

# “GODLINESS BEGINS AT HOME”

## I TIMOTHY 5:3-8

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### INTRODUCTION

This passage concerns widows and their offspring. Paul tells Timothy to “**keep commanding these things**” v. 7. Paul wants both groups to be “above reproach”—cf. 3:2 of elders/bishops.

God cares about those who are disadvantaged; in this case widows; the Church must also care!

Paul here focuses on what a “widow indeed” is and mentions **3 qualities** she should have; and **1 quality** she must not have.

Paul also focuses on the offspring of widows—children or grandchildren—and gives **two requirements** for them in relation to their mother/grandmother, and also gives **two results** for failure to live up to those requirements.

The early church followed Judaism in caring for widows and helping to meet their needs:

- See Acts 6 and the early deacons.
- See Acts 9—Peter and Dorcas and the widows.
- See James 1:27—“true religion in the sight of God.”
- But, abuses were arising, and the church must not be taken advantage of.

### GODLINESS BEGINS AT HOME: WHETHER YOU ARE A WIDOW, OFFSPRING OF A WIDOW, OR ANY BELIEVER IN CHRIST.

- I. HONOR WIDOWS WHO ARE “WIDOWS INDEED.” (v. 3; 5, 6)  
*This “honor” includes financial assistance as can be seen in the rest of the chapter, and also by comparing 5:17 of elders; also cf. Jesus’ rebuke of the Scribes who would claim “Corban” instead of honoring their parents (Mk 7:9-13) See the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment: “Honor your father and mother!”*

The Church should always “honor” widows, but when should such honor include financial assistance?

A. What she is:

1. She has been “left alone”—without husband, children, grandchildren, other close kin
2. She has “fixed her hope on God.”
3. She “continues in supplications—requests—and prayers, **night and day.**
  - She is not so caught up in her problems that she cares only for herself. She is concerned for others
  - Such widows had by this time become a class within the church and were involved in serving the Lord and others.
  - They often helped orphans, the poor, prisoners, etc.
  - Anna, the prophetess of Lk. 2:36-38 is a perfect example.
  - None of us should allow ourselves to become self-centered, but rather be Christ-centered and others centered.

B. What she is not: “Gives herself to wanton pleasure—abandoned to pleasure and comfort, living luxuriantly and indulgently; she lives a “fast” life.

1. Such a woman is spiritually dead,
2. Though her body is physically alive—see Rev. 3:1.
3. Does not necessarily mean indulging in immorality or even prostitution, but does not exclude such.

But, who should help widows who do not meet such qualifications? **Their offspring!** Children and grandchildren

II. CHILDREN MUST DO WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD (4, 8).

A. Two Requirements (4, 8a)

1. "Practice piety—godliness—in regard to their own family [in this case financial help is included in "godliness"!]
  - *Satan is an expert deceiver, convincing many that the best place to serve is some place far away from home; Jesus shows that duty begins at home—in Jerusalem! **The path of duty begins from within our own house, and we must walk it on our own feet.***
  - If one is not godly at home he is not godly at church! He is a hypocrite!
  - The first duty of children is **filial piety**.
2. He must provide for his own, especially for those of his immediate family—including widowed mother or grandmother! (v. 8)
  - He must "pay back his debt" (give back, discharge what he owes) to his living ancestors!
  - They must give back "recompense" or "returns," a word occurring only here in the NT.
  - When this noun is combined with the verb used here the idea is "make a return that is **worthy, a fitting pay back**. The plural "returns" stresses *adequacy, sufficiency*.
  - **God is the evaluator of all such behavior—it must be acceptable in His eyes, His presence.**

B. Two Consequences of not providing for his family—and especially his parents etc.

1. He has denied The Faith, and even his personal faith.
  - Not with his words, but with his behavior
  - Such missing fruit [of basic Christian love at home] shows that the whole tree is bad!
  - "Deny" means repudiate—see **Titus 1:16**.
2. He is therefore worse than an infidel—an unbeliever [one who has no genuine faith].
  - Even pagans practice love for and affection for and provision for ancestors.
  - In fact, many of them worship ancestors!
  - Genuine Christianity acknowledges the divine origin of natural affections within families!
  - The believer has more advantage than the unbeliever—having Christ's law, and the indwelling Holy Spirit; what excuse does he have for doing less than a lost person?
  - He is far worse than an unbeliever when he fails to support his parents/widows.
  - Jesus gave us the perfect example in the support of his mother—even when dying on the cross (**Jn. 19:26-27**).

CONCLUSION

**GODLINESS BEGINS AT HOME: WHETHER YOU ARE A WIDOW, OFFSPRING OF A WIDOW, OR ANY BELIEVER IN CHRIST**

Don't follow our culture and "give yourself to wanton pleasure."

Fix your hope on God. Practice prayer "night and day."

Minister to the needs of others.

Practice godliness at home.

Take care of the needs of your loved-ones.

Don't deny the faith by your deeds; don't be worse than an unbeliever!