

Dear Son
Part Eight – Caring for Family
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If you are new to Woodland Hills, we've been going through the book of Ephesians and 1 Timothy this year. When we get finished with 1 Timothy, we are going to go into 2 Timothy. I know some of you have been absolutely worn out from this book, especially if you've been duped into the feminist movement by Satan. Today is going to be no different.

This is a challenging book on church leadership. Here is the background. It's an old pastor writing to a young pastor. He is encouraging young Timothy to command and teach these things. You've been placed in a position of authority; don't back down. Don't let anybody despise your youth or look down on you. Continue the public reading of scripture, teaching and preaching. Put good leaders in place. Make sure the deacons are qualified men and women. Make sure they are not indulging in much wine. Make sure they are temperate and are not malicious talkers and are one woman men. Make sure that the worship setting and the activities of this church are in align with the scripture.

So today we get to 1 Timothy 5. I've talked about 1 Timothy 5 a lot over the years, but today we are going to look at this idea of caring for family. We are going to jump right into it with number one.

1. The church is your family.

1 Timothy 5: 1-2 - ***¹Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men...*** A lot of times we get this confused. It's not treat younger men as sons, but treat younger men ***as brothers, ²older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.*** What is interesting is that we again see this idea of the differences between men and women come into Verses one and two. The anger part is addressing men and the purity part is addressing women.

Here is what is neat about the church being your family. Some of you come from very dysfunctional homes. Some of you have lost your parents. Some of you are only children. Welcome to Woodland Hills, where you have your pick from hundreds of brothers and you have your pick from hundreds of sisters. You have your pick from hundreds of moms and dads. We have older men in this church that I get to look to as a father and I get to salute the uniform, I get to salute the position. They are older and I don't go at them harshly. This is something I've learned over the years because I used to rebuke older men harshly all the time especially since I was the youngest man in the church when I was leading.

It says you treat each other like family. You treat each other like brothers and sisters in Christ, but you look to the older people in the church and you esteem them as valuable. You treat them like you would treat your mom and dad. How do I let people treat my mom? Don't talk bad about my mom or I will

break your nose; it's really simple. Don't go after my dad or I will hurt you. That's how a family takes care of each other.

Now, as siblings, much like you guys, my brother and I would be fighting on the way to church and we'd pull into our parking space at our church, right? How many of you had a parking space at your church growing up? How many of you had a pew? Well we would pull into our parking space... I could take you to where it is today on GPS. ...and my dad would look back at my brother and I fighting and go "Knock it off, we are at church and we are going to act like Christians" and we did. We went in and we acted a different way, but really we are family and so we are going to get along like family. We are going to rub each other the wrong way sometimes, just like your family growing up.

I looked around today and I thought about it because it happened yesterday. I have a lot of younger brothers and a lot of younger sisters in this church. We've been encouraging you with the Paul/Timothy relationship, challenging you older guys... We looked at this in Chapter 4: old is 40 and over; young is 40 and under. That's from 2,000 years ago. You older guys need to grab some of these younger guys and start spending time with them, not thinking in terms of weeks or months, but in terms of years. There are some young guys in this church who need dads. Their dad was a bum; their dad didn't provide for the family; their dad deserted them and their mom and they need to know what a real man looks like.

They can hear teaching and they can see God's word explained, but they need you to grab a hold of them and meet them at Panera, Starbucks, Dunkin Donuts, Bob Evans and spend time with them and tell them what it means to be a man. If you see a young guy who is married and struggling, invite that family out to lunch with you today. Spend time with them.

We have younger sisters in this church and I know when we were in 1 Timothy 2, some of you got very hacked at me when we talked about modesty. But I'm your older brother. Don't look at me as anything other than that. If somebody wants to date you, I'm going to treat you like my sister. I'm going to get my gun all prepared. In this church, when we do premarital counseling, that's why we get all worked up. We get all worked up because you are getting ready to date my younger sister. If I don't like you, I'm going to tell you that, as a good older brother would do.

This weekend I heard of a guy in our community that moved out for a little bit. Some of you know him. His name is not important. But he started dating... I've got them married already, but they took one date and they've been talking on the phone. I was sitting next to a guy named Jim who is really good friends with this young lady's brother. We got excited. When we heard he was on a date, I had them married with children and having a thanksgiving meal with the in-laws. He told me to slow down. And then I figured it out. Here's why I got so excited. I've known this young lady for nine years. I know her parents very well. She's my sister and I don't want her dating a jerk. I don't want her marrying a bum who doesn't know how to work or provide. And the dad of this young lady said... That's Rob Robbins.

