

**Subject: *Confronting Sin in the Church***

**Scripture: *1 Timothy 5:1-2***

First and Second Timothy and Titus are known as the Pastoral Epistles. They were written to Timothy and Titus, who were pastors. Timothy was pastor of the church at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3), and as pastor he understood the unique identity and calling of the church. The New Testament describes the church in many ways:

- The church is a holy nation with heavenly citizenship (1 Pet. 2:9)
- The church is a holy priesthood with direct access to God (1 Pet. 2:9)
- The church is like a vine with a living connection to Christ (Jn. 15:5)
- The church is a temple built on Christ the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20)
- The church is a body and Christ is the head of that body (1 Cor. 12:12)
- The church is an assembly that gathers in the presence of God (Heb. 12:23)
- The church is a flock and Christ is the Great Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:2)
- The church is a family (Gal. 6:10)

A family is known for love, kindness, and care. But also the family is the place where correction and confrontation must take place. That is always part of a loving family, especially the family of God. Obviously, the church family in Ephesus called for some correction.

From this first letter of Paul to Timothy we know that some church members had abandoned truth and godliness (1:5-6; 2:8). Some had shipwrecked their faith and their lives (1:19). Some women had abandoned their God-given role and were trying to usurp the authority of the church leaders. Others were teaching false doctrine (4:1-5), and as we will see some of the widows were living in immorality (5:6-7, 11-13). And this church is no different than any church. Sin must be dealt with because it disrupts the unity of the body and it disgraces the testimony of the church. In our text we see how sin must be confronted, but before we get to the text, let's look at the bigger picture of confronting sin in the church.

- Sin must be confronted properly (Biblically)

***Matthew 18:15-18*** <sup>15</sup> Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. <sup>16</sup> But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. <sup>17</sup> And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. <sup>18</sup> Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

- Sin must be confronted courageously

***Ezekiel 2:3-6*** <sup>3</sup> And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. <sup>4</sup> For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD. <sup>5</sup> And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. <sup>6</sup> And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost

*dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.*

- Sin must be confronted seriously

**2 Timothy 4:2** *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

**Titus 2:15** *These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.*

- Sin must be confronted patiently

**2 Timothy 2:24-25** <sup>24</sup> *And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,* <sup>25</sup> *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*

- Sin must be confronted impartially

**Galatians 2:11-14** <sup>11</sup> *But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.* <sup>12</sup> *For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.* <sup>13</sup> *And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.* <sup>14</sup> *But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?*

In First Timothy 5:1-2, we have five guidelines for confronting sin in the church:

### **CONFRONT SIN IN A FIRM BUT LOVING WAY**

In 5:1, the word “rebuke” is a strong word. Some translations read “do not rebuke sharply.” It refers to a harsh or violent rebuke. This word is found only here in the New Testament, but a related word is in 3:3, where a pastor is not to be “violent.” It can mean physical violence, but probably refers to hammering someone with harsh words or verbally abusing someone. That kind of rebuke should not be done in any family, much less God’s family.

The proper way is to “intreat.” This word means appeal, encourage, admonish, and strengthen. It literally means to come alongside and help someone who is weak. It is related to the word used of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter (Jn. 14:16, 26). Sin must be confronted in love with the hope of restoring, strengthening, correcting, and encouraging the one who sins.

### **CONFRONT OLDER MEN AS FATHERS**

“Elder” refers to an older man, not the official position of elder or pastor. Timothy must confront an older man with the same respect he would show his father. Respect for elders is taught throughout the Bible.

**Leviticus 19:32** *Thou shalt rise up before the hoary (white) head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD.*

The Bible warns of the consequences of not showing respect for parents. **Proverbs 30:17** *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.* **Exodus 21:17** *And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.* When Paul confronted Peter (Gal. 2:11-14) he did so with respect.

### **CONFRONT YOUNGER MEN AS BROTHERS**

They must not be looked down on. There must be no air of superiority. In the Old Testament, the Jews were forbidden to hate their brothers, **Leviticus 19:17** *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart...*

The proper way to confront younger men is modeled for us by Joseph and his attitude toward his brothers. He showed love and humility. We may need to confront a younger man, but we do so in love and out of concern that he repent and find forgiveness.

**Galatians 6:1** *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

**2 Thessalonians 3:14-15** <sup>14</sup> *And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.* <sup>15</sup> *Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*

### **CONFRONT OLDER WOMEN AS MOTHERS**

The Bible commands us to respect and honor our mothers (Ex. 20:12). Proverbs teaches the importance of honoring mothers, **Proverbs 23:22** *Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.*

Paul models the proper way to deal with older women in the church.

**Philippians 4:2-3** <sup>2</sup> *I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.* <sup>3</sup> *And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life.* “Beseech” means urge. These women were causing trouble and hurting the cause of Christ in the Philippian church. Paul dealt with them in a gracious and kind way.

### **CONFRONT YOUNGER WOMEN AS SISTERS**

Nothing is more dangerous than dealing with young women in the church. They must be confronted in love, but above all, in purity. They must be led out of sin, but never led into sin. We need to be careful in dealing with members of the opposite sex. The book of Proverbs gives some powerful protection along this line:

- Avoid looking and lusting

**Proverbs 6:25** *Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.* **Job 31:1** *I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?*

- Avoid flattering words

**Proverbs 2:16** *To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words.*

**Proverbs 5:3** *For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil.*

- Avoid improper contact and sexual immorality

**Proverbs 7:25-27** <sup>25</sup> *Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.* <sup>26</sup> *For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her.* <sup>27</sup> *Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.*

We must confront sin, but we must be careful to confront it in the right way, in a way that helps restore the person and honors the Lord.