

8,20,26 1 Tim. 5:1-25, Practically Speaking

In this part of Paul's instruction to Timothy, we see Paul exhorting Timothy about things that are very practical; things Paul may have learned the hard way after years of watching the kinds of things that develop in Churches – some good, some not so good.

It kind of reminded me of something Paul said in 1 Cor. 7:25; "Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy."

What Paul discusses in this part of Timothy weren't issues that relate to deep theological insights that could only have been received by Paul through spiritual revelation (like the once-hidden mystery of the body of Christ or the time Peter knew exactly who Jesus was when everyone else just had opinions about His identity).

These things Paul cites are simply issues that someone spiritually mature (like Paul) would have gained through years of experiencing what works and what doesn't work in various problems, situations and functions in a local assembly. In other words, this is like a grouping of Proverbs-style insights of wisdom.

Also, what we'll see isn't complex or difficult to understand – it's very straightforward advice from an older, more experienced Christian to a younger Christian who is teachable and is in a position where he can use all the practical advice he can get. So, let's read through the first 16 verses and you'll see what I mean;

(1 Tim. 5:1-16) Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity. Honor widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God. Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. And these things command, that they may be blameless. But

if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man, well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work. But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. Therefore, I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some have already turned aside after Satan. If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the Church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.

We've talked a lot about the heavenly and spiritual nature of the Church and that our citizenship is in heaven. That which is born of flesh is flesh, but that which is born of spirit is spirit. Now that we have received a new birth into a new humanity, we are spiritual beings, not of this world.

But as true (and as amazing) as all of that is, like we saw in 1 Jn. 3:1-2;

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

There is still a great deal that we haven't yet seen about who and what we are, and in the meantime, as we grow and learn, we're in transition. Our conformity to the image of Christ is not sudden, but progressive. Our hearts and spirits may be in heaven, but our feet are on the earth – we have to live in a place that is not our

home, but it's still very much our reality. We have to work, play, eat, drink and function in whatever culture God has placed us in.

And *as long as* that is our reality, our lives are to reflect the values of God's kingdom expressed in the way we live and act among the earth-dwellers and among each other. What Paul has done in our passage in Timothy is give a blueprint for how we should treat one another in the presence of the world and of angels; just as Jesus's life expressed the Father's nature in the way the Lord communicated and acted toward those around Him until it was time to leave.

If we look at what Paul wrote through *that* lens, we'll see the heart and character of Christ *behind* the practical actions Paul is instructing us to follow. So, it's not just good Christian things to do in the Church community, it's not just obedience to a Christian religion, it's an outward demonstration of what's happening to us inwardly while we are transitioning out of the way the world thinks to the way God thinks. As our minds are renewed through spiritual growth, our behavior will express that in our actions.

The reason I stress that is because if we look at these practical behavior passages as being simply good things Christians should do rather than outward manifestations of inward growth and change, it will remain surface, sporadic, often fake and eventually it will fail and fall apart because it will have been dependent on our strength and commitment to religious duties that sustained it – those things never sustain anything long term, let alone genuinely represent the inward likeness of Christ in His people.

Our personal emphasis must be on growth. If we abide in the Vine, we will increasingly desire the fruit of the Spirit to be seen through us; but if our emphasis is on the “should” and “should not” of the Christian religion, the only thing we will desire is do what we're told to do; it will never be an organic, natural outward expression of the indwelling Christ that we are experiencing or that others are seeing in us.

When passages like this in Timothy are taught as simply being what we ought to do or not do, Christians do them because the Bible says to do them, and that's about

as far as it goes. But when the emphasis is on developing a Christ-like mindset, commands like these cease to be religious obligations and become welcome revelations to hearts that are seeking the best ways to express what they're feeling. Growing believers become hungry for ways to release the desires that are developing in them and they are grateful, not just obligated, to discover these things.

So, keeping all that in mind, we will look at some the specifics Paul says should become as natural for us as they were for our Lord – specific actions toward one another that reflect His nature being formed in us.

Paul starts with the exhortation to not “rebuke” an older person, but to treat everyone with respect and as members of the same family; because that’s what we are. They are fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters. Here’s Ironside’s take on the “do no rebuke an older man” phrase;

I take it he does not just mean an official elder; he is contrasting an elder man with a younger man. What he means is: Do not rebuke one advanced in years. If such a one needs a word of admonition, go to him in a kindly manner and speak to him as one would speak to a father. But never, as a young man, upbraid an older man, because if you do it, will only show your own ill-breeding and your lack of subjection to the Spirit of God.

You can see, just in this alone, how Satan has flipped our culture upside down. It’s rare to find younger people having, let alone showing, respect for old people. We live in a society that is so self-oriented that the only thing which matters is what I think and want. On the spiritual side of things, it’s another move of the enemy to create a generation of young people who are “unteachable”, especially from old people who (quote) “don’t get it”.

Paul doesn’t say that a young person can’t question an older person, only that the sense of “rebuke” is not to be the atmosphere of whatever question or statement they might have. When Christ is seen in His people, the atmosphere will be patience and love; but when the flesh rules, those qualities are missing.

Then Paul raises the issue of widows. If they still have family that can care for them, that should happen first, but if they are “widows indeed” (in other words, no family, they’re alone) the Church should take care of them. And again, growing believers instinctively want to care for anyone in need, so they are grateful to get some clear direction on this and will jump at the opportunity to help. Non-growing believers will likely look at this the same way they do at most exhortations – they want to know if they have to do it, what it will cost them, and is there any way to get someone else to do this? Religion vs. spiritual life / Law vs. Grace.

Paul gives some further definition of who qualifies for this assistance in vs’s 9-10;

Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man, well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

Women who are over 60, who were faithful in their marriage and compassionate to others rise to the top of the assistance list. If they are younger, able to work, and especially if they use their time to stray or ignore the faith, they are not on the list.

I found it interesting that Paul seems to assume that young, unmarried women, are in danger of falling away – that takes us back to the woman’s need for leadership to avoid deception. So, Paul says they should get married, focus on the home and develop the characteristics that honor her position. Think about Paul’s logic and emphasis on this in vs’s 11-15;

Refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith (Christ as their first love). And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. Therefore, I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some have already turned aside after Satan.

That's pretty intense, and parts of it need some explanation. The phrase "wanton against Christ, (they) desire to marry". Here's an explanation of that warning from John Phillips;

Paul had doubtless known many widows, young and old. He had observed that as soon as their grief subsided, the young widows often turned their attention toward finding another husband. Eventually their desire for the pleasures of married life will alienate them from the commitment to Christ expected of certified widows; their natural desires become stronger than their devotion to Christ, and distract them from Christ. These young widows might begin to feel the impulse of sexual desires and begin to feel sensuous impulses that ultimately alienate them from Christ. The verb expresses the young widow's desire influenced by her emotions. In this context she desires to remarry based on her sexual impulses rather than from submission to the Lord. Paul was using strong language indeed. The apostle could envision a young widow grieving over her loss and anxious about her future. Who would support her? She considers making a vow to live solely for Christ. Although she is sure that her faith and love will never wane, she might well be in danger of making promises to the Lord that she will not be able to keep. She makes her vow, then an attractive man comes along. She becomes interested in him and begins to rebel against the restraints imposed upon her by her own vow. More and more she resents the life of sacrifice and supplication that she has assumed. At this point, she might plunge into the round of the worldly pleasure she renounced when her heart was still hurting.

So, they can potentially go all the way from being a grieving widow to someone who has (quote) "turned aside after Satan". Their protection from this path is to remarry a godly man so that together they can support one another, meet each other's sexual needs, and now with someone to help them, they can resist the pull of the enemy and the world.

If Paul wrote something like that today, we'd probably say he's overreacting or paranoid; but as Phillips pointed out, Paul had apparently seen this happen often enough that he knew it was a real danger, not an exaggerated concern on his part.

Unless the Lord has called and gifted someone to be single (like Paul), it's generally safer for young men and women to marry. Each needs what the other one has to offer. God can graciously override the power of the temptations for a single person, but in relation to the context of Paul's discussion of widows in 1 Tim. 5, marriage is preferable.

Sometimes when we think about cultural issues like marriage and widowhood, our first response is to try and find cultural or societal solutions, but Paul always goes to the spiritual realities influencing these things first. He knows our weaknesses and he knows how little the world has to offer. He knows we need to face certain realities of the desires and weaknesses within ourselves and that we need to search out *God's* wisdom and *His* solutions before giving into our own ideas or the world's solutions. This is just another real-life illustration of the validity of passages like Prov. 3:5-7;

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes.

This passage in 1 Tim. 5 is one place, in the context of young women and widows, where God has given us *His* understanding so that if we're ever in a similar situation, we'll know what the Lord's wisdom advises us to do.

Obviously, the Bible is overflowing with practical wisdom on how to deal with an infinite number of dangers and options in our journey; so, the more we know of what God's Word says, the more the Holy Spirit has to work with to bring to our remembrance what we need, when we need it. The better we know the Bible, the safer we are when difficult or even spiritually deadly circumstances force a decision from us. "Our own understanding" or the understanding of the world will never match knowing the Lord's wisdom on anything, so trusting in Him and discovering

His ways is something that has to, at some point, become our first response to everything we come up against.

As one author put it simply; “Knowing the truth is necessary to avoid making self-destructive decisions. Not knowing the truth is by nature inevitably self-destructive.” Which, of course, is why in 3 Jn. 1:4, John wrote, “I have no greater joy that to hear my children are walking in the truth.” With John’s immense emphasis in his letters on love, you would think hearing that his children are walking in love would be his *greatest* joy. But both John and Paul knew that as vital as love is in our relationships with each other, it is truth alone that keeps us safe, spiritually alive and *able* to love as Christ loves.

I was told a few weeks ago that one of the major characteristics of the younger Christian generation is a lack of desire for in-depth study of God’s Word. They love worshipping, hearing sermons that skim the surface and having social interaction in a Christian context, but they generally feel that “their own understanding” of things is sufficient to “lean unto”, so their focus is on a combination of entertainment, inspiration, emotional and social experiences, and they don’t feel the need to spend time doing boring things like studying theology. The enemy, of course loves and encourages this because it makes them vulnerable to a myriad of deceptions they never see coming.

Now, let’s move into Paul’s next section. In 1 Tim. 5:17 & 18 Paul repeats something he’s written about to Timothy and to other Churches, which we’ve also studied before, so I won’t spend a lot of time on it;

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer is worthy of his wages.”

In Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus he is dealing primarily with the subject of Church leadership, and one thing he doesn’t want Timothy to overlook is that it takes a great deal of time and effort to teach God’s Word accurately and

thoroughly. Because of that, those who do this should be financially supported so that they have that time.

There are other reasons this is important, which we've seen before, but the reason Paul focuses on in 1 Tim. is illustrated historically in the early Church by Peter in Acts 6:1-5;

Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude.

One thing this shows is that Peter clearly understood two important things about what he calls "the ministry of the word". First, Peter knew that along with prayer, this was the primary work of someone called to teach the scriptures.

(John 21:15-17) When they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.

With that kind of repetition from the Lord, I'm sure Peter got the point. The Lord gave Peter the gift of teaching, of feeding His sheep; so, if Peter truly loves the Lord and intends to be faithful to that gifting, this is what he'll do.

When Satan tried to tempt the Lord with bread, Jesus' response was "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

There's food for the body, which is important; and there's food for the soul and spirit, which is more important. We've already seen where Paul admonished Timothy to feed (lit. nourish) himself and those he taught on sound doctrine. This became their means of both growth and protection from deception.

In Acts when Peter had to make a decision about what his most important responsibility was, he knew that it was prayer and the ministry of the Word; nothing else could be allowed to interfere with this.

So, in our passage in 1 Tim. 5, Paul is instructing Timothy to make sure that his Church at Ephesus understood that those in the congregation who were called to teach the scriptures should be financially supported by those who are taught. The teacher is worthy of his hire and a grateful Church would acknowledge that by providing support. 1 Tim. 4:18; "(Do) not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain . . . The laborer is worthy of his wages."

As we saw when we studied this principle in Paul's letters to Corinth, the decision of who will be supported and by what amount is a private decision between the student and the Lord. Paul gave guidelines that focused on the *heart* of the one giving, "As a man purposes in his own heart, so let him give. . . ."

Finally, Paul's summary of this was seen in 1 Cor. 9:8-11;

"You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?

We're obviously living in a different time than Paul and Timothy. Churches were in houses; technology didn't exist; things were personal. What Paul is talking about not only made sense, but Christians knew who they were getting their feeding from and they were more than willing to return the favor. It wasn't legalism or obligation; it was gratitude. Things were simpler and much more personal in the

early church. The combination of technology and the mega-movements have robbed us of much of that.

I've been teaching for over 50 years. I've (quote) "sown spiritual things" to others. Sometimes I've gotten support, sometimes I haven't, but regardless, 1 Cor. 9:16-17 still applies; Paul said,

I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the good news! For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.

So, all of us, like Timothy, who are called to teach God's Word are under an obligation to do this. It's a calling and a stewardship (a responsibility); so, with or without the response of financial support, giving up is not an option. Now, if *God* closes me down, that's different, but as long as I'm getting His leading when I pray and study, and there is even one person who wants to hear it, I'll keep going.

Ok, back to 1 Tim. 5. Right after Paul talks about "not muzzling the oxen", he adds this in vs's 19-20; "Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear."

The "two or three witnesses" requirement is drawn from Deut. 17:6 and 19:15; it's also seen in Matt. 18:15-16 and 2 Cor. 13:1. I'll read the two New Testament passages;

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'

This will be the third time I am coming to you. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."

So, we know that gossip or rumors exist and both the Lord and Paul want the Church to be diligent in confirming any accusation against a fellow Christian by making sure at least two or three 'witnesses' back it up.

But the next statement in vs. 20 needs some explanation. I've never personally seen this in action in a Church ("rebuking an elder in the presence of all"), but if it wasn't an option that was sometimes needed, Paul wouldn't have told Timothy to make sure it did happen when it *was* needed.

Keep in mind, though, that the early Churches fellowshiped in homes, not buildings. It may be less awkward to think of something like this happening in a group of 10 or 15 people, all who knew each other and likely would have agreed with this action, than to try and picture this happening in a large Church with hundreds or thousands of people watching this take place on stage. I'm not saying that could never happen, I'm only saying that in the historical context of this exhortation by Paul, the setting would have been significantly different than most Churches today.

Now, let's dig a little bit into the "sinning" Paul is talking about that would cause this. First, the word "sinning" is "harmartano" which is a present tense verb, meaning that this is a person, an elder, who is "continuing in ongoing sin". I'll share a few commentaries by various authors to give you an idea of what is happening;

From Hendriksen's Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles;

Elders who walk in sinful ways must not be spared. In fact, their sin must be punished even more severely than that of others. Timothy must not only bring their sin home to their conscience, but in their case he must do this, not privately, but publicly, that is, in the presence of the entire congregation, so that the remaining elders may also become filled with godly fear of wrong-doing.

From author Guy King;

This publicity may be a very painful proceeding, but it will prove salutary in the end, if its effect is to pull others up sharp. What a striking instance of such publicity we have in the incident in which Achan's transgression was dragged out into the light and he was punished in the eyes of all, Joshua 7:16-26. And how startling was the open treatment of Ananias and Sapphira, which resulted in "great fear (coming) upon all the Church," (Acts

5). A worthy leader is to be an example to the flock; an unworthy leader is to be a warning to all.

And William Barclay wrote:

Those who persist in sin are to be publicly rebuked. That public rebuke had a double value. It sobered the sinner into a consideration of his ways, and wakened him into a sense of shame; and it made others have a care that they did not involve themselves in a like humiliation. The threat of publicity is no bad thing, if it keeps a man in the right way, even from fear. A wise leader will know when there is a time to keep things quiet, and a time for public rebuke. Whatever happens, the Church must never give the world the impression that it is condoning sin. But we must never forget that ultimately the purpose of discipline is restoration, not revenge.

Finally, in the last part of 1 Tim. 5:21-25, Paul gets more personal with Timothy himself. Paul's admonitions are intimate, loving and caring; they are also 'rapid-fire' bullet points that change subjects as if Paul is "wrapping things up" with thoughts flashing through his mind and coming out as helpful recommendations to Timothy personally;

I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality. Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure. No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities. Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later. Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

The "elect angels" refers primarily to the principalities and powers in the heavenly realms which did *not* rebel with Lucifer against God. These angels have been both protecting and watching us with fascination for 2000 years.

(Eph. 3:10-11) ... now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Heb. 1:14) (They are) ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation.