Some of you guys think we are too harsh on you in this church. "You're always challenging me to get a job, Ted." Yea, because you are going to want to marry our little sisters and I don't want you being a bum; it's that simple because we are a family. Think about family dynamics and how the church gets to come in and be moms and dads and brothers and sisters to people how have never experienced a

healthy family. That's what we get to be. This is the heart behind changing our name to Woodland Hills Family Church.

I want to encourage you. If you are not plugged in here, if you are just on the sidelines, find that Paul, find that Timothy, find a Eunice, find somebody like Timothy had in his mom. Find an older lady, find an older man with a good attitude and say "Can I spend some time with you?" Get bold with it. I've gotten a lot of emails and Facebooks over the last couple of weeks saying "Can you provide us with a list of Pauls?" Yea, that list is kept in the head of Denise Bevins. So call her and she will plug you in. I get that some of you are new here and you don't know anybody and you aren't connected. We will help you connect, but don't sit down with that older guy and explain to him how it's going to work. You be faithful and you submit yourself to his authority. Treat him like a father and let him build into your life.

2. You need to learn how to take care of your own family.

This is very important. 1 Timothy 5: 3-8 – ***3Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need.*** This is going to be something we see in the rest of the text. ***4But if a widow has children or grandchildren...*** This is why I'm thrilled that at Woodland Hills Family Church, we will never have to make a benevolence payment to Pat Kershaw. Do you know why? It's because of that row right there. It's because of her children and her grandchildren. I'm looking forward to calling Dainec and Kelton and going "Hey, cough it up; grandma needs a hip and the church ain't paying for it. Do you have a job?" "I've been working 30 hours a week." "Start working 60; grandma needs to be fed." That's what the text is saying: children and grandchildren.

There are a lot of widows and widowers in our church that we don't have to worry about as a church because they have children and grandchildren. This is God's plan. It is not the government's responsibility. It's for the family of the church. It's very simple. Pat's primary care giving in her later years will be that row right there. And do you know what is neat? They have watched their grandmother take care of their great-grandmother, Muriel, for years. It's been modeled to them. You didn't realize you were building insurance right there, did you, Pat? They saw the model. That's God's first step in this process. Then, if a widow has no one to care for her, the church, all of you, the church family, you and I, we get to step in and help that person, not the government. Don't rely on the government.

...these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. This is why Mike and Shari left to go to Wisconsin. They moved to take care of aging parents. I've met probably five or six people in the last month here at Woodland Hills, in their 40s and 50s, that have moved to Branson. One was a pastor in Seattle. Another was a business man from California. When I asked why they moved to Branson, the answer is always taking care of mom and dad. They moved to Branson years ago and now they need help. I can't think of anything more honoring than that.

Think about how God planned it. You've raised your children, they are out and hopefully functioning members of society and now Mom and Dad need your help. So I'm not letting my mom and dad listen too closely to this message this morning because they are in their early sixties; they're fine.

They have money; they have pensions. Dad thinks I always share way too much information about our family. They are now on Social Security and they are healthy. The other side of this is when people ask me if I'm helping... My mom had a surgery a couple of months ago and people were asking me if I was helping my mom out. I go, "She's married!" My dad's been retired for 10 years and if you know my dad, he's in great shape. I don't need to be helping; he's fine. He can make a sandwich. Isn't that true, Dad? That is true. He's going "I guess." My dad is so non-expressive on these things. But he's 62; come on.

Now, when Dad dies, and I don't know when that will be, I plan on taking care of mom. And what's neat is I'm watching my mom take care of her mom who is in Lynchburg. I know that sounds odd, but she's with my aunt. My aunt was trained in hospice; that was her job her whole life. So grandma is getting a little cantankerous. She is the sweetest lady on the face of the earth.

I watched my dad take care of his dad. Here's what is neat. I just want every young person in here to hear this. Your parents, when they get old, decrepit, and poor, will want for nothing because you knew your Bible and your Bible said you were to take care of them. If it requires another job, you get it. If it requires moving a parent in with you, you do it. If it requires putting them in a home to get special care because often times you are unable to care for them at home with some of their medical needs, that's fine. When the medical needs get too much and the finances are difficult, work hard and pay the bills.

The reason Grandma Mary Jane, in Lynchburg, Virginia, will never want for anything is because she has three son-in-laws and six grandsons. That's nine at \$300.00 a month; that's like \$2,700 a month. At \$500.00 a month, it's like \$4,500.00. She will be fine. Why? It's because we are not going to be, and here's the biblical term, bums. We are going to take care of our family. We are going to honor our mothers and our grandmothers, our fathers and our grandfathers.

