

“Discipline the Right Way”
1 Timothy 5:1-2
(Preached at Trinity, July 18, 2021)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we enter **Chapter 5** Paul is continuing to address conduct within the local church—how the church should function. Remember Paul's words in **Verse 13-14 in Chapter 3**.
"I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long;¹⁵ but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth."
2. In **Chapter 5** Paul addresses several groups and situations in the context of the local church.
 - He addresses how to deal with situations of sin in the church.
 - He addresses the proper way to care for widows within the church.
 - He gives some indirect instruction regarding the family.
 - He gives instruction on how to handle cases of sin among the elders.
3. **Verses 1-2** speak on the matter of dealing with sin. Paul is addressing the proper use of rebuke. He divides the members into four groups according to age and gender. Sin knows no distinction among the various members of the church and must be addressed among all.
4. This is important for us to understand today. Too many churches today prefer to avoid addressing issues of sin altogether. If one were to try and characterize our generation it would be accurate to call it a generation of hyper-tolerance. Our culture insists that we're supposed to accept every type of perversion and embrace it in the name of tolerance and the freedom of self-expression. If we speak against sin, we are accused of hate.
5. The church must never lessen its standard of holiness. The church must strive to have a holy membership. This is why church discipline is essential for a true church.
The Belgic Confession: Article 29
The true church can be recognized if it has the following marks:
The church engages in the pure preaching of the gospel;
It makes use of the pure administration of the sacraments as Christ instituted them;
It practices church discipline for correcting faults.
In short, it governs itself according to the pure Word of God, rejecting all things contrary to it and holding Jesus Christ as the only Head. By these marks one can be assured of recognizing the true church-- and no one ought to be separated from it.
6. We are commanded by God in His Word to separate ourselves from those who persist in sin.
2 Thessalonians 3:6 NAU - "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us."

1 Corinthians 5:11 NAU - "But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler-- not even to eat with such a one."

7. Timothy's responsibility as a leader in the church was to confront sin and confront it fearlessly. He was to lead with the confidence and resolve that God commanded of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 2:3-7 NAU - "Then He said to me, "Son of man, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to a rebellious people who have rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day. ⁴ "I am sending you to them who are stubborn and obstinate children, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.' ⁵ "As for them, whether they listen or not-- for they are a rebellious house-- they will know that a prophet has been among them. ⁶ "And you, son of man, neither fear them nor fear their words, though thistles and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions; neither fear their words nor be dismayed at their presence, for they are a rebellious house. ⁷ "But you shall speak My words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious."

8. Sin must never be allowed to go unaddressed within the church.
Paul consistently expressed the importance of church discipline. But he also demanded that it be done properly.
9. In these verses Paul reminds Timothy that the church is a family and must function after the pattern of the family.
The pastor, like a loving father, should look after the welfare of his congregation. This includes admonishing them to continue in obedience and rebuking them for disobedience.
10. Since the church is a family discipline must be moderated by love. In this brief passage Paul covers how sin is to be confronted in the context of the Christian family.
It must always be conducted in a spirit of love.
11. Love demands discipline.
 - A. A parent that doesn't discipline his or her children is showing a complete disregard for their wellbeing.
Proverbs 13:24 NAU - "He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently."
Proverbs 29:15 NAU - "The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother."
 - B. True love in our spiritual family demands that we care for each other's spiritual wellbeing. We must care that all of us prosper spiritually.
1 Thessalonians 5:14 NAU - "We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone."
12. Paul is saying that love demands respect – 2 words govern this passage: "rebuke" and "appeal"
 - A. The word for "rebuke" is a strong word
 1. ἐπιπλήσσω - to chide, upbraid, rebuke
 2. This word describes a strong rebuke. It literally means "to strike." The NASB translates it well: "Do not sharply rebuke."
 3. This is not a prohibition against issuing a rebuke. Paul is giving instruction on the proper way to give the rebuke.
 4. It is essential that we comprehend and maintain a Biblical understanding of human dignity.

