

Give None Occasion to the Adversary

Just a few thoughts upon today's Bible class. 1 Timothy deals with the aspect of general behaviour, on how we all should conduct ourselves. This is important as such deeds set us apart as those who are putting God's intentions into practice. We are doing it because we have read what God's word is and understood them and manifest what God desires mankind should be to glorify Him.

The chapter begins by referencing how we should treat our elder males REBUKE NOT, instead intreat them as a Father then moves on to those men who are younger treating them as Brethren. We then are told to treat the elder women as Mothers, the younger as sisters and such interaction should be with all purity or by the correct method. Proverbs declares a soft word turneth away much anger or wrath. Good communication is a vital part to any relationship. (See also Matt 15) Another point to bear in mind is the commandment to honour thy Father and Mother which is the first commandment with promise, Deuteronomy 20. It needs to be stated that God is the principal Father and as such should be the most honoured parent of all. Proverbs 1 v 8 says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom. The word translated 'fear' should be understood to mean respect. This reinforces the need to do His will and with a willing faithful choice on our part, not as a command or order mindlessly done but a deed or way of behaviour showing an acceptance through understanding the ramifications involved.

What of widows? Why have they been singled out? Widows are those women whose husbands have died. They are without his support, some of them will be in difficulty and would therefore be needed to be looked after. However there is a measure of qualities which stand certain Widows out and other behaviours which need to be rebuked. Verse 9/10 give an apparent contradiction; A widow who has

conducted themselves in well doing is not to be especially looked after why? Because their well doing will be an ongoing way of behaviour making them less needy, perhaps even assisting those who truly are in need. It should be noted that all the exemplary qualities/deeds of a widow in verse 9/10 alleviate difficulties in others, they support others, they provide a framework which stand even in the face of life's circumstances they are founded upon a rock. Those to be rebuked are first indicated in verse 6 described as those who live in pleasure and are, by such behaviour, 'dead while she liveth'. Not surprisingly, as anyone doing the works of the flesh as opposed to the works of the spirit, bring upon themselves condemnation and its end result is death, (see Romans 8). However v11 singles out younger widows, particularly they who have waxen wanton against Christ they marry having damnation because they have cast off their first faith. This implies a departure from God 's will and doing after their own will instead. Further indicators of bad behaviour are provided in v13: They learn to be idle, they wander from house to house, not in a helpful or supportive way instead perhaps displaying aspects of tattlers and busybodies, speaking those things they ought not, murmurs, words and/or actions which cause or spread trouble. Basically being a hindrance to good or Godly works.

James 3 gives good advice about the tongue indicating a need to closely control what we say lest our words become poison. It also indicates that good control of the tongue is hard but very praiseworthy.

Proverbs 31 speaks of she who is a virtuous woman, is known or highly regarded of people, all her works making her stand out saying of her that her price is above Rubies. It should be noted that God, at the beginning in Genesis stated the nature of a woman was to be an helpmeet to the man. This word helpmeet indicates a strengthener / a supporter of, effectively being a pillar which reinforces a man. Of a key note, though the force of 1 Timothy 5 are aimed at women and widows in particular, the inclusion of men in the chapter shows that

they are not exempt. Verses 8, 19 and 20 clearly highlight areas of responsibility and possible failures.

Good examples to follow or use for guidance are Abigail and Ruth. Ruth was a widow looking after her Mother in law, the elderly Naomi who was also a widow and a widow in need! and Ruth is clearly a good example as all her works have a special place in the Biblical account: The book of Ruth in the Old testament. A bad example is Athaliah who upon the death of her son slew* all the seed royal and usurped the kingdom reigning for 6 years (*Josiah being saved by the wife of the high priest) Josiah was restored. NB Athaliah's reign was 6 years, human history is 6000 years. So times of the need to watch or be ever present.

Brother Michael