

May 11th, 2008
“Honor For Mothers”
Reverend Darryl R. Curtis

1Timothy 5:9-10

9 Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, and not unless she has been the wife of one man,

10 well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints’ feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

Thank you very much for coming to hear the message for today. Before we begin our next lesson, let us reiterate our reason for attending Church.

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

Our text for today, **1Timothy 5:9-10**, is part of the passage of Scripture that tells us that the church has the responsibility to honor and care for widows that have conducted themselves in the manner of which God approves. **1Timothy 5:3** says:

3 Honor widows who are really widows.

The Scripture does make it clear that the children and grandchildren of the widow have the primary responsibility to take care of their widowed mother, and the church is only to step in if there is no family to take over. **1Timothy 5:16** says:

16 If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.

Our text gives us criteria by which we can evaluate which widows we should honor. Widows to be honored should be over sixty years of age, married only once, participants in charitable causes that help the less fortunate, and mothers that have raised children. God, in the Old Testament, gives similar criterion to designate which wives should be honored. **Proverbs 31:20, 28** says, of the virtuous wife:

20 She extends her hand to the poor, Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.

28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her:

The principle common idea between **1Timothy 5** and **Proverbs 31** is that the virtuous woman and the protected widow are both women that care for the less fortunate and for their husbands and children.

If we were to examine God’s plan, we would see that the admonishment to care for the other members of the familial relationship is exactly that which God planned for women in the first place. The familiar rationale is found in **Genesis 2:18, 21-24**, which reads:

18 And the LORD God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a

helper comparable to him.”

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.

22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

23 And Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.”

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

The woman, according to the divinely inspired written Word of God, was created to be man’s helper, and the one needed to complete the man. The woman is the other part of the total human organism, joined to the man as the two of them, husband and wife, become one. In the normative case, people can not be added to the human population without the combination and cooperation of the genders, and a man without a wife is in a state that God calls “not good”.

Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived, not because of his great studies, but because of the grace gift of wisdom that God gave him, added his editorial comment to the issue, in **Ecclesiastes 9:9**:

9 Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun.

When Jesus taught on this subject, He spoke of husband and wife, in **Matthew 19:6**:

6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

The conceptual consensus of the Holy Scripture is that husband and wife have the charge to form a permanent relationship, becoming one with one another for the purpose of mutual comfort and benefit. Part of that relationship is the procreation and the subsequent parenting of the children. Our text, **1 Timothy 5:9**, echoes that sentiment when it says that a widow that is to be honored should be the wife of one man.

In our current time, both our secular and spiritual societies generally have a cavalier attitude toward marrying and dissolving marriages, and many people, even in the church, are not part of God’s consensus that the marriage commitment is designed to be permanent, because of the difficulty that they perceive is involved in sustaining a relationship with a spouse. Given the lack of commitment that many people have, people speak of getting “their divorce” in the same way that they speak of reaching any other normal milestone of life.

When marriage is seen as a temporary liaison, the devil finds it much easier, by using the trials and tribulations of life, to tear marriages apart.

I want us to think about the reason that we have so much trouble keeping our marriages together.

The fact of the matter is that we have an unseen enemy that is constantly attacking our relationship with God and seeking to convince us to do the opposite of that which God desires. That enemy is the devil, and it has been his desire to ruin the relationship between husband and wife ever since God created the woman.

The devil first tempted the woman to disobey God, and to draw her husband into her disobedience. Since God ordained that the two of them would be one, it is easy to see how the disobedience of the woman quickly spread to the man. **Genesis 3:1-6** says:

1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”

2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ”

4 Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.

5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

When God asked the man about his disobedience, the rift between man and woman began. The conversation was as follows, as recorded in **Genesis 3:9-12**:

9 Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where are you?”

10 So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.”

11 And [God] said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?”

12 Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.”

I'm sure that you can see the wedge that disobedience to the Word of God drove between the first married couple. Their relationship was, no doubt, damaged by the sin, because, at the very least, they were forced to suffer the consequences of their disobedience as they lost their home in the garden. The man clearly blamed the woman for the transgression that cost them their domicile, and ever since that day, men and women have been blaming one another for their problems.

That married couples live in a state of blame is the desire of the devil. Just as he contradicted the objective truth that God gave the couple in the garden, he wants exactly the opposite of that which God plans for our lives.

