



### III. INSTRUCTIONS FOR ELDERS (1 Timothy 5:17-20)

#### A. Honouring the Elders (1 Timothy 5:17-18)

1. The admonition to honour (1 Timothy 5:17)
  - a. The establishment of honour—"Let...be"
    - (1) As we have stated previously, it is possible that Timothy was yet to be the pastor of the flock in Ephesus.
    - (2) Like Titus, the present admonition involves the establishment of elders (Titus 1:5).
    - (3) As such, Timothy was being admonished to allow, encourage, and institute the support of elders in the churches.
  - b. The recipient of honour—"the elders"
    - (1) In the first part of this chapter, the term *elder* was descriptive of a man's age.
    - (2) In the present context, the term *elder(s)* describes one who is ordained and rules in the New Testament church (Acts 14:23; Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; Acts 16:4; \*Acts 20:17-32; Titus 1:5; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4).
    - (3) In two of the above passages, the elders were described as being overseers or having oversight (Acts 20:17 with Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1 with 1 Peter 5:2).
  - c. The requirements of honour
    - (1) They rule well.
      - a) Understanding ruling
        - i) In the case of a pastor's family, ruling well involves having his children in subjection (1 Timothy 3:4).
        - ii) It is related to the church stating that he takes care of the church of God (1 Timothy 3:5).
        - iii) It is connected to speaking the word of God (Hebrews 13:7) and watching for the souls of others (Hebrews 13:17).
        - iv) As mentioned above, the elders were identified as having oversight (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2).
      - b) The quality of ruling
        - i) The descriptive term commonly associated to right ruling is the word *well* (1 Timothy 3:4, 12).
        - ii) Romans 12:8 says that those who rule ought to do so with diligence.
    - (2) They labour in the word and doctrine.
      - a) The role of the elders or pastors has been greatly confused in the modern church.
      - b) Much like the apostles declared that they were not to leave prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4), the New Testament elder or pastor's priority is to labour in the word and doctrine (1 Timothy 3:1; 1 Timothy 4:15-16; 1 Timothy 5:17; 2 Timothy 2:15).



- d. The extension of honour
- (1) The motivation of honour—“counted worthy”
    - a) Both historically and scripturally, the word *worthy* is connected to having merit or being deserving of something. It should be noted that one can see the word *worth* in the word *worthy*.
    - b) The common thought among Christians today is that to suggest anybody, other than God, is worthy of anything is blasphemous; however, this is not the teaching of scripture (Ephesians 4:1; Colossians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 2 Thessalonians 1:5; 1 Timothy 6:1; Hebrews 11:38; Revelation 3:4).
  - (2) The manner of honour—“double honour”
    - a) As we stated earlier, the word *honour* in the context of 1 Timothy 5 involves financial support.
    - b) The concept of offering financial support to ministers of the gospel is a common subject in the New Testament. For example, consider the teaching of Galatians 6:6.
      - i) The contextual meaning of “communicate” (Philippians 4:15-18; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Hebrews 13:16-17; 1 Corinthians 9:7-14); Note: Consider the following practical thoughts...
        - (a) Many ministers of the gospel are no longer teaching.
          - (i) Some, because they are disillusioned as to the duties of the ministry
          - (ii) Some, because they have no time due to other obligations
          - (iii) Some, because they have never learned themselves
        - (b) Either resulting in this or because of this
          - (i) Saints no longer feel a sense of obligation to support those who labour in the gospel ministry.
          - (ii) Thus gospel ministers have been pushed to the workforce as the Levites were in the days of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 13:10).
        - (c) Financial gain should never be the cause or motive of someone entering the gospel ministry (1 Timothy 3:1-3; Titus 1:7, 11; 1 Peter 5:1-2)
      - ii) The participant of the communication—“him that is taught in the word”
      - iii) The recipient of the communication—“him that teacheth”
      - iv) The means of communication—“in all good things”
      - v) Note: Consider also Galatians 6:7-9. The context of this passage should be seen in new light.



