

# 1 Timothy 5:17-6:2

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Date: 17 June 2013

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[ 0 : 00 ] Again, the passage is 1 Timothy 5, verse 17, through 6, verse 2, page 965. Please stand with me for the reading of God's Word. Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.

For the Scripture says, You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain, and the laborer deserves his wages. Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. In the presence of God, and of Christ Jesus, and of the elect angels, I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality.

Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure. No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

The sins of some people are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others appear later. So also good works are conspicuous, and even those that are not cannot remain hidden.

[ 1 : 18 ] Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled.

Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers. Rather, they must serve all the better, since those who benefit by their good service are believers and beloved.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Good afternoon to you.

It's good to be able to worship with you in God's house on today. The privilege of preaching God's word, hearing it in preparation, hearing it even as I proclaim it on today.

Join me in prayer. Heavenly Father, thank you for your word, your people, in this moment. We pray that in all things you would be glorified through your Son, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 2 : 27 ] May the words of my mouth, the meditations of my heart, even as I proclaim your truth, be acceptable in your sight.

O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer. Amen. The text before us today includes chapter 6 and verses 1 and 2, but my main focus will be on chapter 5, verses 17 through 25.

I was thinking when Drayton was reading, it almost seemed somewhat like a non-sequitur going from talking about elders to slaves.

But the word honor that we see in our text on today, chapter 5, verse 17, it is the connecting term, the connecting term with what has preceded the text, and even the term that what follows.

It connects these three seemingly potentially disparate parts. It connects them together. What does honor mean in the text that is before us?

[ 3 : 44 ] It means to treat with high regard, to give great consideration. It means to show respect or to show care.

And according to last week's text, which was about widows and how they should be treated in the family of God, the widows, or worthy widows, were to be honored with support, material support, from the church.

In chapter 6, verse 1, again, you see the term there, where it's the slaves or the slave masters are to be considered worthy of honor by the slaves, those who were under the yoke.

I'm not going to say very much about that because I really want to say a lot about chapter 5, verses 17 through 25, but also, as Dave mentioned a little bit earlier, we're going to be doing a sermon series in the fall from Ephesians, and that particular slave-master relationship also comes into view in Ephesians chapter 6.

But let me say just briefly that in chapter 6, verses 1 and 2, it's a charge to slaves, those under the yoke, who were in a subordinate social relationship.

[ 5 : 10 ] They were to show respect to those who owned them and the reason that they would do it so that God and the gospel would not be respected, disrespected, in the world.

The conduct of the slaves then could have bearing on how people viewed God and their faith, and guess what, friends?

So does ours, huh? conduct, your conduct, and my conduct matters for both God and the gospel, the reputation of both in the world.

And I would pray that you and I, regardless of where you are on the social ladder, that your behavior, O. King James says, your conversation, the way that you conduct your life will be done in honor before God.

Well, let's look at chapter 5, verses 17 through 25. This particular passage, and it's a great one, friends, it concerns church leaders, and here they are called elders, and it also not only concerns the elders or the officers, it also concerns the office that they hold.

[ 6 : 35 ] Huh? Honor for widows, honor for masters, and in, verse 17, honor for the elders.

Now, the word that we see, elder, in verse 17 is different from, as Dave would say, folks like John Mulholland and me, that you see in chapter 5, verse 1, those who have a little mileage, and along with that mileage, there's some wisdom that goes along with mileage.

So it's not all bad that the knees are not what they used to be, and our vertical leap is not what it used to be. A little wisdom with mileage.

But honor is a good umbrella word, not only that we see explicitly in verse 17, but I think it is a good umbrella word for the entire verses 17 through 25.

Those who occupy the office of elder and the office itself are to be honored. And what I want us to see in these verses is the following, and if you want a big idea, this is what I hope that you would grasp and sort of take away with you from the service zone this afternoon.

[ 7 : 48 ] Here it is. Church leaders who protect the church and God's name from dishonor are to be honored.