Since God wants us to stay married until death does us part, the devil wants us to break up as soon as possible, particularly after we have made children with one another, so that he, the devil, will have easier access to our children. God makes this clear through the words of the prophet Malachi, whom he uses to warn Israel about this problem in **Malachi 2:13**, which says:

13 And this is the second thing you do: You cover the altar of the LORD with tears, With weeping and crying; So He does not regard the offering anymore, Nor receive it with goodwill from your hands.

God is no longer accepting the offering of Israel, which means that God is withdrawing His protection from the land. Malachi goes on to explain God's rejection in **Malachi 2:14-16**:

14 Yet you say, “For what reason?” Because the LORD has been witness Between you and the wife of your youth, With whom you have dealt treacherously; Yet she is your companion And your wife by covenant.

15 But did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.

16 “For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one’s garment with violence,” Says the LORD of hosts. Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously.”

God hates divorce because the rancor involved in divorces make it difficult for parents to maintain the type of relationship with their children that would allow them to lead their children to the Lord. When the parents break the family home into two components, the children have no choice but choose sides. The children have to believe one of two alternatives, either that one parent did something to the other parent to break up their home, or that one or both of their parents were so self-centered that they destroyed their home without a cause.

It is a simple fact that we as a society have lost our way when it comes to family relationships. Just as satan deceived the woman into eating the forbidden fruit, he has deceived our society into accepting the concept it is not necessary to raise children in an intact home in which the two adults raising the children are parents married to one another. Just as our first parents survived the experience of life outside of the garden, children in our society are surviving the experience of being raised in homes in which their parents are not committed to one another. Statistics indicate, however, that fewer of our children are able to make permanent commitments than in previous generations, and the general state of family life is declining.

The statistics from the Centers of Disease Control indicates, based upon their 2002 survey of the nation, that although 82% of Asian children, 76% of non-Hispanic white children, and 65% of Hispanic children live with both parents, only 36% of Black children live with both parents. It is interesting that the Department of Justice statistics indicate that, in 2006, there were 487 white male sentenced prisoners for every 100,000 white males, but 3,042 black male sentenced prisoners per 100,000 black males.

God punished the first disobedient couple by putting them out of the garden, but they survived the experience, although their lives were certainly much more difficult outside of the garden than inside. The more we disobey God’s instructions as they pertain to family life, the more difficult we will find life to be as we live outside of His will. We can rationalize to ourselves that discarding the institutions that God commanded us to use to form families is okay, and the alternate lifestyles that we choose are just as good as those that God gave us, but the outcomes that we are experiencing as a result of our poor choices reveals that although life outside of the garden may be livable, it was really much better when we were inside, in the will of God.

However, my topic this morning is honoring mothers. It is interesting that my computer search of the New King James version of the Bible indicates that there are nine passages of Scripture that contain both the word “honor” and the word “mother”. All nine of them are restatements of the Biblical commandment that pertains to motherhood, which is found in **Exodus 20:12**, and says:

12 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

The Scripture indicates that a child should honor both of his or her parents. The designation of both mother and father in the commandment along with the Scripture references about marriage leads me to the conclusion that the designation of honor is, in part, determined by marital status. Fathers and mothers are meant to be honored in the context of the family unit. In the Old Testament dispensation, there were some mothers that God acknowledged, and others that He did not. For example, **Deuteronomy 23:2** says:

2 “One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

A child is of illegitimate birth if his or her parents were not married at the time of conception. The first Biblical qualification for honorable motherhood is that a woman become a wife before she becomes a mother. The qualification for an honorable wife is that she be a virgin when she marries her husband. **Deuteronomy 22:13-21** says:

**13 “If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and detests her,
14 and charges her with shameful conduct, and brings a bad name on her, and says, ‘I took this woman, and when I came to her I found she was not a virgin,’
15 then the father and mother of the young woman shall take and bring out the evidence of the young woman’s virginity to the elders of the city at the gate.
16 And the young woman’s father shall say to the elders, ‘I gave my daughter to this man as wife, and he detests her.
17 Now he has charged her with shameful conduct, saying, “I found your daughter was not a virgin,” and yet these are the evidences of my daughter’s virginity.’ And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city.
18 Then the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him;
19 and they shall fine him one hundred shekels of silver and give them to the father of the young woman, because he has brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel. And she shall be his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days.
20 “But if the thing is true, and evidences of virginity are not found for the young woman,
21 then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father’s house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel, to play the harlot in her father’s house. So you shall put away the evil from among you.**