- a. As image bearers we have great worth in the sight of God. We must bear this in mind in all of our dealings with our fellow man. To do otherwise is to dehumanize him.
 - b. This is at the heart of the Sixth Commandment. We must treat one another with respect that reflects their character as God's image bearer.
 - 5. We have a higher obligation to show love and honor to those who are a part of the Body of Christ.
 - 6. Paul's meaning here is we must not rebuke them in such a way as to dehumanize them or diminish their position as a co-heir of the promises of God.
- B. "Appeal" to him
- 1. From the word παρακαλέω –
It means "to admonish, exhort, to console, to encourage, to comfort"
 - a. This was the work of Barnabas when he arrived at Antioch
Acts 11:23 NAU - "Then when he arrived and witnessed the grace of God, he rejoiced and *began to encourage* them all with resolute heart to remain *true to the Lord*;"
 - b. It is the same word sometimes translated comfort.
2 Corinthians 7:6 NAU - "But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus;"
 - 2. Paul isn't saying the offending member should be coddled or encouraged to continue in his sin. Rather, he is to be encouraged to flee from his sin and repent. He is to be admonished to forsake his sin, but in a spirit of love and respect.
- C. The purpose of a rebuke or of discipline is not to demean the character of the individual. He is not to be hammered with sharp words.
- 1. All should be treated with respect and dignity.
Gal. 6:1-2 NAU - "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ."
 - 2. **2 Timothy 2:24-26 NAU** - "The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will."
 - 2. The purpose confronting sin should always be to strengthen the church and each individual in the church

Paul now proceeds to address how to confront sin in various groups within the church.

Older men, younger men, older women, younger women

I. Older Men – as fathers

- A. πρεσβύτερος – can refer to the office of elder or to an older person
The context must determine how it is used. See **verse 17**
Here it is referring to older men and the honor that was to accompany their age
 - 1. Remember, age in this culture was honored. Gray hair was a blessing.
Proverbs 16:31 NAU - "A gray head is a crown of glory; It is found in the way of righteousness."
 - 2. The Bible is clear that older men are to be treated with respect
Leviticus 19:32 NAU - "You shall rise up before the grayheaded and honor the aged, and you shall revere your God; I am the LORD."
 - 3. This principle should be taught to our children. The Southern practice of saying “yes sir” and “yes ma’am” is a reflection of respect for age and position. And it is appropriate to address them by their titles rather than by first name.
- B. Timothy was to confront sinning older men in the same way he would confront his own father.
 - 1. The Bible stresses respect for one’s parents
Exodus. 20:12 NAU - "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you."
 - 2. There were stiff penalties for disrespect of parents
Proverbs 30:17 NAU - "The eye that mocks a father And scorns a mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it."
 - 3. Older men must be confronted with gentleness, respect, and love. They must not be permitted to persist in their sin. The holiness of the church must be protected. But they should be treated with gentleness.

II. The Younger Men – as brothers

- A. Not just a brother in the flesh, but more importantly a brother in the faith
These are our true brothers.
Matthew 12:47-50 NAU - "Someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You." ⁴⁸ But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" ⁴⁹ And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers! ⁵⁰ "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

- B. This forbids carrying an attitude of superiority – we must confront young men in sin as equals in the faith

Galatians 6:1-2 NAU - "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ."

- 1. Discipline doesn't mean we treat our brother as an enemy

2 Thessalonians 3:6 NAU - "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us."

2 Thessalonians 3:14-15 NAU - "If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. ¹⁵ Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

- 2. Love for our brothers in Christ must be maintained

III. The elder women – they are to be treated as mothers

- A. Like the older men, they are to be treated with love and respect

- 1. Timothy was to treat erring older women as he would his own mother

- 2. The older women should be cared for and protected.

They should be approached with honor and humility.

- B. Paul furnishes us with an example in **Phil. 4:1-3**

Although they were harming the cause of Christ at Philippi Paul dealt with them in a gentle manner. Although he corrected them he noted their service to the kingdom and considered as sisters in Christ.

Philippians 4:2-3 NAU - "I urge ($\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{e}\omega$) Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. ³ Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in *the cause of the gospel*, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life."

IV. The younger women as sisters – in all purity.

- A. Timothy was to treat erring young women as sisters in the faith.

- 1. They were to be treated with the same love and respect as the young men.

- 2. There must be particular care given with the younger women. Like the older women, they should be protected and cared for.

- 3. But Paul adds another charge here – "in all purity"

a. Timothy was to view an erring young woman as his sister – in other words he was not to regard her sexually.

b. This is especially true with young pastors although none are immune.

- B. The Book of Proverbs gives some practical advice here

- 1. Avoid looking with the eye to lust

Proverbs 6:25 NAU - "Do not desire her beauty in your heart, Nor let her capture you with her eyelids."

- a. Like Job, we must guard our eyes
Job 31:1 NAU - "I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?"
 - b. Lust begins with the eye – David is a witness to this
2 Samuel 11:2-3 NAU - "Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. ³ So David sent and inquired about the woman."
2. Great care must be taken when meeting with younger women

Conclusion:

1. Sin must always be confronted – but it must be dealt with in a proper manner.
2. If church discipline ever becomes necessary, may we handle with love, patience, fear and tears.