Church leaders who protect the church, God's people, and God's name from dishonor by how their behavior as well as through their ministry, what they proclaim, God's truth, these are the kind of men that are to be honored.

Unfortunately, there are those who occupy the office who disgrace themselves. They disgrace the office, and they disgrace God and cause the gospel and God to be held in disrepute in this particular world.

Earlier this week, I got a text from my nephew with a message making me aware that a prominent pastor, nationally known minister, had been arrested in the Atlanta area for assaulting his 15-year-old daughter.

You know how it is on the internet. After the article, there then is a lot of people make a lot of comments, and this is one of the comments after the article.

[ 9 : 19 ] They never practice what they preach. An indictment against this particular church leader and perhaps others too.

May it not be said of us, whether you are a church leader or otherwise, that we never practice what we preach.

A few weeks ago, a lesser-known clergyman from North Carolina got more press than he bargained for when he called for gays to be rounded up and put inside an electric fence.

Can you believe that? And the list could go on and on about types of clergy misconduct, saying and doing things that really don't advance the cause of Christ in this world, but oftentimes bringing shame and disrepute.

News about the good guys doesn't travel as far and as fast, does it? But there are scores of pastors in the city, in the nation, in the world who love God and love His people.

[ 10 : 34 ] May we never forget that. You don't hear about the pastor that rises up early, goes to the homes of those whose marriages and families are on the brink, and spends time counseling from God's Word and praying that God would make the individuals and the home whole.

You don't hear about the one that the pastor that invites wayward people into their homes who labor weekly to get the gospel right in order that they might nourish the people of God.

How do you respond to the pastor who is a credit to God, a credit to the gospel in this world, and labors that those who would follow Him would be the same?

How do you respond to that kind of person? Well, I believe that the passage on this afternoon really helps us and enables us to see how you and I, because though a pastor, guess what?

I've got pastors. There are six of us, and each of the men that I had the privilege of working with ministers to me, and I respect them, I honor them, honor them, and I am in various ways pastored by them, but not only by them, our volunteer elders who are here, they shepherd us also.

[ 12 : 02 ] But there's several things. I want you to note four things. The first one we see is in verses 17 and 18. How do you honor the pastor?

You honor them with appreciation that includes adequate compensation. You honor them with appreciation that includes adequate compensation.

Their work is hard. Huh? Now again, as I mentioned, the elders that are mentioned here in this particular verse, verse 17, different from the older men mentioned in chapter 5, verse 1.

These are those who occupy the office of an elder. The term elder is used in Titus 1 and 4, and it actually is synonymous with the word overseer that we see in chapter 3, verses 1 through 7.

Huh? The word overseer is associated with their work. They look over. They watch over. They care for God's people and the affairs of the church.

[ 13 : 14 ] The elder speaks of their maturity. It speaks of their dignity, their gravitas, if you will. Huh? And if you notice here in the text that the word elder is plural, huh?

The oversight of God's people where there are qualified people to do so is not the responsibility of one person.

Again, you see the plurality of elders, and that's a New Testament kind of concept that there is more than one who has oversight of God's people. Huh? A team of elders have been charged with the oversight of the household of God.

And such men were to be recognized and appreciated for their work. Hard work.

And not only that, do you see, look at the verse that says that they are considered to be worthy of double honor or two-fold honor. Well, what does that mean?

[ 14 : 20 ] How do you give double honor or two-fold honor to a pastor or an elder? Here's the idea behind that. They are to be honored by respectful submission to their authority and by proper compensation.

Submission to their authority as well as by proper compensation. Now, there are some that see in verse 17 that you may have been a part of churches that have ruling elders and teaching elders.

That's where this, that particular view or that concept, it comes from this particular passage. And there are some that would distinguish the roles. But that's a legitimate way of viewing what we see here.

But another likely one being that the terms are covering the comprehensive work of the pastorate rather than being the divisions, though some people, some churches might do that.