Can you imagine living in a society in which the woman’s penalty for having sex out of wedlock is execution? That would be quite a different society than the one in which we currently live. We live in a society in which 46 percent of never-married boys aged 15 to 19 have had sexual intercourse, down from 60 percent in 1988. 46 percent of never-married girls aged 15 to 19 have had sexual intercourse, down from 51 percent in 1988. Only 30 to 34 percent of those in two-parent families have had sex compared with 52 to 54 percent of those in other types of families.

Consider this scenario. A young woman in the 15 to 19 year old age range that we are discussing decides that she wants to date, although she is clearly too young to marry. What is the purpose of her dating? She wants the ego strokes of being popular, and she just wants to have

fun. If she dates a young man that is similar in age to her, it is unlikely that he is dating her because he wants to marry her. His honest motivation for dating the young woman is actually to have a sexual relationship of some sort with her, but not necessarily with the motivation of eventual marriage. So they date, become “boyfriend and girlfriend”, and they eventually become involved sexually with one another.

The young man has achieved his objective. Since his objective was not marriage, as he continues to grow and mature, he finds that his old girlfriend no longer meets his needs, and decides to move on. There was never any formal commitment between the two of them, only an agreement to date and have fun, and he has had his.

The young woman in this situation is now used goods. Her sexual experience has created an emotional bond within her for the young man, but the interaction of the sexual with the emotional is different for young men than it is for young women.

When the young man dumps her and the young woman goes back into the dating rotation, she has a scar on her emotions that she did not have when she first started dating; she is more cautious, more guarded, less trusting, less giving.

In our society, girls start this dating and breaking up pattern as early as fifteen years of age or less. How many relationships do they go through before they actually reach the point in which they are ready for marriage? How many scars do they receive on their souls before they find someone with whom they can have the permanent, committed relationship of marriage? When they do get married, how do these scars of the soul affect them? Can they give themselves to their marriage in the same way that they could have had they maintained their virginity and not had the negative emotional experiences associated with casual sex?

It just may be that casual sex, even casual sex with contraception that successfully avoids pregnancy, is not as harmless as we may want to think that it is. God’s call for young women to bring virginity to the marriage bed may actually be for a good reason. Also, it may be that parents have the responsibility to deny adolescent children access to unchaperoned dating until they actually have the maturity to handle the repercussions of that which they may encounter.

We deny our children access to our drive our cars until they have proven that they can handle the responsibility to drive; should we pay more care to our cars than to their bodies and psyches?

Back in the day, the lion at the gate was a girl’s dad. It was his responsibility to protect his daughter from the body and from herself, so that one day he could be a virtuous wife and mother. A young man had to meet the young girl’s father before he could take her out, and he had to satisfy the father that his intentions were honorable. A lot of boys and girls were embarrassed to express their affection for one another in such a formal manner, but there were many fewer scars on the soul.

Dennis Rainey, in his book, Interviewing Your Daughter’s Date, relates that when a young man asked his daughter Ashley, if he could take her out, she told him that the rules in her house were that he would have to talk to her dad first. When the young man, Kevin, showed up, Dennis suggested that they go outside to talk. When they got outside, Kevin showed Dennis his motorcycle.

“Kevin”, Dennis said, hoping that he’d remember the rest of the words that he wanted to say, “God did a wonderful thing when he made women. “

Kevin froze. This was going to be worse than he had thought. Dennis thought that Kevin might just jump on the motorcycle and get away.

Dennis continued, “And Kevin, God made men and women different. You’ve probably noticed some of those differences.”

Kevin was getting stiffer by the minute, but he had the presence of mind to nod.

“Actually, God made us different so that men and women would be attracted to one another. Now, Kevin”, Dennis paused for dramatic effect, “you have probably noticed that God made Ashley quite attractive. She’s really a cute girl. In fact, you’ve probably noticed that she has a nice figure.”

This was less of a statement and more of a question. If Kevin said no, he and Dennis would both know that he was lying. If Kevin said yes, however, he would be admitting to the obvious, that he had the audacity to notice Dennis’ daughter’s figure! Either way, Kevin was toast.

