

Bible Class Give No Occasion to the Adversary**1 Timothy 5:14****14th November '24**

The verse for consideration is 14 *I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.*

I will therefore... shows the Apostle is connecting this advice to younger women with the previous advice given to older sisters. As such, it means that the comment “give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully...” is not just applicable to younger women, but all to whom the Apostle is addressing his words.

Paul in writing to Timothy was offering practical advice, and guidance into daily behaviour in how the disciples of Christ should behave themselves and conduct themselves in everyday living, upholding the principles of the Doctrine in practise.

The passage includes how to treat elders and younger men. How to treat elder women, and younger sisters – with respect and purity, widows who in a real need to be specially cared for. But widows who have a large family must fulfil their duty first as much as is possible. Paul compares with some widows who use their single status to live in pleasure, that is free of obligations to others, they can do what they want, and thus become spiritually dead. But this is not the way of the godly, who are in fact obliged to the ecclesia. Paul emphasises to Timothy that he must reinforce these teachings that the ecclesia is beyond reproach see verse 7. Continuing, Paul is very critical of those who do not support themselves by working, or who do not support their own families. This he says is akin to denying the faith! So important is this basic rule. It is in fact, the first command given to man, after his sin. *In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread.* Anyone who tries to dodge out of this, and lives off the wellbeing and kindness of others, while they just laze around, is cheating God, and

everyone around them, and Paul says they are denying the faith – of course, instead displaying selfishness and disrespect to those around them. They are worse than an infidel or an unbeliever.

Paul continues explaining how special welfare should be provided to some widows, and he describes certain criteria, for example to be at least sixty, with a good reputation, especially for helping those in distress and doing good works, but Paul advises that the same welfare should not be given to young widows, as with their energy and capability they are well able to keep themselves busy and earn a living. He points out certain dangers that if younger widows are put on the list, and agree not to remarry but serve the ecclesia (and so be subsidised by the ecclesia) there would be a likelihood that some might see the opportunity of having an easy lifestyle, and be led away by temptation, learning to be gossips, be lazy and generally gain a bad reputation among a hard working population. He did not want young widows to be discouraged from remarrying, and carrying on with life's responsibilities.

Charity can be given in a foolish way, and unwisely, leading to dependency and lack of initiative – essentially laziness. Paul was warning of this.

Paul has already given a reason, because temptation, and laziness can make members of the ecclesia worse than the unbelievers, (because they should know better) sitting around, expecting other people to help them all the time. But he then gives another reason for this attention to decent living -

to give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are already turned aside after Satan.

in order to give the adversary no opportunity to vilify us.[x] 15 For some have already wandered away to follow Satan.

Of course there are always those watching on, who take great delight in pointing out the failures of those who claim to be Christians, as to

them it justifies their idea that religion is full of hypocrites. (Which it is) But by definition all people, all humans are hypocrites at some stage in their lives whether religious or not. These unbelievers, scoffers who walk after their own lusts, and who are no more than brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not (2 Peter 2:12). They are the adversary, enemies of the cross of Christ. But they are not the only opponent.

There are also those who arise out of the midst of the ecclesia who speak *perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.* (Acts 20:30) These set up another table, and claim the name of Christ, but have no right to because they have changed the Doctrine and corrupted it. These also are the adversary, who are only too happy to gleefully report the bad behaviour of former companions, and so the Name of Christ is brought into disrepute.

The Apostle Peter has this to say: 1 Peter 2: 12 - 14 *Having your conversation [or way of life] honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:*

By good behaviour, and consistent integrity, there will be no reason for the adversary to speak reproachfully and vilify the Word of God, but rather will be silenced!

Paul said here in our verses for consideration *that some have already turned aside after Satan.* Satanos means adversary. Some he says have already turned aside... by their bad behaviour not only causing those without to condemn and thereby dismiss the Gospel, but by their bad behaviour they themselves become the Adversary. The

process starts with idleness, and ends with being in opposition to the will of God. It does not take much to distract human nature and to lead away.

So great care must be taken in every aspect of our life, to ensure that we do not give the adversary an excuse to sneer at the Truth of God's word, but by good works and even in how we talk as Paul to writes:

Titus 2:8 Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

Brother Terry