

WORSHIP INSPIRES SERVICE

God's Word:

1 Timothy 5:1-8; 17-22

Key Verses:

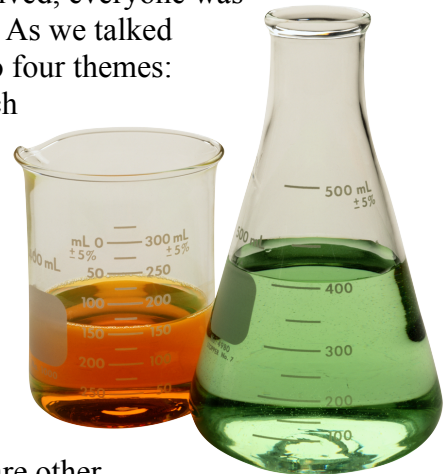
"BUT IF ANYONE DOES NOT PROVIDE FOR HIS OWN, AND ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE OF HIS HOUSEHOLD, HE HAS DENIED THE FAITH, AND IS WORSE THAN AN UNBELIEVER."

1 TIMOTHY 5:8

Breaking It Down

Each book in the New Testament, apart from the four Gospels, was written as a letter to a specific person or congregation. (The book of Revelation is a book of prophecy that also includes letters to churches.) When a letter was received, everyone was called together for its reading. It was then read in its entirety. As we talked about in the last lesson, 1st Timothy can be broken down into four themes: sound doctrine, right living, evangelism, and a guide to church leaders. These particular verses emphasize right living.

In verses one and two, Paul tells Timothy not to sharply rebuke an older man, but rather to appeal to him as a father. He goes on to explain how his relationships with younger men, older women, and younger women should look. All relationships should be in purity and each of these people should be treated as a relative. Since he was to treat older women as mothers, it makes sense that Paul instructed Timothy that the church should care for the widows. (There are other references in the Bible about the need to care for women. See James 1:27, Exodus 22:22-23, and Psalm 68:5 to name a few.)



Then, verse 8 says: "But those who won't take care of their own relatives, especially those living in the same household, have denied what we believe. Such people are worse than unbelievers." (NIV) In the culture of the Middle East, as it should be in

Christian households today, the family was very important. It was the center of life and family honor was of the utmost importance. It was not anything unusual to take care of your extended family. That is why Paul says that those who won't take care of their own family are worse than unbelievers simply because unbelievers already do that.

In verse 21, Paul charges Timothy to guard the principles in which he was instructed without bias or partiality. The only way he could do that was if he kept himself pure and focused on following Christ.

Living It

This week's passage tells us to first serve those in our own families. This caused me to ask why God put us in the families that we have. Perhaps it is to learn to love our own family -- mother, father, sister(s), and brother(s) unconditionally. He wants us to learn how to treat them like Christ would want us to. If we can do this with our own families, then it makes it a lot easier when we are trying to love someone who is not related. Does anyone have any idea how hard this is? Our families are the ones we blow

up with, usually with the attitude that they're stuck with us because we're "blood." Usually, our families are the ones we're the quickest to mistreat because they put up with it. However, that is not what the Bible says we are to do. It says that we should first serve and take care of those in our own families. We are to start our Christian walk by living properly within our own households. In fact, I would argue that it is a part of worship.



We can zoom out from focusing on our immediately families to take a look at the church family. If we really were to look at the people in our congregations as brothers, sisters, mothers or fathers in Christ, how would that change how our churches function today? Keeping with this logic, if the church is the body of Christ, with Jesus as the head, then how should we be treating anyone who is a believer? If they

will know that we are Christians -- or Christ's followers -- by our love for each other and our love for God, then there should be no problem. But are we treating our church family as relatives in Christ? Are we treating these people as beloved and cherished relatives in Christ? Take a look around at the people who are sitting around you this week. How could you do a better job of showing God's love for them today?

Understanding it:

- 1) What are the four themes talked about in 1st Timothy? Which is being addressed in this selection?
- 2) Who are the main people who were singled out to help? Why?
- 3) What is the purpose of a family?
- 4) How are we showing love to our families?

Doing It!

This week, look for opportunities to show Christ's love to the people in your family! At first, your reaction might be to do the opposite and to talk back or make excuses.

Instead, focus this week on being Christ to people in your home. If you need help, start by person each day until you have focused on loving each person in your household. Report back to your teacher next week on what you experienced.

