



# First Timothy

# Worse Than An Unbeliever

**Caring for Family**

**I Timothy 5:3-8**

**Lesson Twenty-One**

*Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum*



# First Timothy

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

## Worse Than An Unbeliever

Our Scripture lesson for today is a very interesting and practical one. It is Paul's idea of how family members are to be treated. He approaches the subject by discussing widows. Specifically, widows in need. Read I Timothy 5:3-8.

The subject of how to treat those whose husbands have died continues into the next few verses, but let's look at these five today. We will find here a lot to consider.

The first thing we should know is that caring for those who have financial needs is very important in the behavior of Christians. Jesus told the people of Nazareth, recorded in Luke 4:16-21, that He had come to Earth "to preach good news to the poor...proclaim freedom for the prisoners, and recovery of sight to the blind...to release the oppressed." Jesus was always conscious of those in need. By the way, just in case you are tempted to think about these words as not meaning just what they say, you should look back to Isaiah, chapters fifty-eight to sixty-one which is the background from which Jesus quoted the words. Any Christian who doubts how important the poor are to Jesus, should also read, Matthew 25:31-46.

The Christians inherited from the Jews the compassionate concern for widows and orphans. In their day, there were no governmental programs to help such people. If their family did not care for them, no one did. That is, unless God's people got involved. Women whose husbands died were supposed to be cared for by brothers of their husbands. If not, other members of the family were to step up to help. In the Old Testament there were laws which required that some of the harvest be left for the widows and orphans to gather for their support, Deuteronomy 24:19-21 and Ruth 2:2.

When the Christian church was begun, the care of these people became a serious concern for the members of the church. In the sixth chapter of Acts, we find the story of how the church voted on deacons who were to care for the widows. Paul is writing this letter to Timothy about thirty years later, and by then the number of widows had to be pretty large. People didn't live nearly as long, there was persecution: people being put in prison and being killed. Many of those were men with families. All that meant that there were many widows and orphans.

Paul refers to widows who were "really in need." We are not absolutely sure what "really in need" meant, but we can assume that there were some women who took advantage of their situation and "begged" for money and food. Paul **does** explain the responsibility of the grown children and grandchildren of the widow.

It is the Christian thing to do (putting your "religion into practice.") to care for your own family. The fifth commandment, straight from the mouth of God to Moses, was "Honor your father and your mother..." Exodus 20:12. Jesus took care of His mother's future from the cross, see John 19:26, 27. It is something we should "learn first." Caring for your own family is a "first"

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kind of thing we should do as Christians. If we don't care for our own family, how are we going to care for anyone else. The worst kind of "show off" is the guy who makes a big deal of giving to strangers, or putting his money in the collection plate at church, but who doesn't give the best care possible to his own mother or grandmother...his own family.

Paul said that caring for parents is just repaying them for what they have done for you. Now, it is quite possible that some reading or hearing this lesson have parents who never treated you right, may have neglected you or even abused you. Here is where you have the privilege of being just like Jesus. You can return good for evil.

There is a real difference between a widow who is really in need and trusts God for her care, and the widow who is using her widowhood for the wrong things. The widow who trusts God, lives a life that pleases God and she prays. We can assume that Paul meant that the righteous widow prayed for others as well as herself.

Then, there is the other kind of widow who spent her time living a life of pleasure. What pleasures these were, we do not know. However, we can assume that they probably took advantage of their single status to have fun, maybe at the expense of others, possibly, as suggested earlier in this lesson, they were having "pity parties" to get people to feel sorry for them and give them things that they might not have even if their husbands were still alive.

Paul had said in Romans 8:5b that "those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires." The widows who spent their time living as God would have them live were fulfilling this Scripture. He said, in Romans 8:6, "The mind of the sinful man is death...the sinful mind is hostile to God." That is the description of the "widow who lives for pleasure." She is dead already.

Then, in verse eight, Paul expands the responsibility to care for the whole family. He says that anyone who does not provide for his/her relatives, and especially for his or her immediate family, that person denies Christianity and is even "worse than an unbeliever." Wow! What is worse than an unbeliever? It seems that Paul was warning Timothy, and also the church at Ephesus, that their responsibility to family should be taken very seriously, and that God would judge those who failed in this responsibility...this family issue.

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

**Lesson Goal:** To encourage students to fulfill their responsibility to their family.

**Scripture Memory:** "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." I Timothy 5:8



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## Student Worksheet—Following Through

### Worse Than An Unbeliever

- >The first thing we should know is that caring for those who have financial \_\_\_\_\_ is very important in the behavior of \_\_\_\_\_.
- >Any Christian who doubts how important the \_\_\_\_\_ are to \_\_\_\_\_, should also read, Matthew 25:31-46
- >Where in the Old Testament would you find laws that required that some of the harvest be left for the widows and orphans to gather for their support?
- >What did Paul say was “putting your religion into practice?”
- >Caring for your own family is a “first” kind of thing we should do as \_\_\_\_\_.
- >Paul said that caring for parents is repaying them for what?
- >Then, in verse eight, Paul expands the responsibility to care for the whole \_\_\_\_\_.

**For Memory: “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.” I Timothy 5:8**

#### **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.