God is revealing His purpose for the Church Age (the creation of a new humanity), to the amazement of His angels.

And under that benediction, Paul tells Timothy to do all he has written about without hesitation and without showing favoritism or leaving anything incomplete or unfinished. Once Timothy knows what should be done, he is to do it completely – it's the spiritual version of Israel conquering Canaan (which they *didn't* do completely, but should have).

In vs. 22 Timothy is encouraged to not place a person in authority without first doing a thorough examination of their qualifications. He also tells Timothy to “keep *yourself* pure” – don't compromise and give into the temptation of either sin or people-pleasing.

The wine recommendation is interesting. Here's some historical information on Timothy's circumstances that might help you understand why Paul brought that up;

Timothy was a conscientious person. He did not want to be accused of being the kind of individual who "lingers beside his wine" (1 Tim. 3:3). Hence, he had formed the habit of drinking nothing but water. However, in the Orient the water is often far from "safe." Those who have been there--including, for example, those who were there while serving in the armed forces--know this. If one insists on drinking nothing but unboiled water, attacks of dysentery may result. In fact, something worse might happen! Consequently, for the sake of helping Timothy to overcome his stomach-troubles and related ailments, which seem to have been coming to him "thick and fast," Paul advises him to stop being purely a water-drinker. Timothy must use some wine, not over-much wine, but some wine.

I found another author who quoted W.C. Fields as an attempt at humor. Fields said, "I only keep a bottle around in case of snakebites. I also keep a small snake."

Then finally, in vs's 24 & 25 Paul closes this chapter with a reminder to Timothy that God sees what man does not see (vs. 24);

Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later.

Here's a comment on this by the author of "The Daily Bread;

A woman had been maligned and misrepresented by an envious co-worker. She was frustrated because her attempts to confront her in private had only made matters worse. So, she decided to swallow her pride and let the matter go. She said, "I'm glad the Lord knows the true situation." She expressed a profound truth that both warns and comforts.

Then in vs. 25;

The good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

We may not see the value of hidden sacrifices and service to others, but the Lord is keeping a record and will reward that service. J.B. Phillips wrote;

Men flocked to the standard raised by Martin Luther. Queen Mary of Scotland feared John Knox and his preaching more than she feared all of the armies of England. David Livingstone was honored in life and death by an admiring nation. George Müller's funeral closed down Bristol. Church history books are full of the stories of such people.

(Heb. 6:10) God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

So, no matter where you live or what your circumstances are, any obedience you give in response to Paul's exhortations in this chapter we've looked at are seen and will be rewarded by the Lord, even if no one else sees the sacrifice you've made.

God is glorified and others are helped by our action, not by our “learning”.

(Jas. 2:14-17; 1:22, 25) What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? . . . If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus, also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead . . . be doers of the word, and not hearers only . . . he who is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

James is more direct than Paul, but their point is the same. It won’t do us any good to learn God’s will about something, jot it down as a thing learned, but not act on it. This applies to all of us of course, but it’s especially true in the context of Church leadership. Paul’s pastoral epistles are directed primarily to those in leadership; James’ letter is addressed to all believers; but they are both expressing the mind of Christ in what they’ve written.

Here’s a paraphrase of Paul’s last verse in 1 Tim. 5; “The good works of some are clearly evident (openly manifest to all), and those that are otherwise (those that are private or done for only a few) cannot be hidden (for God records and blesses all that is done for His children – whatever we do, even for the least of these, we do for our Savior; our sacrifices are felt and registered by the Head of the Body they are touching).” As Spark’s put it;

We need to get a better idea of what the service of the Lord is than that it is pulpits. service for the Lord is just as important when it is rendering some kindly act of helpful service to some rather depressed child of God in the ordinary domestic things of daily life; it is strengthening the hands of the Lord's children, it is coming in to check the crushing overweight of the adversary, coming alongside to lift up the testimony in some life or home where the enemy is trying to crush the testimony

There are many priests of God whose voices have never been heard in public, who have never been seen in a public way, who are unknown, hidden

very often within the assembly and yet in secret history fulfilling a most valuable ministry. We have to come to the point where we abandon ourselves to it because of our appreciation of our Master.

So, never downplay the smallest sacrifice you make for someone else.

Next week we'll look at 1 Tim. chapter 6.