2. The principle of honour (1 Timothy 5:18)
    - a. The source of the principle—"For the scripture saith"
      - (1) The passage at hand is a quote from two passages:
        - a) The first part comes from Deuteronomy 25:4.
        - b) The second part comes from either Leviticus 19:13 or Deuteronomy 24:14-15.
      - (2) It is also quoted in 1 Corinthians 9 with the context following making it clear that the present application is that the minister should be granted support in carnal things as a reward or hire for his spiritual service (see 1 Corinthians 9:9-14).
    - b. The theme of the principle
      - (1) In some areas of labour, the oxen might be muzzled. When it came to treading out the corn, the oxen were not to be muzzled in order to allow them to partake of the fruits of their labours.
      - (2) God made it clear that the oxen were worthy of reaping from their service. In the end, they were providing for their masters and deserved a portion of the increase.
- B. Rebuking the Elders (1 Timothy 5:19-20)
1. The conditions of accusation (1 Timothy 5:19)
    - a. The unstated cause
      - (1) Although the reason for accusation is not stated, the probability of accusation is.
      - (2) This should seem odd that a gospel minister would be automatically anticipated to come under accusation.
      - (3) After all, the gospel minister is given by God as a gift to the New Testament church (Ephesians 4:8-16).
      - (4) Like Balaam of old, the Lord knew that man opposed by a faithful servant would be tempted to turn on the servant (Numbers 22:28-33; see 2 Corinthians 4:5).
      - (5) Not surprisingly, the danger of accusation falls on the heels of an admonition to financial support. For some reason, people are much more concerned about money spent on a minister of the gospel than they are any other area of life.
    - b. The stated concern
      - (1) The object of accusation—"Against an elder"
      - (2) The warning of accusation—"receive not an accusation"
        - a) Based upon comparing scripture to scripture, it should be understood that an accusation brought forward by anything less than multiple witnesses would signify unscriptural dealings.
        - b) When an individual believes he has been trespassed against, he is responsible to go privately to the offender (Matthew 18:15).
        - c) If rejected, the offended is to take one or more with him to again seek restoration and reconciliation (Matthew 18:16).



- d) If rejected again, the accusation should be escalated and presented to the church (Matthew 18:17).
- (3) The qualification of accusation—"but before two or three witnesses"
  - a) The idea of multiple witnesses is a common principle found throughout scripture (Deuteronomy 17:6; Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:16; John 8:17; 2 Corinthians 13:1; Hebrews 10:28).
  - b) This principle is not fool-proof and it should be remembered that multiple witnesses stood against many of God's men in condemnation, not in the least was Jesus Christ.
  - c) The point is that an accusation should not even be entertained unless the minimal requirement is met.
- 2. The conditions of rebuke (1 Timothy 5:20)
  - a. The object of rebuke—"Them (elders) that sin"
    - (1) The authority of examination
      - a) In order to fully understand what is being presented, one must consider the context of our passage.
      - b) An accusation would have been made by multiple witnesses against elder.
      - c) In the immediate context, this accusation would have been made to Timothy. In the case where Timothy would have been the elder, the case would have been brought to a male leader in the church.
      - d) Timothy, in this case, was to examine the accusations and determine the guilt or innocence of the elder in question.
    - (2) The authority of conclusion—If Timothy determined that the elder was guilty in the accusation, he was to offer a rebuke to the man in hopes of reconciliation.
  - b. The biblical concept of rebuke
    - (1) One should rebuke with longsuffering and doctrine (2 Timothy 4:2).
    - (2) One should rebuke another so that the rebuked may be sound in the faith (Titus 1:12-14).
    - (3) The only proper authority for rebuking comes from the Lord (Zechariah 3:2).
    - (4) It should be expected that multiple reactions will be manifested in response to rebukes (Proverbs 9:7-8; Proverbs 28:23; Amos 5:10).
    - (5) Love is the proper motive when offering a rebuke (Revelation 3:19). As such, an open rebuke is identified as superior to secret love (Proverbs 27:5).
  - c. The audience of rebuke—"rebuke before all"
  - d. The purpose of rebuke—"that others also may fear"; The Bible principle is that wise men will learn from the correction of the fool (Proverbs 10:13-14).