

## How we ought to treat others

These days I often see younger people treating older people with disrespect. They rebuke them openly in public, shout at them, humiliate them, and generally disrespect them. This isn't the way the believer is to treat older people, and, in fact, shouldn't treat younger people that way either as that isn't Christlike character. Jesus rebuked the hypocrites, but not the humble sinner. He uplifted the humble and treated them with respect and dignity.

1 Timothy 5: 1 – 2 Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.

### 1) Treating everyone as family

- Paul is writing to Timothy, a young man at that time, instructing Him how he should deal with certain matters in the church. He starts with how he ought to deal with older men when they've messed up, then going on to younger men, older women, and younger women.
- Timothy is basically instructed to treat everyone as he would treat his own family, obviously meaning a functional loving family and not a dysfunctional family.

### 2) How to treat older men and women

- We need to treat older men and women as if they were our own father and mother.
  - Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father...older women as mothers
- If our own father sinned or messed up even in a non-sinful way we wouldn't harshly rebuke him. We would speak to him gently in a manner that is respectful and not aggressive.
  - In some cultures, a younger person would never reprimand an older person at all no matter how wrong the older person is. Another older person, of similar age or older, would approach that person to reprimand him of his wrong doing.
  - Respect is displayed differently in different cultures
- If we are to treat older men as fathers and mothers then let's see how we are instructed to do so
  - Exodus 20: 12 Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.
  - Proverbs 23: 22 Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.
- Jesus showed love, respect, and concern to His mother, ultimately showing care for her while on the cross
  - John 19: 25 – 27 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.
- Recognise the wisdom that comes with age and experience, and respect the views of older people.
  - Job 12: 12 Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?
  - However, take care that not all older people lived wise lives and made wise choices. They may have learnt from them and become wise, but they might still be foolish in their old age.
  - Maturity comes from obedience, not necessarily from age. *Leonard Ravenhill*
- When many of us were small we were taught to stand up when an older person walks into a room, needs your seat, or when addressing them. This comes from the Scriptures
  - Leviticus 19: 32 Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord.
- Let us then respect older men and women in our midst and wherever we may be in the way we behave towards them, speak to them, and listen to their points of view.

### 3) How to treat younger men

- We are told to treat younger men as brothers.
  - 1 Timothy 5: 2 Treat younger men as brothers
- As Timothy was a young man when Paul addressed him this would apply to him at that stage.
  - It would apply to us on how we deal with those our own age, even if they are older now.
- Treat them as brothers as the Lord would have us treat them – with brotherly love.
  - Of course, this is how ladies ought to treat other ladies as well – with sisterly love
  - John 13: 34 A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.
- How then ought we to love our brothers and sisters?
  - By doing the “one another” verses
  - Bear with one another
  - Carry one another’s burdens
  - Forgive one another
  - Share with one another – don’t leave someone in need if we have what can fulfil that need
- We seek their good and don’t exploit them by using them for our own purposes, even in ministry
  - 1 Thessalonians 5: 15 Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.
- Older men can also treat younger men as sons, as Paul did with Timothy
  - 1 Timothy 1: 2 To Timothy my true son in the faith

### 4) How to treat younger women

- 1 Timothy 5: 2 Treat...younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.
  - Paul adds on “with absolute purity” to his expected treatment of younger women
  - This means that there shouldn’t be any inclination of sexual desire towards younger women at all.
  - Treat younger women as you would your own sisters.
- The reason for the treatment of younger women in this way is twofold – to protect the integrity of the women and also to protect the integrity of the Pastor – in the context that would be Timothy.
- Men are to protect women, not abuse them
  - Protecting them, as we would protect our own sisters or daughters, goes beyond not lusting after them. It desires to uphold their dignity and integrity in every way
- We are also to protect our integrity and the honour of the Lord in the way we behave towards the opposite sex.

Let us then treat everyone in the church as we would our own family – as fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters to the honour and glory of God