

January 24, 2021 -

I Timothy 5: 17-21 -

“Regards for Pastors”

Introduction:

Many years ago a very prominent pastor of a very prestigious Baptist church fell into the sin of immorality. The fall of this pastor had a great impact on that church and on other ministries in that area including the church where I was an assistant at the time. The pastor was having an affair with a young lady that he had been counseling for some time. We became aware something was wrong when a good friend of ours, who was a member of our church started going to this particular Baptist church while dating a gentleman who was attending there. She was deeply trouble when the sermon she heard preached one Sunday was word for word the message she had listened to on the radio preached by Dr. Charles Swindoll. This young lady was troubled and did not know what to do about this. We convinced her if she could not have peace about it to make an appointment to speak with the pastor. She eventual did. His affair led him into one lie after another. His answer was he was so busy that week he resorted to plagiarism. The truth came to light and the church was shocked when the pastor was brought before the members and confessed he had been having an affair. He made his apology, his wife forgave him, they went for counseling and the church forgave him.

However, the church board came to the decision that the pastor’ must submit his resignation and that is when the real mess began. I too had a difficult time because my boss was a member of that church. He sought my advice and I sided with the churches Biblical decision based on I Timothy 5:20-21. People have not changed much in fact it seems to be worse when it comes to implementing Biblical protocol. Folks want to do what the world is doing. We had an even worst situation of this at Hyde Park Baptist church in recent years and it spilt the church. Yesterday I read a news article that address this, “Too many churches are afraid of having challenging discussions and reluctant to point to Biblical truth out of fear of pushback from secular culture.” I am quoting Tony Dungy, a former NFL coach and Christian who urges the American church to “clean up our doorstep”. It time to do things God’s way.

In this next section the Apostle Paul will direct Timothy in four essential principles: honoring elders, protecting elders, rebuking elders, and selecting elders. These four principles when properly understood and properly implemented will reestablish the church on a biblical footing and that will protect the ministers and the ministry.

The first principle Paul expound upon is honoring elders. Now just for the sake of those that may not know I preach through scripture verse by verse... So I want you to know that I am not preaching this message for my sake. My intention is not self-serving. Your abundance of generosity to me and my family is deeply appreciated and so this is not a message about my financial situation. Some areas of course will apply but in giving as a church I commend you for your remuneration and kindness. However, we must preach the whole council of God.

I. Honoring elders (5:17-18)

1. This verse calls for honor to be given to elder/pastor of the church. Those who serve the

church, lead the church, pastoring the church both by way of example and leadership, and teaching and preaching in the church are to be given honor. The practice of giving honor to those who lead in spiritual matters is biblical. The word *tee-may* “honor” refers to “respect” or “regard”; it can also refer to financial support. It is where we get the term “honorarium”. It was Paul’s custom not to deal with money directly. He deals in this section with the heart attitude that will result in remuneration.

2. Paul is teaching Timothy that one who is over you in the Lord, who feeds you and leads you, is to be honored. ---**Hebrews 13:17** This means respect and also remuneration as required and necessary. Those who honor elders do not begrudge the generosity in paying their support. While these elders are to be honored, Paul points out some as being worthy of double honor.

3. There is a distinction made about the elders who serve with greater commitment, effort, and excellence. He gives 2 qualifications that mark elders as worthy of double honor. They direct the activities of their church **well** the emphasis is on the adverb “well”. It could be translated “with excellence” they work at preaching and teaching. The emphasis is the “work.” So we say honor for elders, double honor for excellent hard-working elders, leaders who serve the church as a pastor with greater commitment. ” There are various types of pastor then there are those who labor in the word who work hard in preaching and teaching are worthy of double honor.

4. In verse 18 Paul recalls to Timothy Deut. 25:4 about the cruelty to muzzle the ox so to keep it from food and nutriment as he works at treading the grain. --- Dr. Ironside- pg.125a

II. Protecting Elders (5:19)

1. There is always someone eager to falsely accuse the man of God. They may resent his calling, reject his teaching, or resist biblical authority. Then there are those that overlook the seriousness of sin in leadership and tend to let it fester like a cancer. He addressed both.

2. We know men of God like Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, the apostle Paul and of course Jesus Christ all suffered from false accusations. Many false accusations came against Jesus; accusations that He spent all of His time with drunks, prostitutes, and wicked people. That was an attempt to accuse Him of those same things. They said He was a glutton and a wine-bibber, and they said He was possessed with a demon. This is what Satan does, he accuses us before God. **I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. Rev.12:10**

3. Paul gives Timothy instructions on how to deal with accusations against elders. Unsubstantiated charges are to be rejected. They are not to be investigated they are to be ignore. Some folks are too eager to listen and not to follow the Biblical protocol. The simple act of turning a deaf ear to them is one of the best ways of protecting elders, the pastor of your church. Unfortunately too many folks join the band wagon against the man of God.

---Dr. Ironside- pg.125b

There must be 2 or 3 witnesses. The accusation may yet prove false, but if there is 2 or 3 witnesses it then and only then warrants investigation. This is not meant to exempt elders from

any accusation, but those that are illegitimate accusation. Now the intent of two or three witnesses is for confirmation. It follows the principles in Deuteronomy 19:15 where no accusation against a person is to be upheld apart from two or three confirming **credible and non-bias** witnesses. We are never to receive any accusation against an Elder not even to entertain it or to investigate it or to look into it unless it has been confirmed by two or three significant and credible witnesses. **Galatians 6:1-** Sad to say this is not upheld in many churches.

To attack someone in authority is a serious matter. You better have your facts straight and some witnesses. **Psalms 105:15** “Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm.”

III. Rebuking Elders (5:20-21)

1. Elders must be protected from false accusations but they are not to receive immunity from real and honest accusations. Those who sin are to be rebuked. Greek is the present participle which means they sin continually. He doesn't mention any specific kind of sin. Any sin that caused an elder to violate the qualifications in chapter 3:2-7 would be grounds for public rebuke, the word “rebuke” means to expose, to bring to open conviction, to correct, to reprove.

2. The sins of a man in leadership are more serious and are to be punished more seriously. James 3:1. When an accusation has been made and it's been confirmed in the mouth of two or three witnesses and investigated, if it is indeed proven to be true, he is to be publicly rebuked. The word rebuke means to expose, to bring to open conviction, to correct, to reprove. And the idea is public, before all. There's no exegetical bases for limiting to just the elders. There's no contextual base for limiting it to just the elders. The church needs to be informed and of course this would be believers who are members of the church.

3. The ministry is a two-edged sword. Those who serve faithfully are to be honored and protected those who sins are to be removed and publicly rebuked. One of the purposes for the public rebuke is “so that others may take warning”. If leaders are in sin, it must be addressed directly with public rebuke, to promote a fear of sin among the leadership and the church.

Conclusion:

This strong statement *I charge the before God*...in verse 21 reflects the seriousness of the job of leaders in the church. Many churches have had great trouble because sin in the leadership was not straightforwardly dealt with. It's important that everyone understand that leadership in the church does not shield one from accountability, it makes one even more accountable.

In the middle Ages, the church protected its corrupt bishops against accusation by demanding that 72 witnesses be brought forth to confirm any accusation against a bishop. We must confront sin especially among leadership. We know what happened under Joshua because Acken lie and stole. It affected the whole camp.