of God!

But there is instruction here for all of us in this room today. The truth is that what we do here in this worship center each Sunday morning is only a small part of what it means to be a devoted follower of Jesus in life. When we walk out of these doors and engage with our family members, our neighbors, and those with whom we work or go to school, that is when the testimony of Jesus must be lived in the everyday decisions that we make!

Living a life that demonstrates that we have been alone with Jesus means that people can see His **Footprints in our Lives** by the decisions that we make. They can see Him acting to change us

from Self focus to Others focus. They can see His heart enabling us to act in love toward all different kinds of people.

Let's not give the enemy a reason to say to people we love, "See the way that man/woman lives! He calls himself a Christian and he lives like that! There is nothing to this thing called the Christian life. They are all just hypocrites."

Concluding Thoughts: