

1 Timothy 5:1-16

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[0 : 00] Now in this chapter before us, this chapter 5, it's very clear that for poor Timothy there's not really any sort of guidebook he can go to. There's no kind of Old Testament doctrinal standard he can use as a sort of template for how to deal with this situation or that situation.

Because this chapter is all about the human face of the Church of Jesus Christ. The humanity of the Church in all its weaknesses, in all its imperfections, in all its sometimes unpleasantness.

The Church has a very human face because it is composed of fallen human beings, many of whom are redeemed by grace. But also the visible Church contains those who are not in fact redeemed but who join with the Lord's people.

It is always, thinking of the children of Israel coming up out of Egypt. So likewise, the Church on earth is a mixed multitude in that sense. It has a very human face.

And even those who are redeemed by grace are in many ways imperfections here whilst we are in this fallen world. And it is human relations that Timothy is required to deal with here.

[1 : 14] In some ways, you know, it is a marvel that the Lord chooses to make a Church of redeemed people out of humanity at all. Wouldn't it be so much easier if you just took the elect angels that had never fallen, never sinned, never put a foot wrong in heaven?

These will be my people in heaven. I will take the angels and they will just worship me in perfection for all eternity. They've never put a foot wrong. They've never sinned. There were no blemishes, nothing.

But the Lord did not choose to be. He would not have fellowship as such with mere angels because they are simply ministering spirits, pure spirit. But the Godhead desired fellowship with mankind. Mankind whom he made in his image, male and female, he created them. And not only so, but he ordained it that in the fullness of time, human flesh, humanity would be brought into the Godhead, into the Trinity.

Now that's an amazing thing when you think about it. You know, a Godhead from the beginning was pure respect, Father, Son and Holy Spirit from all eternity. But at a particular point in history, humanity from the time of the ascension of Christ into glory, humanity was brought into the reigning Godhead above.

[2 : 33] From the time of the conception in the womb of the Virgin, humanity was part of the Godhead. But it's taken up into glory and so there is human flesh as part of the Godhead.

God has chosen to make a people for himself from this fallen humanity. And here it is with all its imperfections in this chapter here. So it's all about the difficulties, the failures, the problems that young Timothy might face in trying to deal with human relationships within the church.

Human faults and failings and difficulties and recommendations and so on. Now where we have at this outset, rebuke not an elder but entreat him as a father, this probably does not refer to an elder in the sense of presbyter.

It doesn't mean an ecclesiastical elder. Probably. We can't say for certain. But it's just that the context here in verses 1 and 2 would imply that it simply means an older man.

Because it then talks about younger men and then older women and then younger women. So it would imply in the context older man, younger man, older woman, younger woman and so on.

[3 : 43] Where it then goes on to verse 17 onwards, that does refer to the sense of ecclesiastical elder, presbyter in that sense. But the context of verse 1 would imply not necessarily that.

And Timothy is instructed that if there is a fault that has to be pointed out, you can't be as Peter himself, for example, writes in 1 Peter 5, verses 1 to 3.

The elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God which is among you,

taking oversight it all, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but in samples to the flock. It's all good sound stuff, but they can take it from Peter, not only because he is an apostle, but as he himself says, look, I'm guiding, I'm giving advice to you elders because I'm an elder myself. Timothy isn't. He hasn't got that sort of natural thought. He's not an apostle. He hasn't seen the Lord transfigured on the Mount of Glory there. He is just a second generation, if you like, Christian. [4 : 58] By that I mean one who is not in the inner circle of those who have seen the Lord in the days of his flesh. He is not one who's been converted by the Lord's own ministry or by the outpouring of the spirit of Pentecost.

He is one who has heard the gospel from an apostle, received, accepted, been converted, been born again, but he's one of the first sort of non-apostolic generation, one stage removed. This means that that combined with his youth means he can't just swat around and say to the older men, older men, listen, listen to me because I have an authority here. Technically, he does have church authority, but this is not how to exercise it, Paul says. Just entreat him as a father. Imagine you were trying to speak to your own father and there was something you needed to put right with him. Imagine you were speaking to your own brother whom you loved and whom you really wanted the best for. And if it's something that was a difference between you that had to be put right, talk to him, yes, honestly, but do it with love. Do it with humility. This is no place for dictatorial behavior. [6 : 06] If there's something difficult that has to be said, then say it with all love, say it with all humility. If offense is going to be taken, let it be in the thing you're saying. Not at the manner in which it has been done.

There may still be offense, but take away all excuse. So rebuke, not an elder, but entreat him as a father. The younger men as brethren. The elder women as mothers. As though you would your own mother. And of course the bond of affection between a boy particularly and his mother is always going to be strong for his whole life. So have that kind of gentleness and entreat him. The elder women as mothers. The younger as sisters with all purity. And this of course is important too. Because whilst there is always the danger, particularly the younger men and young women, that there will be chemistry or a spark or something else as well as just Christian brotherhood or sisterhood. Even the most predatory of males probably wouldn't feel any kind of desirous attraction to their own sisters. You know, they might have a roving eye elsewhere, but their sister is probably safe from their attentions.

[7 : 15] So this is how you are to regard the younger women as sisters with all purity. If there comes to be a wife for Timothy and the fruits of Diana, never really told if there is, then by all means you can pour all his affection and devotion and attentions of that romantic kind into her.

But all the others are to be like sisters with all purity. Now, all are widows that are widows indeed. What does that mean? Well, is there some doubt about whether or not a husband is actually dead? No, it doesn't mean that. Now, widow in this context means just as throughout the Old Testament where the Lord has a care for the widows and the fatherless, it means those who are destitute. Because not only their husband has been taken away by death, but also, particularly in that age and culture, it means their entire economic support has been taken away. To be a widow indeed is to be one who is not only bereft, but destitute. Honor widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, or you might say grandchildren, some translations might put, let them, that is the sons or the widows, the nephews or children, learn first to show piety at home.

[8 : 33] That doesn't just mean say their prayers and read their Bibles and so on. Showing piety, putting their faith into practice is, as it says here, required their parents. You know, there's all those years for which your parents laid out for you.

When you were helpless, when you were young, when you couldn't do anything for yourself, when you couldn't either feed yourself or when you couldn't provide for yourself, they expended themselves to provide for you. Now when they are old, and perhaps without economic needs, you must requite that. It's time to level up the balances. And this is an expression of Christian faith and devotion.

It is piety. Show piety at home. And Jesus, of course, teaches precisely this. You think of Mark chapter 7, for example, when he has so little time for those who neglect the care of their parents. In Mark chapter 7, verse 10, Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother, and whoso curseth father and mother, let him die to death. But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is comon, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, he shall be free. [9 : 45] And what that means is, if somebody were out of piety to say, Oh, everything that I have, it's devoted to the Lord. It's given to the temple. It's given to the Lord. And because it's set apart in that sacred way, I can't give it to you, Mom, Dad, I can't use it to provide for this temporal needs, because this is a holy thing.

This is sacred. It's all given to the Lord. So, sorry, I just have to leave you. And if you're in difficulty, well, that's just that, because it's all given to the Lord. Jesus said, That's like an abomination. How can you, by supposedly devoting something to the Lord, break God's very commandment in doing so? It is comon. That is to say, a gift given to the Lord, given to the temple, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, he shall be free.

And he suffered him no more to do aught for his father or his mother, making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered.

And many such like things do ye. So, this is perfectly in line, this is exactly in line with the teaching of Jesus. Show piety at home, require their parents, for that is good and acceptable before God.

[10 : 54] Now, she that is a widow indeed, again, without any other means of support, again, it's not a question of whether or not she's actually bereaved, of course she is, and desolate, with no other means of support, trusted in God.

In other words, she takes her needs to the Lord, because she's got nowhere else to go. It's not simply that she is more pious than those who have a bit more economic means. It's that she has nobody to turn to except the Lord.

She is literally dependent on the Lord for the food that she eats day by day. She is desolate. She trusts in God, and continues in supplications and prayers night and day.

Now, this isn't just a reference to the fact, well, a real widow is going to be constantly on her knees, but it's a fact that she depends on the Lord, and she also, because she now no longer has family commitments or husband commitments or whatever, she can give herself to the Lord.

You know, an instance of this, remember the widow in Luke 18, verse 7, and the unjust judge, where, you know, she asks for justice, and she goes back and back to the unjust judge, and he says, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

[12 : 12] And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith, and shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear along with them.

That's the sense of it. The widow cry day and night, supplications and prayers night and day. Think of Anna in the temple, when the baby Jesus was brought in.

Chapter 2 of Luke, verses 36, 37, there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phan-Raw, the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, had lived with her husband, seven years from her virginity, and she was a widow of about four score and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers, night and day.

And presumably, for her sustenance, was dependent on the alms, the givings, of those who came to the temple. But another reason why we ought to be, widows are unable to in this context, but all of us ought to be, mindful of the Lord, and dependent on him night and day, is because you can be assured, that the devil is active night and day.

These godly widows, are described as, in pleading the Lord's throne, night and day, day and night. Remember what it says, about the devil himself. In chapter 12 of Revelation, in verse 10, I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now has come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.

[13 : 38] For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God, day and night. He is constantly at his evil work.

It is necessary, therefore, that the Lord's people be constantly, at their divine work, at the devout work of seeking the Lord, by day and by night.

Not everyone is able to do that, physically. They've got their work, their employments, their duties, and so on. We all ought to be making time, yes, the beginning and the end of the day, for the Lord,

and for our devotions, but it's not possible, that we are in constantly, and discharge all our duties, and our works, and so on.

But the widow in that situation, is in one sense, freed up to do that, but in another sense, how is she going to live? If she has no relatives, or loved ones to care for her, what is she to do?

This is where it says, the church is to take care of her. She that is a widow, indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, continueth in supplication, and praise, night and day. But she that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth.

[14 : 49] In other words, one who has just gone back to the world again, instead of from the Lord, is spiritually becoming dead, even while she's physically alive, and liveth in pleasure.

That is the sense of going back, as it were, to worldliness. These things give in charge, that they may be blameless. Now, part of the concern in this chapter, is that the Christians, whatever their state, whether they're married, or single, or widowed, or office payers, or not, should be living in such a way, as not to bring any ill repute, upon the church.

The witness and testimony, of the holiness, of the Lord's people, was part of their witness, amongst the godless even. Whatever they may have said, or the doctrine they may have believed, people would see, recognize, and be impressed by, the faithfulness, the holiness, the godliness, of the walk, and the witness, of these people, who called themselves Christians.

And this was an essential, not an optional extra, an essential part, of the testimony. But if any provide, not for his own, and especially for those, of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an invalid.

In other words, you know, just like Jesus was saying, in Mark 7 there, if you've got the means, to care for your widowed mother, or aunt, or whatever it may be, and you just leave them, you don't care for them, you don't bring them into your home, you don't look after them, you don't in any way, provide for them, or help them, then how are you living as a Christian?

[16 : 24] You've denied the faith, you're worse than an infidel, even the infidels, who care for their own, and for their own loved ones, and for their dead, it's worse than an infidel. Now of course, some people would, with some justification, extrapolate this verse further, and say, what is true for heads of households, to care for the vulnerable, and those who have no protection of their own, is true also for heads of nations, and this they would take as being a verse, that would justify, you know, a strong defence force, or, you know, arms, armed forces, and so on, because it is the protection, the defence, of their country, their nation.

Of course, that's not the original context, but we can leave that aside. It is a verse that, that allows for greater application. But if any provide, not for his own, especially for those of his own house, who have denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

It's never just about, going to church, reading a Bible, saying your prayers. It's about, putting this into practice, and letting love, flow out, that inner spring, of the spirit, that bubbles up, and flows out, into every aspect, of what we do.

Now, when it says, let not a widow, be taken, into the number, under three score, years old, it doesn't mean, well, don't classify her as a widow. If she's a widow, then she's the left, of course, then, but the suggestion here, is almost like, an order, of widows.

And it is thought, by some commentators, that what we have, a reference to here, is almost like, an order of those, who have become, kind of, official, church, widows, who had particular, works, and tasks, and charity, which they were engaged in, which they were busy about, whilst they were being, sustained, and provided for, by the church.

[18 : 18] I will miss, remember, as you see in this chapter, was regarded, not simply as, as a vice, in something a Christian, shouldn't be doing, because it's, you know, not a good witness, or whatever, but also, as positively dangerous.

To have, too much time, on your hands, and doing nothing with it, the devil will soon come in, and fill that. In fact, you can, we can point to, you know, waves, and cycles in history, when, when a society becomes, affluent, and comfortable, and leisurely, beyond a certain point, all manner of evil, gets in.

All manner of depravity, and, it's sought out, because, people, no longer have to scabble about, to make ends meet, they don't have to just subsist, they don't have to work, all, all the hours that they, they can, in order just to get by, they're comfortable.

They've got a safety net, they've got a sufficiency, of affluence, and so all their particular needs, are met, so they, they look around, for things that aren't easy, they look around, for entertainment, they

look around, for a bit of indulgence, and this is, one reason, why you'll find, that a particular, sin, that afflicts our modern society, that of homosexual practice, being really trumpeted, as a, as a major, sort of a, virtue, this arises, almost, a, always, when a society, has become peaceful, and wealthy, and where there is, idleness, now if you look at, what it says about, the sin of Sodom, I think in Ezekiel, it's not just referring, to sexual behaviour, but fullness of bread, idleness, pride, were in her there, all these things, combined, to cause people, to have, oh let's look around, for something to entertain, well we've tried this, and that's not satisfying, let's try something else, a little more daily, something a little more, sort of risky, something a little more, but idleness, is not only, a vice in and of itself, it is dangerous, it is that, which the devil, will seize upon, and use, to turn to his purposes, rather than God's purposes, there is, in the, you know that, good reformation principle, the so called,

Protestant work ethic, is not so much Protestant, it's just Christian, it's what the Bible teaches, that we should be active, and busy, with that, which is profitable, and good, and worthwhile, so this, an order of widows, the number, of the widows, who were being cared for, by the church, there's, there's a suggestion, that this was a, in practice, already happening, in the days, of the apostles themselves, if we go back, to Acts 9, where you find Peter, going to visit the home, in which Tabitha, or Dorcas, had died, you read in Acts 9, verse 36, there was a Joppa, a certain disciple, named Tabitha, which by interpretation, is called Dorcas, this woman, was full of good works, and alms deeds, which she did, we don't know, that she was a widow, of course, but she was very active, and it came to pass, in those days, that she was sick, and died, whom when they had washed, they laid her, in an upper chamber, and they sent for Peter, and so on, Peter then, he put them all forth, knelt down, and prayed, turning him to the body, said Tabitha, arise, she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up, and here we have, verse 41 of Acts 9, and he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called, the saints, and widows, presented her alive, now that doesn't state, explicitly, that Tabitha, was herself a widow, or one of an order of widows, but it's just a little hint, implied, that those people, active like Tabitha, with good works, and arms deeds, and so on, and blankets, and so on, that she had made, they came, showing Peter, you know, the garments, and coats, which Dorcas made, while she was with them, she was busy, she was active, she was like the virtuous woman, in Proverbs 31, these widows, sustained by the church, were busy for the Lord, active for the Lord, serving, working, there was no idleness, in there, because now, their human husbands, had been taken away, they had given themselves, now to another bridegroom, and they were being, sustained by the church, and helped by the church, to do this, there is the sense, the suggestion, that they were bound together, in this sort of, order, almost, of church widows, or presbyterists, as some would put it as, but let's go in church widows, not to be taken into the number, under three score years old, six years old, having been the wife, of one man, and you'll remember, what we said, and compare that, with what we read, in chapter three, verse two,

[23 : 02] I wish it then, must be blameless, the husband of one wife, so the husband of, the wife of one man, well reported of, for good works, if she had brought up, children, and that doesn't mean, that those who have been, childless in their marriage, are somehow to be excluded, but rather, to bring up children, doesn't mean, they had to be simply, biologically your own, but there would, in those days, particularly, you know, when medical care, was nothing like, what it is now, there would have been, a far higher proportion, of orphans, than there are now, also there would have been, cases of people, who are not unknown, within a generation, or two from our own day, if people had children, and they, their resources, were strapped, and they couldn't afford, to feed all their children, they might lodge them, with an aunt, or a cousin, or whatever, and quite often, you might have, cousins or aunts, or uncles, who were childless themselves, but who would bring up, children, for other members, of the family, they would stay in their home, they would be, almost like, starting to get parents to them, and it's in that sense, I think we should understand, that if they, if they didn't have, biological children, of their own, that they would, you know, make themselves available, to bring up others, who maybe either, had no parents, of their own, or whose parents, were no longer, able to care for that, so it's not simply, well, let's just have children herself, she's all about, she wouldn't be brought into the know, but the caring for children, was seen as a good work, they didn't have to be, necessarily just your own, but one who has, practiced this, and who in other words, has kind of proved, her love, for those more vulnerable, than herself, that she had lodged strangers, she had washed, the saints feet, that she had relieved, the afflicted, she had diligently, followed every good work, this would imply, that they're looking, for people, who by their own nature, would be

doing, the kind of things, which the church widows, if you like, themselves, would be engaged in, caring for the poor, the afflicted, the sick, and so on, just like Tabitha, was doing, so those, who would be sustained, and kept by the church, and bound, into all, like this, this church order, this sisterhood, these were the kind of, women they were looking for, but the younger widows, refuse, for when they have begun, to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry, now again, that's something, we have to be very careful, there's nothing implying, it's not wrong, to remarry, this is made clear, further down, but the suggestion, is that perhaps, there were those, who had been brought, into this, order of church widows, who had been sort of, engaged in this work, but because, they were younger, and because, you know, they had more energy, perhaps, than all the ones, that began to get a bit restless, and got a bit fed up, with what they were doing here, and, you know, not rebellious, in the sense, in the wrong sense, but, their energies, were too great, for what they were, given to do, they were, they wanted to, sort of break out a bit, they will marry, having damnation, or judgment, because they've cast off, their first faith, now it's not wrong, to remarry, and nothing should be, implied from this, but the, the wrongness, the judgment, is that, having as it were, bound themselves, exclusively, to Christ, as their bridegroom, and to this good works, in which the church widows, would be engaged, you know, if they were going to go off, and marry before, why didn't they do that before, rather than sort of become, part of this, this body dependent, on the church, in that sense, if there's opportunity, to remarry, they should do so, that's what Paul writes, verse 14,

I will therefore, the younger, doesn't just mean, younger women, he means younger widows, in the context, their children, guide the house, give none occasion, to the adversary, to speak reproachfully, in other words, be engaged, about the things, that are right, and appropriate, for their situation, again, idleness, is the enemy, of the Christian, verse 13, they learn to be idle, wandering about, from house to house, now there is, the implication also, there at verse 12, that perhaps, these younger widows, in seeking, remarriage, or whatever, were perhaps, being content, with a marriage, to somebody, who's comparatively godless, or perhaps a pagan, or perhaps somebody, who was a judaizer, or whatever, who were turning away, from, their first love in Christ, in order to seek, this romantic liaison, or at least, this human satisfaction, being cared for, and looked at, and perfectly understandable, well that is something, which is a danger, in every age, and right now, in the present day, both with men, and women, there is a danger, that especially, of people perhaps, think, oh well, if I don't take this opportunity, there won't be another chance, if I don't accept, this person's affections, or attentions, this might be the only chance,

I get, it's all very well, for these other people, who've had loads of suitors, or loads of admirers, and so on, and maybe they're, better looking than me, or prettier than me, or whatever, this might be my only chance, and here I am, widowed now, who's going to look at me anymore, if I, I've got to take this opportunity, and maybe the person, isn't a Christian, and maybe the person, isn't particularly godly, and when that happens, whether it's a man, marrying a woman, who's lukewarm, towards the Lord, or a woman, marrying a man, who's not, a Christian, or whatever, there will, at best, be a diluting, of their devotion, to the Lord, even if that, non-Christian, not red hot Christian, yeah, yeah, yeah, sure, I'll come to church, we have no interest in it, but you know, I'll come out to church, and that's what we'll do, that has to be given to it, this is what I'm doing for you, what are you going to do for me, so for me, you're going to come off, some of these church things, you're involved with, you're going to be, a wee bit less than, because I'm coming out for you, come on, we're going to meet each other, halfway, and at best, there will be, a diluting, of their devotion, to the Lord, at worst, there will be, a complete and total, falling away, and this is partly, what is meant, having the national judgment, because they have, cast off their first faith, and this, you know, without being, condemnatory, this is something, which is a very, real, human danger, people inevitably, want to feel, that they are, the object of somebody, has attentions, affections, or desire, or whatever, and whether we're talking, about men or women, it isn't the most, natural thing in the world, when somebody shows, an interest, and an affection, to want to, reciprocate that, but, if they are someone, who is going to, draw you away, from Christ, or to dilute, your relationship, to Christ, and it must, be diluted, because as Paul says, you know, 1 Corinthians 7, there is a difference, between, whether an unmarried man, or woman, and a husband, or a wife, they have to devote, part of their time, their attention, their desire, to please, to the other one, that's what marriage, is about, if they are, both the Lord's, then they will, have that same goal, and same objective, they will be able, to support, one another, in what they are, seeking to do, their relationship, to Christ, will not be diluted, but rather, it will be strengthened, so there is, this very human danger, and this is, this is what Paul

is saying, it's not that, oh you Ephesian Christians, are so much worse, than everybody else, we see the human face, of the church here, from every nation, every culture, every generation, the same dangers, the same pulls, and attractions, this way, or that way, for men, for women, whether they are, whether they are, completely unmarried, or whether they are, struggling in marriages, that are, no longer happy, and with all, they learn to be idle, to lose, our first love, to be drawn, away from Christ, is the most, dangerous thing, that can happen, to a soul,

I will say that again, to lose, our first love, to be drawn, away, at all, from Christ, is the most, dangerous thing, that can happen, to anyone, therefore, Paul says, you don't want, the younger women, of the women, to marry, yes, their children, drive the house, given on occasion, the adversity, to speak reportedly, I think we must, take it as read, that verse 40, implies, marry another Christian, and therefore, do all the things, that a Christian wife, would be engaged in, in that context, or some are already, turned aside, after Satan, again, the implication, not simply, oh, they've remarried, big deal, but rather, they have remarried, to those, who are drawing them, away, from the Lord, so his desire, is, that if in a position, to be married, then do so, but do it, in the Lord, and serve the Lord, in your marriage, or in your widowhood, with your wife, with your husband, or in the single estate, as I've said, many times before, we have often, failed, perhaps, to honour, the single estate, as perhaps, we ought to, someone already, turned aside, after, sitting, the importance, here, is of staying, focused, on the Lord, if any man, or woman, that believe, have widows, let them, relieve them, and let not, the church, be charged, and just means, so the church, can save its money, and send off more, to central offices, or whatever, to Jerusalem, but that it may, relieve them, that are widows, indeed, those who don't, have any other, means of support, the church, will have to support them, and that's only, right and good, but, it's not right, if there are those, who could look after, their own mothers, or aunts, or whatever, grandmothers, and they're not, bothering to, and then, so the church gets, so that just means, there's less to go around, with everybody else,

I don't imagine, that there has ever been, a church, a genuine church, in any age, which has, you know, is awash, with resources, and is wondering, what on earth, are we going to do, with our money, there's just so much money, in the church pot, what on earth, are we going to do, there's only so many, big churches, we can build, only so much, we can expend it on, we've just got so much money, we don't know, what to do with it, nobody has ever been, in that situation, resources are always, more straightened, than you would like, there would always be, less resources, to feed, and provide, and provide, for the true widows, than the church, would have liked, there's always, a greater need, than there is, already supply, that doesn't mean, the Lord doesn't supply, of course he does, but we are dependent, on him from day to day, and we have to steward, the resources, that he does give us, so this is another reason, why it says, like with showing, piety at home, verse 14, verse 14, I beg your pardon, that any man, or woman, that believeth, have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church, be charged, that it may relieve them, that are widows indeed, now I think, if we go on, in subsequent weeks, we'll deal with, the eldership itself, the rule of the church, and with the necessity, of caring, for those relationships, that ruling power, and care for the self, but I think, we've reached here, at verse 16, a sort of, natural demarcation point, down, between the first half, of the chapter, and the second, we have to recognize, that the focus here, is upon these, human relationships, and the need, that whatever state, or married, or single, or widowed, or whatever, our first focus, must be on the Lord, and that anything, that draws us away, from that, is something, to be regarded, as dangerous, something, to be regarded, as potentially, ruinous, to our souls, it's not something, that we can say, it's okay,

[35 : 13] I can handle it, because I'll change them, I'll make them more, because I'll be a good influence, on them, for good, yet that's great, if you are a bath, that's totally filled, with boiling water, and a bath, that's totally filled, with freezing cold water, and you had a big bath, twice the size, and you poured, the two of the moon, what are you going to have, just lukewarm, neither hot, nor cold, and we know, what the Lord says, about that, which is neither hot, nor cold, the focus, has to be upon the Lord, and if the focus, is upon the Lord, then those, human relationships, of which the church, is composed, will be done right, any rebuke, or admonishment, will be done, with love, with gentleness, with humility, relationships, between a young man, Timothy, or other young men, and sisters in Christ, will be, with all purity, grandmothers, and grandfathers, in the Lord, will be honoured, those of no other, means of support, will be supported, those who can be supported, by somebody else, will be supported, and remember, of course, that in those days, as well, it's not just a case of, love and marriage, wasn't just about, romantic involvement, who takes your eye, there

would be, there would be pretty much, a degree of arrangement, and of, you know, of bringing people together, just as there are, in Christian communities, in other parts of the world, in Asia, and Africa, and so on, where Christians are few, to find a fellow Christian, of manageable age, of the opposite sex, for marriage, and family life, is sometimes, a very rare thing, people are in great difficulties, in communities, because they can't get,

Christian husbands, or wives, of a suitable age, so there will be, an arranging, of bringing together, where it is possible, to do, so people are going to say, oh, I don't really fancy, that one much, no, they don't take my fancy, I don't really feel, my heart beating, and breaking for them, so people were realistic, about putting the Lord first, and all other relationships, follow, that is what the Lord, requires of us, and it is the least, that we can return, to him.