What is interesting is whenever you hear a widow referred to in the scripture... the same thing is true today, women are going to be widows because men don't live as long as women. It was the same thing back then. But it works both ways. Whatever parent is left, you and I have a responsibility for the physical needs. Put your faith into practice by taking care of them.

⁵The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. We have the story of the widow's mite, which I don't have a lot of time to get into today, but it's about the woman who brought everything she had. That's who I am reminded of when I read this. **⁶But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.** Meaning there are some women who will not honor the Lord in their later years and we are going to see in a second how to handle a woman like that.

⁷Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame. ⁸If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. Meaning I am worthless if my mom and dad are in need and I'm out on vacation, not taking care of my parents. Worthless is what the scripture says. Your faith is void because you don't understand what it means to care for people. We take care of our family.

It says if anyone does not provide for his relatives... again there the emphasis comes onto the man. I truly believe men make money and women spend it. All the women said... amen. Now, there is nothing sexier than a woman that cuts out coupons. Just so you know.

I love providing. Young guys, you have to hear this because your parents are in their fifties and you think they don't need your help right now. But in providing for your family, there are a lot of ways to do it and I want to encourage the young guys for just a little bit this morning.

Some of you are still way too into your hobbies. Your kids or your family is going without certain basic needs or even orthodonture or whatever, because you have too many hobbies. Put your needs on the way back list. You take care of your wife and kids. Here's why some guys get so frustrated young in life. They feel like they are in a prison. They work and they give. You learn to take that as a badge of honor that you get to provide for your family.

Do you know what I challenge some of you young guys to do? You can get about a million bucks worth of life insurance for about twenty bucks a month. I pay fifty bucks a month because I'm older. I have Dale Sanders word that upon my untimely death, within a week, he is going to walk up to the front door of our house and hand my wife a check for a million bucks. Do you know what Amy says? "Can we make it two?" I kid you not. She doesn't think she can make it on a million! That's tax free dollars. So we are looking at upping it.

But I'm good with a million because I plan on her remarrying which we will talk about in a second. It's biblical; she needs to remarry. I shouldn't bare the brunt of her forty years after I'm gone. That's the idea of a dowry. I used to think that was what you would buy off a parent with to get a young lady. No, it was an investment; it was an insurance policy that you gave that incase you died on the battlefield, or you died in the workplace, the parents had something to continue to take care of their daughter with.

I'll tell you that it's an automatic debit out of my account and when I go online with the Ozark Mountain Bank and do my baking and I see that fifty bucks come out every month, that is one of the happiest payments I make all month because I know if something happens to me.... Some of you are going "trust God!" I get that, but the scripture says I'm worse than an unbeliever if I don't think through ways to take care of my family. It would be so cheap for some of you guys to go out and get your family taken care of. I've met a lot of young ladies who lost their husbands unexpectedly and they were just not prepared. Think through taking care of your family.

Verse 9... Here is where we start to get into some hairier issues. ***⁹No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband,¹⁰ and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.***

Now, the modern day widow, to help many of you, would be the single mom. We have a lot of single moms at Woodland Hills Family Church who have been deserted by their husbands or their husbands had an affair and decided to leave and have left these women high and dry and these men are bums. They have deserted their wives and they want us to find a way to take care of them.

They fight the courts on how much their kids should get. When I meet a guy who is fighting the courts on how much he should pay to take care of his kids, I want to, in pastoral love, break his nose. I can't believe he is really fighting over how much his kids should get. He should go without, live in a one room apartment, or live on the couch of a friend. He has deserted his wife and now he wants to have her scrape by for the rest of her life? We talked about this last week with divorce. We did a whole week on divorce.

3. Our benevolence discriminates based on behavior

The list here... Just so you know, I know this sounds odd, but we have a list at Woodland Hills and this list comes to us every month and it's the financial of Woodland Hills that Denise gives to our executive team and to our elders. It's a list of everybody that our church has helped out this month with benevolence. But here's the point: our benevolence discriminates based on behavior. It's a really hard one for churches.

If any of you have ever worked in a church or in benevolence, you know there are people that are con artists and their whole goal is to try to get money from the church. They show up to a town, read through the phone book, and just try to get as much as they can. That's why we started with a name that starts with a "W," Woodland Hills instead of Apple Hills... You never name your church with an "A" because you are the first on the list. So we are Woodland Hills and we don't get as many calls as you might think because a lot of people get everything they want by the time they get to the "Ms." When people come in wanting financial help, that's part of our job. As a family, part of our job is to take care of people and strangers, but we discriminate based on their lifestyle.