After a brief pause, Dennis spared Kevin the agony and continued.

“Kevin, you’re a young man and Ashley is a young lady, and God made men and women to be attracted to one another. It’s good.”

Kevin seemed relieved at Dennis’ pronouncement, and Dennis went on. “And Kevin, I want just you to know that I am a man and I understand this attraction. I was once a teenage boy, and I know what teenage boys think about. I’ve even read some research on this, and the studies indicate that teenage boys think about sex every seven seconds.”

At this point, Kevin’s eyes darted, wondering where Dennis was going next.

“And Kevin, you and I both know those teenage boys were lying about the other six seconds.”

At this point, Kevin’s eyes began to dilate! There was no dodging this one. “Yes, sir”, he said, with a nervous little laugh.

“Kevin”, Dennis said, “I don’t know how to put this any plainer; I want you to keep your lips and hands off my daughter. And, I’m going to help you with that. Because whether I see you after your first date with Ashley – or after your fiftieth date – you can expect me to ask you ‘Kevin, are you dealing uprightly with my daughter?’ And I want you to know what I mean when I ask you that question. Are we communicating, Kevin?”

“Yes, sir.” Kevin’s eyes were fully dilated at this point.

Dennis continued. “Kevin, Ashley is going to be somebody’s wife someday, and I don’t want you touching her body. Would you want somebody touching your wife’s body?”

“No, sir”, said Kevin.

“That’s what I thought”, said Dennis. “So you and I, we know what we’re talking about when I ask you to be accountable for protecting the emotional and moral purity of my daughter, right?”

Kevin nodded enough to let Dennis know that he understood the vocabulary.

“And, Kevin”, Dennis said, “I want you also to take this challenge: If God ever gives you the privilege of being a husband and a dad, especially if he gives you girls, I want you to take your role so seriously with them that you’ll talk to your daughter’s dates the way I’ve talked to you today. Will you promise me that?”

“Yes, sir”, said Kevin.

At that point, both Dennis and Kevin were relieved that the conversation was over. Dennis grinned and patted Kevin on the back. Dennis told Kevin, "I'm proud of you for coming to talk to me and allowing me to interact with you around such important issues."

As Kevin was putting his helmet on, he answered Dennis' one last question by assuring Dennis that they would be riding in a car on their date.

Ephesians 6:1-4 tells us:

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

2 "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise:

3 "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

4 And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Brothers, we have the responsibility as protectors. Our job is to take care of the heavy lifting as our wives make our homes places of peace and prayer. Our job is to train our sons, protect our daughters and comfort and reassure our wives that we have our hands in God's hand and that we are going to do those things, with the help of God, that we need to do to make our relationships that which Jesus would have them be. He says, through the pen of the Apostle Paul in **Ephesians 5:25-33**:

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

The church is the bride of Christ. Jesus Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, out on the hill that they call Calvary.

Jesus Christ was not a fictional character, or a figment of the imagination of the men that testified to His life. If you believe in the existence of any other historical person, you can more assuredly believe in the existence of Jesus Christ, because there has been more bona fide, verified history written about life of Jesus Christ than of anyone else in the history of the world.

Jesus Christ came to give his life for our sins. I talked about the rules and regulations that God put in the Bible, and how we need to follow His instructions, but none of us have actually done so.

All of us are in line for one or another of the condemnations.

If we haven't had children out of wedlock, we have done something else that we ought not have done and displeased God in the process. **Romans 3:23** tells us:

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

When I tell you that which the Bible says about sin and it hits you, don't feel bad, because I'm not looking down on you. Some page in the Bible is hitting me as hard as the page I read is hitting you, because all of us, every one, are sinners. We have all disobeyed God in some way. But Jesus Christ, knowing that we are all under the same condemnation by God for our sins, came to earth to die to pay the penalty that we owe for the sins that we have committed.

Romans 6:23 tells us:

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So as we celebrate the sacrifices that our mother's have made for us, let us remember that just as our mother's sacrificed themselves for us and brought us into this life, Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself for us on Calvary to give us eternal life. Let us emulate His example, take care of one another, and keep His commandment, as He gave it to us in summary, in **John 13:34-35**:

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

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