

Biblical Leadership: A Study of 1st Timothy
Lesson 12 “Honoring Elders”

I. Introduction - We are in a series on *1st Timothy*, which is a letter Paul wrote to Timothy in approximately 62 A.D. after he installed him as the pastor of the church in Ephesus.

A. This is personal letter, Paul wrote to mentor Timothy as Timothy took over one of the most significant churches in the 1st century (about 7 years after the revival that started the church). Paul wrote both to speak directly into Timothy’s life and also teach him how to address challenges the church was having (doctrinal, prayer, women, how to pick leaders, and how people handled money.)

B. We are called to make spiritual sons like Paul did with Timothy. Replication is the key to saturation.

C. Tonight we are going to learn an important lesson about the importance of taking care of those who help us carry out the mission. We want to be careful in whom we select, but when we select folks we need to ensure they are taken care of financially (if possible) and we need to protect them from accusation.

II. Honoring Elders

A. **1 Timothy 5:17-24**

1. **Verse 17** Elder - *presbyteros* - Mature one. One who rules/oversees. Some elders oversee in word and doctrine. These are worthy of double honor (double payment for their work. This verse establishes the principle of paying ministry staff.

2. **Verse 18** Paul quotes an Old Testament passage and Jesus to verify it was appropriate to pay elders.

a. **Deuteronomy 25:4** Only a cheap or mean-spirited owner would put a muzzle on an ox so it couldn’t eat while it was treading out the grain. This keeps the ox strong so he can do more work.

b. **Luke 10:3-9** Paul quotes **verse 7**, but the context is people who labor in ministry need to be taken care of financially by those they minister to.

c. This doesn’t mean ministers always need to be paid. There were times Paul would give up this right for the betterment of the people so they didn’t think he was only in it for the money.

i. **1 Thessalonians 2:9**

ii. **Acts 20:34-25** Paul made tents while in Ephesus and didn’t live off of offerings.

iii. Andrew Wommack example - **1 Corinthians 9:14** - You live to the measure you preach. If you are preaching to 5 in a Bible study

you shouldn't expect those 5 to meet all your needs. If you are preaching to a larger crowd, you should.

d. Business application - You hire for growth. Many small businesses stay small because the leader tries to do everything themselves and doesn't add the help necessary to take on more work. Recipe for stagnation.

3. **Verse 19** Paul quotes **Deuteronomy 17:6** and **Deuteronomy 19:15**. Multiple witnesses are required to establish truth and protect elders against reckless allegations from those who don't like their decisions.

a. Ex: If someone says I'm stealing money from the church, there needs to be a second witness and/or an investigation to determine if what was said is true.

b. How to understand in the light of **Matthew 18:15-18** and IHOP. If a church leader has been accused of physically or sexually harming someone, the alleged victim should not go to their alleged abuser alone. Must use common sense as God wants to protect the sheep. The leader should be removed unless the story can be corroborated by other witnesses/evidence.

4. **Verse 20** Leaders who sin before all need to be corrected publicly because leaders have influence. Ex: Peter and **Galatians 2:11-14**.

5. **Verse 21** We are to be impartial in our decision making. When we remember God, Jesus, and the angels are watching it should encourage us to slow down so we can take time to hear all sides and be fair.

6. **Verse 22** We aren't supposed to place people in leadership roles without really getting to know them and to take time to hear God. When we do and lay hands on them, in a sense we are partakers of their sins if they get into sin.

7. **Verse 23** Paul switches from talking about elders Timothy would appoint to Timothy and told him to drink wine for his infirmities because the water was bad in Ephesus. Paul wanted to take care of Timothy.

8. **Verses 24-25** This passage is a reminder to get to know people. Some people show their true colors fast (good or bad) while others take time to show who they really are. We need to take time to get to know people before we place them in a position of authority.

a. **Matthew 13:28-30**

b. Give people small assignments and see how they do - these are tests.

III. Conclusion - The principle we learned tonight is leaders need to take care of those who help them lead/run an organization or ministry. If we'll take care of people, they'll take care of us.

A. Dismiss Online Audience

B. Break Into Small Groups

IV. Discussion Questions

1. What was your top takeaway from this teaching?
2. Tonight we learned a major responsibility of leaders is to take care of those who help them run the church/ministry/organization. Talk about a time you worked or served under someone and they did not make sure you were cared for. How did this impact your loyalty and work performance?
3. Talk about a time you worked or served under someone and they **did** make sure you were cared for. How did this impact your loyalty and work performance? How can you apply this lesson to others you lead or have influence over?
4. Tonight we learned that when leaders sin it can impact large numbers of people. Have you ever seen this. How did it affect your relationship with God? What did you do to overcome?
5. Have you seen church leaders place people in areas of responsibility/leadership too quickly (without getting to really know them). What were the results? How can you take this lesson and apply it to your life?