Benevolence 110 – we do not fund sin. We don't just hand them cash to go out and do whatever they want. The other thing we challenge them with is their salvation. Are they followers of Jesus Christ? The scripture says here very clearly *has been faithful to her husband, ¹⁰and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality...* What are you doing to serve the church? At the top of our list are single moms and widows who are doing everything they can to live a life that honors God. Those are the first ones we are taking care of. We can do that because that is what the Bible calls us to.

We are challenging people. That's what I love about Cross International. We are delivering shelter, food, and hope to the poorest of the poor. That's their mission statement. Meaning that we are not just going in and feeding people. The real need is their salvation and we make sure that we are teaching and preaching well.

He says here not to put anyone on the list under the age of sixty and here's why.

4. Single moms and fatherless children need husbands and fathers.

Here's where the feminists will go all nutty wacky on me. Verses 11 – 15 – ¹¹*As for younger widows...* Here is where you are going to get excited. Younger widows, for those of you 58 or 59, he is going to call you to get married and have babies. Like we said, if you are able to, you need to and we will explain that

in just a second. ...**do not put them on such a list.** This is going to be really interesting. Have you ever helped a single mom that is 40 years old? Absolutely, but do you know what single moms at Woodland Hills Family Church need? They need husbands. Do you know what fatherless children at Woodland Hills need? They don't need another government program; they need dads.

May we never (I'm going where angels dare to tread) look at single motherhood as ideal or normative as a church. There is a movie that comes out this weekend that does just that. I took direct quotes from Jennifer Aniston in the movie *The Switch*. She says "Women are realizing more and more that they don't have to settle. They don't have to fiddle with a man just to have a child." This isn't in the movie; this is what she said in an interview. "They are realizing that if it's that time in their life and they want this part, they can do it without that." She is meaning that she can have kids without bothering with a husband. The Hebrew term for that is *caca*. It's absolute silliness. It's absolutely a duping of Satan and he has it formed and packaged in this thing called modern day woman feminism and it is crap.

She goes on to say "Of course, the ideal scenario for parenting is obviously two parents of a mature age. Parenting is one of the hardest jobs on earth." She told *People*, "And of course many women dream of finding Prince Charming with fatherly instincts, but for those who have not yet found him, I'm just glad science has provided us with a few other options." That is not God's plan. God's plan is for single moms to get married. So what is interesting is that this text is going to say...

For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. ¹²Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. Speaking here of a pledge they made to serve the Lord. So when a widow over sixty is being taken care of by the church and the church is meeting that woman's needs, she is working for the church. Now she is not a 1099 employee, but her job is to serve the saints of the church. Her job is to come in and to just be a minister, a deacon, in the church.

¹³Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. ¹⁴So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. ¹⁵Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.

It's talking here about the younger widow. Here at Woodland Hills, it's the single mom. Who it's not addressing directly, but we can address indirectly, is the young men. Some of you are thinking what kind of freaky Amish cult are you going to try to turn us into? Listen for just a second. Some of you guys are overlooking some great women in this church. For too long, the church, and I'm just talking about the stigma, has placed this idea on single moms that somehow they are damaged goods. Again, in the Hebrew the word is *caca*.

Some of you guys need to consider marrying the single moms of this church and adopting their children as your own. When you do that, do you know what you are? You are a man. That's what Paul is saying. Now think about it. This is the family. You have to remember the text we just read... Some of you are thinking this is brand new and I am off the deep end. We are a family and I'm not talking...

You are thinking how I just said you are brothers and sisters. "Am I supposed to marry my sister? What is this, Arkansas?" We are family and what that means is I have younger sisters in this church whose husbands deserted them and they are good women. They are women who are trying to do everything Verses 9 and 10 say. They are women that are trying to follow the Lord and they have a few children.

Some of you guys in your twenties, you are just learning how to take care of yourself because your mom and dad... Again, we have so many issues. Your mom and dad didn't send you out of the house as an adult; they sent you out as a prolonged adolescent. And now to take on five people...? So that's why when you come in for counseling, again because you are in a remarriage and you brought a couple of kids into the marriage and you sit down and go "this is hard." I go "I know. What else do we have to talk about?" You say, "Well, Ted, it's difficult. I wasn't expecting this." "So what?" It's hard; we know that, and that's why you are a man.

Some of you young guys in the church want to grow up and have an add water and stir marriage. Marry a woman with three children and you go out and work your hind end off to provide for those three kids. Don't get into the blame game of how their dad is a jerk and won't provide for them and won't do this and won't do that. Don't allow him to ruin your marriage. You move forward as a man of God who takes a young mom... It's happened in this church a lot.

