

“HAVING A REPUTATION FOR GOOD WORKS”

I Timothy 5:9-16

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INTRODUCTION

Every church needs godly women; and every church needs godly “old women”!

Last week we looked at the widows who qualified for church financial aid; this week we look at those who not only qualify for aid, but who also are to be put on the list of godly female church workers—very possibly taking on a feminine version of the role maintained by the male elders of the church. We have already seen church “deaconesses” in 3:11; now Paul unveils how women over 60 could be used to be a blessing in the local church.

These women are more than dedicated Christians; they have evidently made some kind of pledge or vow to Christ and to the church to give unreservedly of their time and energy to serve Christ; evidently in exchange the church maintained their basic needs. Now, every Christian needs to maintain **a good testimony** and must avoid situations that will give either the human enemies of Christ or Satan himself standing ground or a jumping off place in order to bring **reproach** or **scandal** upon the church and upon Christians.

Therefore, the church must take every precaution to make sure that all of its leaders and workers are well-qualified and that they will serve as good representatives of Jesus Christ. *It is not just your testimony that is at stake; it is not just the church’s testimony that is at stake; it is the testimony of Christ’s name that is at stake!*

Ladies, this is your day! Today we look at:

- 1) Qualifications for older women who may be put on the list; **surely all older women ought to aspire to such high standards!** (9-10)
- 2) Standards for younger women [more specifically widows] (11-15)
- 3) Requirement for well-to-do women—whether single or widowed, or married (16)

You must aspire to something higher than yourself and your needs. You must find the secret of life’s fulfillment:

JESUS first,

OTHERS second,

YOURSELF last

- I. QUALIFICATIONS FOR OLDER WIDOWS [who can be put on the list] (9-10)
 - A. Life Begins at 60! [at least in this case one cannot so serve until at least 60]
 - B. A One-man type of woman—One husband who has now died and she is left alone [and for most, desolate—v. 5]
 - Notice the emphasis put upon the sanctity of marriage over and over again in Scripture.
 - This would exclude polygamy, divorce, and many think even a second marriage.
 - C. Maintaining a clear cut testimony from many others of her **good works** (10).
 1. “Brought-up” children—not merely bear them but “**raise**” them.
 - Not limited to her own children—if they were still alive she would not qualify—vv. 4, 8; unless they were unbelievers and refused to help.
 - Likely included orphans, children abandoned, etc.
 2. “Shown **hospitality** o strangers”—whether saved or unsaved

- Included evangelists, preachers, messengers, ordinary Christians, etc.
3. “Washed the feet of the saints”—not a religious ceremony; **humble service**. Cf. Jesus in Jn. 13.
 4. “Assisted those in distress”—**sympathy and benevolence**
 - Includes persecution, sickness, hunger, sorrow.
 - In mind, body, and estate.
 5. “Devoted herself to **every good work**.”
 - Not merely having a reputation of good works, but persisting in them.
 - Intensity of service, and a wide variety of good works.

But, what about the younger women? Are there any expectations for them—especially for the widows among them?

II. STANDARDS FOR YOUNGER WOMEN—Especially Widows (11-15)

A. Dangers

1. Refuse [to put them on the list—implied]; “reject them” is the literal reading. (11)
2. “Sensual desires”, quite normal at this stage of life, lead them to desire marriage.
3. Such desires lead them to forsake or go against Christ.
4. They forsake their pledge or agreement of faithful service [literally “faith”] to continue without wavering or compromise in the Lord’s work.
5. They bring condemnation upon themselves—**censure** from the church and its leaders.
6. They also **learn idleness**—instead of learning a job, profession, etc.!
7. They wander from house to house—not really performing their religious duties as they should.
8. They become gossips.
9. They become busybodies.
10. They talk about things that are not proper.
11. They turn aside—to follow after Satan (15).
12. They give the enemy—human and Satan—occasion, base of operation for bringing **reproach**.

B. Duties (14)

1. Get Married.
2. Bear Children.
3. Keep House—literally “rule the house.”
4. Prevent the enemy from bringing reproach on Christ’s name and on the Church.

III. REQUIREMENTS FOR WELL-TO-DO WOMEN (16)—whether, single, widowed, or married

- A. She must assist dependent widows.
- B. The Church must not be burdened with people who can be supported by others.
- C. THE Church must assist those who are widows indeed—vv. 3, 5.
- D.

CONCLUSION

God’s Word is so practical! How much better off would be the individual, the home, the church, and the world if we followed Paul’s practical instructions!

God’s standards are for older women, younger women, and for well-to-do women. Let us follow these words.

Put JESUS first, OTHERS second, YOURSELF last. Aspire to something much higher than yourself & your needs!