

## **Sermon or Lesson: 1 Timothy 5:5-8** (NIV based)

[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Widows In Genuine Need Of Survival Assistance

INTRO: As you go through life on a daily basis, do you find that it is easy to become jaded to the plight of needy people in your society? And do you find that mass media exacerbates this phenomenon through its continuous promotion of the entitlement attitude that apparently is prevalent in many societies today? For the next few minutes, try to set aside any jadedness you may have in this regard, and instead consider God's position on this topic.

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READ: 1 Timothy 5:5-8, with vv.3-4 for context

### BACKGROUND:

- - Ministry leaders are directed by God to regard and treat as close beloved family members the men and women attending their ministry. (vv.1-2)
- - The leadership in the church or ministry has an obligation before God to monitor the situation and plight of every widow in their congregation or ministry. (v.3)
- - Widows, parents, grandparents, and relatives who are really in need are to be provided for, with that responsibility and religious duty falling on their grown children, grandchildren, and relatives. (vv.3-4)
- - Now let's investigate further to find out what else God says about genuinely-needy widows, their plight, and God's remedy.

### v.5 - READ

[Lesson Question: Analyze and describe how God wants widows to respond to their desperate survival predicament.]

SECTION POINT: A godly widow sets her hope in God for rescue relief from her desperate survival predicament, persevering in petitioning God in prayer.

- - Two natural and common results of being widowed are falling into destitution and being isolated to fend for one's self.
- - Typically, desperation to survive becomes an all-consuming daily preoccupation for the widow.
- - The godly response of the widow who is in such a destitute and desolate situation is to turn to God for rescue relief.
- - The godly widow continuously throughout the "night and day" makes "earnest and urgent requests, appeals", and "petitions" in prayer to God. (from Strong's #1162 with AHD - 'petitions')
- - In accordance with the faith, the godly widow furthermore "sets" her hope in God, "expectant and confident" that God will orchestrate a remedy to her desperate survival predicament. (Strong's #1679)

- - Certainly, God knows her plight, sees her destitution, hears her petitions and prayers, and honors her for persevering in responding in this godly manner.
  - - God's concern for the plight of the widow is one main reason He is instructing and imploring in this Scripture passage that the widow's relatives and the church come to her rescue. (vv.4,8,16)
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#### v.6 - READ

[Lesson Question: How does the response of the worldly widow differ from that of the godly widow?]

SECTION POINT: In contrast to a godly response, the worldly widow relies on her own charms to pursue a path of self-pleasure to remedy her desperate survival predicament.

- - In contrast to the response by the godly widow, the worldly widow responds to her dire predicament in a much different manner.
  - - Devoid of any reliance on God and not pursuing relief from God, the worldly widow pursues "pleasure" to remedy her desperate survival predicament.
  - - She chooses "living in self-pleasure, being voluptuous", "devoting herself to pursuing and indulging in sensual pleasures". (Strong's #4684; AHD - 'voluptuous')
  - - The worldly widow relies on her own means, her own abilities, her own beauty, and her own charms, which are derived from her own natural but ungodly perspective and reasoning about how to remedy her desperate survival predicament.
  - - Clearly, God does not approve of such a response and consequently He considers this worldly widow to be dead spiritually even while she is physically living.
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#### v.7 - READ

[Lesson Question: What are the implications of 'the people being instructed' in this regard?]

SECTION POINT: The people of God are included among those persons whom God holds responsible to provide tangible sufficient care for genuinely-needy widows.

- - Herein, God broadens this responsibility to take care of widows, which now is to include being the responsibility of the people of the church.
- - Because this verse specifically denotes an element of "blame", this extending of responsibility is essentially being elevated to the level of being a command from God, because there is accountability attached in this verse for the church people to be implementing this responsibility.
- - Herein, God expects, instructs, and even commands that His ministry leaders and His people are to take distinct steps of action to alleviate the survival distress of widows who are in genuine need.
- - And individual believers are responsible and accountable in this regard as well, because God desires that through the "transmittance of this message" by the ministry leaders to God's people, they likewise are to be "without blame or reproach". (Strong's #3853, #0423)

- - In other words, both the ministry leaders and the individual believers are to be "blameless or free of guilt" in the fulfilling of their God-given responsibility of supplying tangible support to genuinely needy widows. (from Strong's #0423 with AHD - 'inculpable')
  - - And notice that fulfilling this responsibility is not only an act of obedience to God, but it also is a visible testimony of one's faith to the watching world around us believers and our ministries, that no one will be able to rightly launch valid criticism or accusation against any of God's people or their ministries for failure in this regard. (from AHD - 'reproach')
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## v.8 - READ

[Lesson Question: Expound on how God regards those persons who fail to provide assistance to their genuinely-needy relatives.]

SECTION POINT: In effect, a believer denies and disavows the faith when failing to supply tangible assistance to their relatives that is sufficient for their basic survival.

- - Believers have a duty to provide tangible assistance to one's relatives who are in genuine need for survival.
  - - The responsibility for this duty increases for one's immediate family members.
  - - Failure to fulfill this responsibility is a major failure to maintain and live out one's faith properly.
  - - Matter of fact, God considers this failure to be "denial" of one's faith, a direct "contradicting" of the core tenets of the faith, which in effect "disavows and rejects" one's faith. (Strong's #0720)
  - - Furthermore, God considers this failure to be worse behavior than what an unbeliever exhibits.
  - - Such a failure demonstrates a blatant and unthinkable lack of concern or love for one's own relatives, who are in a desperate survival predicament no less.
  - - Also, this failure is a significant violation of the second greatest command to "Love your neighbor as yourself", especially considering that it is natural to have deep concern and love for one's own relatives that is tangibly committed to their well-being. (Mark 12:31)
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BIG IDEA: Widows in genuine need of survival assistance are to put their trust in God, and believers are to put their faith into action by tangibly and sufficiently meeting those needs.

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## APPLICATIONS:

- - Which has more value: resorting to worldliness to remedy your desperate survival predicament, or trusting in God to provide rescue relief from your desperate survival predicament?

- - Which has more value: maintaining your financial excess, or sustaining the basic survival of a genuinely-needy widow relative?
  - - Which has more value: maintaining your financial excess, or tangibly contributing to sustaining the basic survival of genuinely-needy widows in your church?
  
  - - In each of these value choices just mentioned, there is a choice of a quick but worldly pay-off in the short-term that sacrifices a future spiritual pay-off, and there is a choice of a slow but godly pay-off in the long-term that sacrifices a somewhat-immediate physical remedy. Which type of choice are you going to make henceforth?
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[An additional Lesson Question to ponder (optional, if time allows):  
- - Within this God-given responsibility of family members to provide assistance to their genuinely-needy widow relative, is one's responsibility lesser if the widow is an in-law, being not a direct blood relative? Why, or why not?]

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