



First Timothy

Respect Your Elders

And, Respect those Your Age

I Timothy 5:1, 2

Lesson Twenty

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum



First Timothy

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

Respect Your Elders

It is very interesting that Paul listed these common sense rules for Timothy and the Ephesian church. We would think that they knew how to behave with people who were older than them and people their own age. But, Paul knew that there was always the possibility of problems in human relationships.

He begins this chapter with one of those problems. As a church leader, Timothy might have to correct someone who was doing something wrong. Remember, he told Timothy in the very beginning of the letter that Timothy was to "command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer." He refers to "rebuking" an older man in today's lesson. Read I Timothy 5:1, 2.

Rebuke is a pretty strong word. And, Paul adds the word "harshly." So, he is thinking that there might be some situations when Timothy thought he should speak harsh words to someone who was older than he was. In the first chapter he had used the word "command," which is also a strong word. Here, it seems that Paul was expecting Timothy to assume the full responsibility of a leader and point it out when people were not behaving correctly. We don't have time and space in this lesson to try to explain all that means. But, we can say that church leaders should be prepared to correct anyone who is teaching wrong things, doing things that harm the church, and doing things that embarrass the church.

In this first verse, Paul says that when it is necessary for Timothy to "exhort" or correct someone, it should be done with full respect...like Timothy would do his own father. Back in the first chapter, Paul said that the command was love, verse five. Any rebuke or correction should be for the purpose of making things better and should promote love, not anger.

There are those who enjoy correcting other people's mistakes. Actually, that is one of the worst traps of leadership. When someone becomes the boss, they can decide whether they are going to be a boss like the devil, or a boss like God. The devil is all about destroying people. He enjoys the pain and embarrassment when someone makes a mistake. He wants people to be unsure of themselves...to lack self-confidence.

God, on the other hand, made the perfect sacrifice for our mistakes, so that when Jesus died, we now can have full forgiveness, and He said that He would not even remember our sins. God wants us to remember that we are children of the almighty God and the one who loves us more than we can imagine. His correction is always loving and encouraging.

So, Paul is telling Timothy that when someone does something wrong, something so serious that the leader of the church must correct that person, that leader should treat the person with love. Actually, he said that he should treat that person like he would treat his family.

The age Paul and Timothy lived in was one in which elders were highly respected. The

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leaders of the church were the older persons. In Titus, (Titus 2:1-8) Paul listed responsibilities and character traits of older and younger persons. Among other things, he said that older men should be respectable and loving. He said that older women should be reverent and teachers of younger women.

In the verses we study today, he went on to say that Timothy should treat younger men, his age, as he would a brother. He should treat younger women, his age, as he would a sister. He added, that they should be treated with purity.

For best understanding of this teaching, we should remember Paul's words in I Timothy 3:15. He said that the "church of the living God" is the "household of God." In other words, the church should be seen by any church leader as a "household" or a home. Timothy was a young man, see I Timothy 4:12. If he had been older, Paul might have told him to treat older men as brothers and older women as sisters. He might have told Timothy to treat younger men and women as sons and daughters.

The whole idea here is that a church leader should see church members as family and treat them with the kind of respect one shows to family members. Now, it is clear that some families do not have good relationships. Some fathers may not behave in ways that make for warm loving relationships. Some mothers, brothers and sisters may be hard to treat with kindness and gentle love. For some, it may take some thought, even imagination, to understand what Paul is saying here. However, our own family situation does not have to be the pattern for future family relationships, and not even for relationships in the church.

Finally, Paul says that Timothy was to treat younger women with purity. He is talking about Timothy's behavior. Remember in the fourth chapter, verse twelve, Paul told Timothy that he should "in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity show yourself an example of those who believe." His general behavior should be such that when he dealt with women his own age, there would be no suspicion of his motives or behavior, because everyone would see him as a person of purity.

It is of great importance that church leaders earn the full respect of the community.

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

Lesson Goal: To help students see how Christian leaders should treat others.

Scripture Memory: "Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and young women as sisters, with absolute purity." I Timothy 5:1, 2

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Student Worksheet—Following Through

Respect Your Elders

>What kind of things should church leaders be prepared to correct?

1.

2.

3.

>What should be the purpose of rebuke or correction?

>What is the Devil all about?

>How did we describe God's correction?

>Young men should be treated as _____. Young women as _____.

>Paul said that the "church of the living God" is the "_____ of God."

>It is of great importance that church _____ earn the full _____ of the community.

For Memory: "Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and young women as sisters, with absolute purity." I Timothy 5:1, 2

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.