



B. Instruction for Widow Support (1 Timothy 5:9-10)

1. The rejection (1 Timothy 5:9)
 - a. The rejecters—"Let not"
 - (1) In the English language, we have a principle where the word *you* can be understood without having to be included. For example, a sentence could read, "Go to the store," rather than, "You go to the store."
 - (2) While the biblical pronoun would be singular and therefore "thee" or "thou," the principle of an understood subject also exists in scripture.
 - (3) That being said, in the immediate context, Timothy was responsible for being the gatekeeper for who would or would not be accepted. In the end, one would think this responsibility would fall at the feet of the pastor, but also of those who made up the leadership and membership of the body of believers.
 - b. The rejected—"a widow...under threescore years old"
 - (1) The modern thought
 - a) The modern understanding of fairness is that everybody has to be treated equal.
 - b) In that line of thinking, all widows would be equal and the same and treated likewise.
 - (2) The truth
 - a) However, the Bible is clear that some widows were widows, but not widows indeed.
 - b) As such, while all widows are to be treated with kindness and love, some of them have to be denied certain benefits.
 - c) The reality is that refusal to reject some from the number would hinder the ability to take care of those who most needed the assistance.
 - c. The group—"into the number"
 - (1) Obviously, this would represent the group of those chosen for support.
 - (2) The word *number* was historically and biblically used to describe a group composed of people based upon some commonality (Luke 22:3; 2 Corinthians 10:12).
2. The requirements (1 Timothy 5:9-10)
 - a. Age requirements (1 Timothy 5:9)
 - (1) The threshold—"threescore years old"
 - a) In this context, the word *score* means twenty.
 - b) The overall number is determined by multiplying the number preceding the word *score* times twenty.
 - c) This is provable historically, but more importantly, it is provable in scripture (Genesis 46:26; Exodus 1:5).
 - (2) The rejected
 - a) The younger widows (1 Timothy 5:11)
 - b) The younger women (1 Timothy 5:14)



- b. Experience/character requirements (1 Timothy 5:9-10)
 - (1) Her marriage (1 Timothy 5:9)
 - a) It is unwritten, but assumed that the woman was a good wife.
 - b) What is recorded is that she was to have been the wife of one man.
 - i) This is not a rebuke of polygamy. Even if you believe that polygamy was commonplace in the time in which Timothy lived, it is commonly agreed that this almost exclusively included multiple women for one man and not multiple men for one woman.
 - ii) That being said, the message of the passage is that this woman has only been married one time and only to one man.
 - (2) Her treatment of others (1 Timothy 5:10)
 - a) Children
 - i) The conversation of children is an interesting one.
 - (a) A widow with living children was not to be considered for the *honour* or *relief* given by the church (1 Timothy 5:4, 16).
 - (b) Therefore, it would seem that if she had children that she no longer had them, likely suggesting they had died and left her truly desolate.
 - (c) At the same time, as we will examine in a moment, the suggestion may or may not be that of a woman giving birth to and raising children.
 - ii) The question of requirement
 - (a) The presence of the word *if* has led some to believe that this was not a requirement, but a suggestion.
 - (b) However, the word *if* is also used in regards to:
 - (i) The lodging of strangers
 - (ii) The washing of saints' feet
 - (iii) The relieving of the afflicted
 - (iv) The following of every good work
 - (c) Therefore, it would seem as though the bringing up of children was more a requirement.
 - (d) Again, it is understood that she hath done this in a God-pleasing manner.
 - iii) Further consideration
 - (a) In the immediate context, the bringing up of children is partnered with:
 - (i) Lodging strangers
 - (ii) Washing the feet of saints
 - (iii) Relieving the afflicted



- (b) The commonality of these things is that they pertained to people outside the widow's immediate family.
 - (c) The point of the passage could be that the widow saw other children (perhaps orphans) in need who were not her own and cared for them as though they were.
 - (d) In other words, she cared for others and now it is her time to be required.
- b) Strangers
- i) Lodging strangers is not directly stated as a New Testament command, but her willingness to do so demonstrates a heart of hospitality.
 - ii) While this was not directly commanded, proper consideration and treatment of strangers is quite biblical.
 - (a) The strangers are not to be vexed or oppressed (Exodus 22:21; Exodus 23:9; Leviticus 19:33-34).
 - (b) Provisions were to be made for the strangers (Leviticus 19:10; Leviticus 23:22).
 - (c) The stranger was to be loved (Deuteronomy 10:18-19).
 - (d) Compassion opened homes to strangers (Job 31:32).
 - (e) Believers were warned not to forget to entertain strangers (Hebrews 13:2).
- c) Saints
- i) She had washed the feet of the saints.
 - ii) This is not to be confused as being an ordinance of the church as some have supposed, but a practice of hospitality (Genesis 18:4; Luke 7:44; John 13:14-15).
- d) Afflicted
- i) She relieved the afflicted.
 - ii) Again, this is a practice of hospitality (Psalm 82:3; Proverbs 22:22).
 - iii) Additionally, this is a great reminder of the law of sowing and reaping (Galatians 6:7-9).
 - (a) She cared for the afflicted in their affliction.
 - (b) God was going to care for her through the church in her affliction.
- (3) Her works (1 Timothy 5:10)
- a) The testimony of her works
 - i) The spread of her testimony—"well reported of"
 - ii) The cause of her testimony—"for good works"
 - b) The manner of her works
 - i) The effort of her works—"she have diligently followed"
 - ii) The character of her works—"every good work"