

Sermon or Lesson: 1 Timothy 5:4 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Caregiving Obligations For One's Genuinely Needy Relatives

INTRO: Have you ever given any thought about who is to be responsible for providing the caregiving for genuinely needy people? Does that responsibility and duty primarily fall on the government? Or on charity organizations? Or on someone else? Or on a relative? Or on you?

It would be logical to assume that God has something to say about this - which He does. Let's read to find out what God says and even instructs.

READ: 1 Timothy 5:4, with vv. 4:6,15; 5:1-3 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)
- - Ministry leaders are directed by God to treat each of their people with gentleness, encouragement, propriety, and honor. (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 who are really in need" are to be provided for. (v.3)
- - Now let's investigate further to find out what else God instructs to provide for people who are in genuine need, and widows in this particular case.

[Lesson Question: Describe the responsibility being designated by God here.]

SECTION POINT: God places the responsibility and religious duty on grown children, grandchildren, and relatives that they are to ensure that sufficient care is provided for their genuinely needy parents, grandparents, and relatives.

- - The topic here pertains to an adult person who is needy, citing a specific example commonly being a widow. (v.3)
 - - A widow or any needy person who is "really" or genuinely "deficient" of a means of support has no husband or family to earn and provide food, shelter, clothing, and other basic essentials for her or him. (v.3, Strong's #5503; also see v.5)
 - - Such a needy adult person is not to be ignored in the church, but rather is to be "recognized" and provided for. (v.3)
 - - The responsibility to provide care for a genuinely needy adult primarily or firstly falls on that person's immediate family members such as grown "children", and then on the extended family members such as grown "grandchildren".
 - - By extension, if both of these groups of family members default, then the responsibility to provide care for a genuinely needy adult falls on the church (vv.7,8,16), which the "good minister" is leader over. (vv.4:6; 5:3)
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[Lesson Question: Describe how the faith fits into this responsibility.]

SECTION POINT: Providing caregiving for one's needy parents, grandparents, and relatives is an appropriate action in response to the faith and corresponding godliness.

- - Family members such as grown children and grown grandchildren are to "learn", understand, and appreciate that God has given them this caregiving responsibility.
 - - In the declaration of His reasoning, God considers this caregiving responsibility as a necessary and appropriate resulting activity that springs forth from one's faith, putting their religion into practice.
 - - In accordance with faith, "godliness" always needs to be tangibly exercised and put into practice when opportunities or obligations arise, in this case being the genuine neediness of one's parents or grandparents. (Strong's #2151; cf. James 2:17)
 - - And specifically for this case, as stated in James 1:27, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress...".
 - - So for God, this is a matter of taking action rightly in accordance with the faith.
 - - Furthermore, this is a matter of appropriate and practical keeping of a basic commandment, "Honor your father and your mother..." - Exodus 20:12.
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[Lesson Question: Explain why God is pleased in this.]

SECTION POINT: God is pleased when grown children and grown grandchildren reciprocate providing caregiving to their needy parents and grandparents.

- - Also of significance to God, parents and grandparents have earned the worthiness to be "repaid" by their children and grandchildren for all of the child-rearing efforts the parents exerted over the decades.
 - - During the time of childhood, the children were vulnerable, helpless, needy, and thereby dependent upon their able-bodied parents to provide for them, which their parents did extensively and protractedly.
 - - And now, conversely, when the parents or grandparents have become vulnerable, helpless, needy, and dependent, their grown children and grown grandchildren are to step up and "return" or "give back" the same providing care. (Strong's #0591)
 - - Responding and reciprocating in this manner is thereupon "pleasing to God", being "good, beautiful, valuable, virtuous", "acceptable, and agreeable" "in the presence" of God. (Strong's #2570, #0587, #1799)
 - - Furthermore, this reciprocation outwardly expresses "recognition", gratitude, and honor to one's ancestors for their prior faithfulness in providing care to their children. (v.3)
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BIG IDEA: Providing caregiving for one's genuinely needy parents, grandparents, and relatives is a necessary godly response to the faith and to the responsibility God has instituted.

APPLICATIONS:

- - How do you regard your obligations and role in providing caregiving for your living genuinely needy parents, grandparents, or relatives?
 - - Do you consider that your obligations ended the moment you moved out of your parents' house?
 - - Or do you let relational dysfunction with your parents, grandparents, or relatives shape or determine your opinion, regard, and response to their genuine caregiving neediness?
 - - Or do you let geographical distance from your parents, grandparents, or relatives shape or determine your perceived obligations for their caregiving to alleviate their neediness?
 - - Or do you rely on government welfare programs to meet their caregiving neediness and assume that the welfare benefits are adequate and timely?
 - - Or do you insist that the providing for the genuine caregiving neediness of your parents, grandparents, or relatives is the responsibility of your sibling or some other family member and is therefore not your responsibility?
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- - Now in consideration of this study of 1 Timothy 5:4, what do you think your regard and your response should be to the genuine caregiving neediness of your parents, grandparents, and relatives?
 - - Now in consideration of the faith that you say and project that you have, what should be your response to the genuine caregiving neediness of your parents, grandparents, and relatives?
 - - What good is it if you claim to have faith but have no corresponding good deeds in this matter? (James 2:14)
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Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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