Why is this such an important teaching? It's because some of you have looked at these marriages of young men who want to follow the Lord with all of their heart and with all of their soul and with all of their mind and with all of their strength and they marry a young lady. I've seen it. I've caught wind of the attitude of I wish he wouldn't do that, he is making a big mistake. Is he? Paul tells Timothy to get these young single moms and don't allow them to sit around trying to raise their kids by themselves. Get them a hubby.

I know last week in the second service, I was stronger with it. I told the single guys that if they didn't have a date this week, not to come back next Sunday. That was in the second service. Does anybody want to raise your hand; how did the date go? Now I want to encourage some of you guys. Some of you guys, after the service, are going to be walking by Critter Street, looking in. When you see four guys gathered around a room, don't think anything weird, they are scoping out a mom. And the rest of us applaud you. Single moms are thinking man; I'm getting out of here. This is a freaky church.

I didn't know where this was going to go, but we figured something out. I have labored over this all week. On the plane coming back this week, Ted asked me what my points were on the text. I didn't have any idea. I have to tell young men to marry single moms; it's going to be odd.

Does that make sense though? That's straight from scripture. Paul is telling young Timothy to get these guys marrying these ladies and tell them to be men of God. Some of you young moms are going to resist the men in Critter Street here in about five minutes. It's because in your first marriage, you married a bum who didn't follow the Lord. Don't develop this feminist mindset that says all men are bad, stay away. Don't do that. You get in your Bible and you find out what the Lord says. You immerse yourself in the scripture.

Right now, some of you don't like 11-15. That's okay. You go home and you study it and you get God's heart behind this text. Understand why he wants you to be taken care of and why he wants you to be part of this Woodland Hills family. Single parenting is not ideal and may this church never look at it as so. May we help single parents. May we encourage them and bless them because it's the hardest job in the world.

When I have to travel with my two kids alone, I think about single parents all the time. I usually tell everyone I meet, whether it's at a Hertz Rental booth or an airline ticket counter. "Don't ever get divorced!" They usually look at me like "Yes sir?" "You are supposed to stay married and raise your children together. That's God's plan." "Okay." That's because I'm pulling my hair out. Some of you moms... I just want every single mom at Woodland Hills today to leave feeling honored. Your job is hard. You've been placed in a position that's been difficult. Some of you have been placed in that position because of your decision. Others have been placed in that position because they have been deserted or cheated on. We want to honor you.

Here's what Verse 16 says. Single moms need the support of their family. Every family I know at some point has some sort of single parent involved in their home. ¹⁶***If any woman who is a believer... Again you see the benevolence tied directly and the need tied directly to behavior. ...has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them...*** This is a hard line, but I'm thankful for it. Some of you are allowing us to care for your children, your single mom children, and you need to...

About 15 million households in America right now are grandparents raising their grandchildren. We honor you grandparents for that this morning. We know there are grandparents raising their grandchildren. As I thought about this text this week, I thought about Mike and Shari and I thought about Pat and Muriel. I just started thinking about stories at our church and I said thank you, Father, for a church that gets family. Thank you for the grandma and grandpa who are trying to make it themselves and have been left with a widow in their family. They have three grandchildren and they are working their hind end off to try to help raise those grandchildren, providing financial support, watching the kids while Mom goes and works. Let's give them a hand this morning. I think more of that needs to happen.

As you model family in your own immediate family, it will make this church family even stronger. That's what Paul is telling Timothy. He is telling Timothy to get people functioning as a family, but to do that, they have to function in their own family in a healthy way. They have to take care of each other and not rely on other people, including the church and the government. They have to rely on each other and take care of each other. ***...so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.***

If you are here today without a family, Woodland Hills wants to be your family. But understand that before you come in and ask for help, we are going to challenge you in your lifestyle. We are going to find out how close you are walking with the Lord and challenge you, as Titus talks to us. We may put you with an older woman in the church and make sure you are walking with the Lord in a way He has called you to walk.

If you are new here today, we encourage you to study 1 Timothy. We are almost done and going into 2 Timothy. If you are new here today, would you fill out this connection card? We are going to add a box next week that says *I am a single mom and looking*. That will be on the card next week and if you want to put on there *single guy and open to single mom*, we will take that as well. We would love nothing more than to be EHarmony for a week or two. My wife eats this stuff up. I may even get a couple of guys to fund your date. How about that? That will be cheaper than the benevolence, right? Some of you are thinking how you don't want to fill out a card. Fill out a card, drop it in a bucket and we will see you next Sunday.