But I believe that more than likely the comprehensive work of the pastorate on the elders therein to watch over God's people but also to minister to them through the preaching of God's Word.

[ 15 : 35 ] Because where God's Word is preached, God's voice is heard. Not the authority of man, but it's the very voice of God and therein lies the authority.

What is clear is that those who labor in this way are to be supported. And from the context, the support that's in view is really, it's material support.

You see that in verse 18? For the Scripture says, you shall not muzzle an ox when it shreds out the grain and the laborer deserves his wages.

Verse 18, Paul uses Scripture to support what he's saying. And notice the picture that you see there is that of laborer, the laborer, and you got the muzzling, the ox that's trading out the grain.

Again, it speaks about the labor, the intense kind of labor that's reflected in those but it's also reflected in the pastorate itself.

[ 16 : 42 ] One Scripture he uses, Old Testament, Deuteronomy, and then he quotes Jesus from the Gospels who says, the laborer is worthy of his power. Muzzling the ox that treads out the grain would be something that would be cruel and inhumane.

The context of Jesus' words was when he was sending out his disciples on a mission, a pre-mission mission while he was still with them. What's the idea, Pastor Jay?

When leaders labor, they are to be recognized and rewarded, commended, and compensated. The tending of the flock of God is indeed labor.

In this particular word, here's our word again, we saw it a few weeks ago. But what that word means, it is labor or toil to the point of exhaustion and sweat.

Spiritual labor, emotional labor, also with physical components to it. At Holy Trinity Church, we're fortunate not only to have two pastors in this congregation and six pastors church-wide, but we have a great group of committed laborers, lay elders, who minister without remuneration.

[ 18 : 04 ] And you'll find them early morning meetings, late evening meetings, meetings before their jobs, meetings after their jobs, sometimes even meetings during their lunch breaks.

Men, pastors, shepherds, all, some of us have the privilege of doing this and making a living of doing it, but others are laboring for the advancement of the gospel to see the seat of Chicago transformed by the power of the gospel.

Such men, friends, are to be honored. when church leaders labor well, respect them and compensate them fairly.

Don't be stingy. And when I say this to Holy Trinity Church, I'm sort of speaking to the choir because you all are not stingy with your pastors and we deeply appreciate it.

But you may be here not a member of this church. how are you doing in taking care of your pastor. Pastors, don't be stingy.

[ 19 : 15 ] Verse 19 helps us to see another way to honor church leaders and pastors. In verse 17 and 18, it is expressed positively what you are to do.

And in verse 19, it is expressed negatively. You see that? Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

What do we see here? Honor them by not rushing to judgment with everything that you hear about them. Honor them by not rushing to judgment about everything that you hear about them.

Satan works overtime to tarnish the reputation of discrediting pastors and other church leaders.

Church leaders can be easy targets, easy targets for accusation. Unfortunately, friends, there are those who are looking to say, I told you so.

[ 20 : 23 ] malicious, mean-spirited, motivated by pride and other impure motives.

They're looking for the stumbling of the minister. They seek to make themselves look good by making them look bad.

I was in New York about a month ago. I picked up a newsletter. I was at Redeemer Presbyterian Church and it was an old newsletter but it was featuring a new pastoral family that was coming to be one of the lead pastors there.

Beautiful family, wife, two daughters had their pictures there. But I found it's written in the first person and I found what he had to say in the last paragraph very, very interesting.

As he was talking about he was glad to be there but here he was up front coming in and he says this, one very important disclaimer, I will disappoint you.

[ 21 : 30 ] Isn't it comforting that ministry isn't about great people doing great things, it's about broken, deeply flawed people discovering the power of the gospel and then living each day desperately dependent upon it because they know their life depends completely upon it and this is what he ends, he says I join you as one such man.

And we can say that too. All pastors can say the same thing. We are imperfect people but in spite of our imperfections unwarranted accusations will come.

Let me tell you a few things that people will do. People will put words in the pastor's mouth that he didn't say and then they will twist words that he does say.

They will report that the pastor is in places where he hasn't been, scrutinize his lifestyle or over scrutinize the lifestyle because why?

The pastor, the elder is a target and a big target. But verse 19, notice again what it says. Don't admit a charge. What is to happen when a church leader is accused of not being honorable?

[ 22 : 54 ] Listen to this and hear this closely. Accusation, friends, is not to be equated with condemnation. condemnation. Because we can rust to judgment.

Condemnation is a legal declaration of guilt. And sometimes we take accusations as legitimate or factual condemnations.

Beware. When people hear something juicy, you know what juicy kind of stuff is.

it can be easy to sink your teeth into it and gorge on it. Beware.

Notice what Paul does. Don't you love him? When such accusation happens, a solid biblical principle comes in play. Paul was a man of the word.

[ 23 : 53 ] Here he goes again to Deuteronomy. He doesn't quote it verbatim, but that's where the principle comes from. A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime, for any wrong, in connection with any offense that he has committed.

Only on the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses shall a charge be established. Deuteronomy 19 and 15. So how do you honor your pastors when such things happen?

Remember that by reason of their role, they're very easy targets. And one way that you can honor them is by not rushing to judgment with everything that you hear about them.

Notice the next thing that we see is in verses 21 and 22. Accusation of sin is one thing. Participation in sin is another thing.

And that is addressed in verses 21 and 22. Look at it again with me. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all so that the rest may stand in fear.

[ 25 : 07 ] In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels, heavenly court, I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, do nothing from partiality.

what happens when that happens. Honor them. This is the principle. Number three, honor them, the office, and the church, by holding them accountable when they persist in sin.

That's another way that you can honor a pastor, elder, a church leader. Hold them, the office, and the church, honor them, the office, and the church, by holding them, spiritual leaders, accountable when they persist in sin.

Understanding that that demands both wisdom and tact. Look at verse 20, because the principle there is that they respond decisively.

It shifts, the verse shifts from responding when one is accused to one who continues in confirmed sin. And what the text is saying here is that those who do so are ripe for public rebuke before the other elders for sure, and likely before the congregation, depending on the scope and the seriousness of the sin.

[ 26 : 30 ] The goal, of course, as always, with any kind of discipline in the church, is the repentance and the restoration of the offender. Whether we're talking about a person in the pew amongst the flock or the church leader, the goal is always the restoration of the offender, the ultimate well-being of the church, the ultimate well-being of all.

Discipline has a positive effect on the individual and those who witness that kind of proceedings. Respond decisively, but also, he tells them, respond impartially.

He wasn't to respond based on who's in the congregation or their position in the congregation of their major gift giver, of their stalwart in the community.

They're to respond knowing that God ultimately is holding court in heaven. Heaven's court is pictured there. The father, the son, the elect angels, before heaven's tribunal, respond knowing, that there are proceedings on earth, there's also proceedings going on in the heavenlies.

While there are things that are hidden from the ears and the eyes and hearts of men, church leaders must know that God is looking, but they're also to examine one of their own and they're to do it without partiality.

[ 28 : 01 ] Here's the bottom line. The sins of pastors and church leaders must be dealt with. And here we're instructed how that's to be done. It's likely that this in fact was done in Ephesus.

If you recall 1 Timothy chapter 1, it speaks of Paul's response to the errant ways of two people, Hymenaeus and Alexander chapter 1 verse 20.

These church leaders had strayed likely in that they were teaching false doctrine, and Paul, he said, I have delivered them over to Satan, church discipline, that they learned not to blaspheme.

Huh? Your pastors, your church leaders, the office, and holding them accountable, you honor them by holding them accountable when they persist in sin.

the last verses or before so in this afternoon, verses 20 through 25. And there's the fourth way that pastors can be honored.

[ 29 : 14 ] These verses concern the selection of leaders. Honor them in the office with the careful execution of due process for their appointment.

honor them in the office with the careful execution of due process for their appointment so that the right people would be in the right positions.

And verses 23 through 25, note that. Think about it, even in the world. Organizations are looking for the right people to fill positions.

They want to get the best persons to do the leading and the directing. That's the case within the household of God. Specifically, Timothy is told, don't be hasty in laying on of hands or appointing or selecting or ordaining.

That's what's in view. What he's saying is be aware of premature appointment or endorsement or approval or official recognition of those who are going into the potential for the office of an elder or pastor.

[ 30 : 31 ] Notice in the verse there, look at verse 22 where you see the whole idea of partaking of sins and then there's parenthesis in verse 23 and then he goes back to the subject of sins.

Partake of sins of others. Keep yourself pure. Verse 22. But then after giving this very personal parenthesis in verse 23, he goes back to the sins of some men are conspicuous and the sins of others appear later.

Again, so he's talking about the same thing. He just had somewhat of a parenthesis there. So all of this really goes together. Regarding verse 23, drink a little, no longer water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments and somebody perhaps you say amen or something.

It's very personal. It's very personal. This is very Timothy specific. And this was one of the things that helps build a case for Pauline authorship of this particular letter.

Again, because he has this sort of out of the blue, this sort of personal aside. It really does fall. He says keeping yourself pure. And Timothy may have thought in his mind because he may have had ascetic tendencies that not partaking of wine at all would be the best thing for me.

[ 32 : 03 ] But Paul exhorts him here and he encouraged him for health reasons to drink wine which had medicinal value. Now, anyone who tries to build a case for abstinence or against abstinence from this particular verse, you're very hard-pressed to do so.

It's not here. It's very, very personal. But Timothy, how does he keep himself pure? By not being hasty in appointing elders.

Premature appointment to spiritual responsibility is one of the worst things. That could ever be done. It could be like putting a person who doesn't have a driver's license behind the wheel, hasn't had any experience.

They do themselves harm as well as others harm too. Keep yourself pure. Timothy, don't partake of that kind of thing because their sin, their error, it falls back on you.

Huh? It's not fair for the person. It's not fair for the church. Premature appointment makes those who make the appointment accomplices in the results, whether those are good or bad.

[ 33 : 26 ] Why due process? Paul speaks in verses 24 and 25 because everything that can be known doesn't come to surface all at once.

whether it is good or bad. We know that recently in politics 2008 John Edwards was on track for presidential nomination until certain things begin to surface.

Recently of course he was on trial not guilty on one account mistrial on five other accounts but notice what he said.

I did an awful awful lot of wrong. I am responsible. I didn't have to go any further in the mirror. It's me and me alone.

Sins went before him. Others are not necessarily known immediately but may come to light later Timothy be careful be careful on your appointment keep yourself pure be cautious in this regard honor elders and the office they hold with the execution of due process before their appointment.

[ 34 : 51 ] Again he speaks this kind of proverbial word here in these verses but it's caution enough not to be hasty but to be cautious church leaders who protect the church in God's name from dishonor are themselves to be honored.

This passage helps us to see how the church can do that. We praise God for the flock that the Lord has honored us to pastor here and we commend you and pray that you would continue to pray with pray for your leaders.

Oh how we need prayer. It's laborious. They're long hours but as I was coming to church I was saying to Shirley I get to preach today.

We love what we do. We love the flock of God. It's an honor. Huh? How are you to treat pastors? Honor them.

Don't worship them. Honor them with fair compensation. Honor them by not being too quick to judge them.

[ 36 : 17 ] Honor them the office and the church by holding them accountable when they persist in sin. Honor them in the office with the execution of due process for their part in it.

This is God's word today. Let's pray. Dear Lord, we bless you and we honor you and give thanks to you for your guidance as it concerns your servants.

Thank you that all are accountable before you. Pray that in all things you would be glorified. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.