



1 TIMOTHY

WOMEN WORTHY OF HONOR

WEEK 10 | 1 TIMOTHY 5:9-10
PASTOR CHARLIE BLOUNT
MAY 12, 2024

We will jump ahead in our study of 1 Timothy because today is Mother's Day, and there is some truth in Chapter 5 that I think is fitting for today. We will go back next week and pick up where we left off in Chapter 3, but today, we will look at women worthy of honor. The Bible puts a lot of value on women. Anyone who thinks differently hasn't read all of it. The type of women that the Bible highlights are not those whose qualities look like the world but those who, as read about in Proverbs 31, truly fear and honor the Lord. So, today, we will look at the women that the Scriptures say we are to celebrate - women worthy of honor.

The passage we will look at may seem strange at first because it primarily focuses on the church's care and support of widows. However, inside, it highlights a specific type of woman that the church is to esteem. We find it in verses 9-10, and these qualities mirror some of the qualities we see in the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31. I also want to tell the story of some women I have known throughout my life who display these qualities that their works may praise them in the city gates (Proverbs 31:31).

She is faithful to her husband.

The first thing this honored woman is known for is her faithfulness to her husband. While the translation we are reading from today says the "wife of one husband," it literally means the woman of one man. This is like the qualification of elders and deacons we saw earlier. What it is referring to is the kind of woman who is known for her faithfulness to her husband. To parallel this with Proverbs 31:11-12, we see that a virtuous woman is trusted by her husband because she lovingly does good by him throughout their lives. God designed the woman to journey alongside her husband as a helpmate. Together, as they work hand in hand, they can accomplish God's plan and purpose for their lives of displaying the gospel together. Just as a woman should know her husband's heart is only for her, a husband should know that his wife's heart is only for him, and they seek to do good for each other until death ends the marriage.

The last picture I have of my mom and dad in my mind happened about ten days before his passing. We had met in Bricktown to celebrate my niece's birthday. I didn't know this would be the last time I would see them together. Both had had some health issues, which caused them not to be able to get around like they used to and as they left, I watched them walk hand in hand down the street to their car. I watched them walking together, thankful for their love and faithfulness to the Lord and each other. Not long after that, my dad got COVID and passed away from other health complications. My mom was faithful to my dad to the very end, and he was to her. Their marriage lasted over forty years, and together, they displayed the gospel.

She is known for her good works.

While good works are not necessary for salvation (but instead comes from the free grace of God), they are to be part of a believer's life. The small book of Titus bears testimony that God's people should be "zealous for good works" (2:7), "ready for good works" (3:1), and "devoted to good works" (3:8,14). Ephesians 2 tells us clearly that while we are not saved by our works but rather by grace through faith, we are "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works." Simply put, how we live matters because it bears evidence to being born again through faith in Jesus. This is James the elder's argument in his NT letter.

The point is that in the life of a believer, especially those we honor as faithful, good works are evident. I can almost guarantee that every believer can point you to a woman who exemplified godliness by her works. I can list many that I have encountered over the years, but maybe none more than May "Ma" Anderson. I'm pretty sure that Ma Anderson was always old. She was a faithful Sunday School teacher of third graders for decades. She wanted every child to memorize the books of the Bible and read the NT. I still have the Bible in my office that I received in her third-grade S.S. Class. Her life was a model of faithful living that exemplified good works. Her life was plain and ordinary by most standards but was a picture of Christian living that honored her Lord. This kind of woman should receive the "reward for her labor" (Proverbs 31:30) both in this life and life to come.

She has brought up children.

Another reason that this kind of woman is to be honored is for her bringing up of children. Our first thought when we think of bringing up children is biologically. Clearly, this is part of it. One of the proving grounds of faithfulness to God in the Bible is how one raises their children and trains them in godliness. As we have said before, there is far more to motherhood and womanhood than having babies. The church has been called to not only be fruitful and multiply but also to care for children beyond those that are born to us naturally. Some mothers raise their biological children; some mothers adopt and raise their children; some mothers foster and bring up children; and some mothers bring up children in their church and/or neighborhood by lovingly caring for them and pointing them to Jesus.

There is a dear woman named Betty Snodgrass. You have heard me talk about her husband, Frances, before. Betty never had biological children, but she and her husband adopted and raised two children. Betty's bringing up children didn't stop there, though. She ran a daycare out of her home and, through that, influenced many children for Christ. So many young adults talked of her influence in the church and home. She truly modeled the influence a godly woman and mother can have without ever having biological children. She reminded me of our own Warthanell Downing, who, never having any biological children of her own, has brought up several generations of girls and women in our church. This kind of woman will hear, "Her children rise up and call her blessed..." (Proverbs 31:28) because her "mouth speaks wisdom and loving instruction" (Proverbs 31:26) as she will be praised for her godly investment in their lives.

She shows hospitality

An honorable woman lives her life open to others. Her home and life are made available to lovingly welcome others. Friends and strangers are welcome as she serves through kindness and warmth. One thing missing in our culture is the willingness to open our lives to others. We easily wall ourselves off from others. Christians are to be those who invite others openly into their lives to share the love of Christ.

My wife, Renee, is one such woman. She is always quick to open our home to people to serve them. From church groups to neighbors to foster kids, she has exemplified over and over again what it looks like to show hospitality to friends and strangers by not just opening the door of our home but also opening our family's life. Interestingly, she is an introvert, which proves that hospitality is not a personality but a spiritual trait. This woman extends her hands to the poor and needy (Proverbs 31:20) and anyone else she can show kindness to.

She has served the people of God.

Paul describes such a woman as one who washes the feet of the saints. This was a cultural custom that is a picture of servanthood. Such a woman is quick to serve God's people however they need it. She is willing to meet any task, great or small, without concern for recognition, as her reward will be in heaven. There is nothing that makes a person more like Jesus than serving. This is the key to greatness in God's kingdom and one of the ways that the world will know we belong to Jesus. When I think about this kind of woman, I think of Paula Mikes. She is the Director of Finance in our church but is also a faithful servant of the Lord's people. I have never known her not to be one of the first to volunteer to serve under any circumstance. Not because she wants to be recognized (she will actually be uncomfortable with me mentioning her) but because she loves the Lord and His people.

She helps the hurting.

The world we live in is filled with hurt because of the effects of sin. It is everywhere. Hurt comes physically, emotionally, mentally, relationally, spiritually.... There will never be a shortage of opportunities to help the afflicted. The type of women that are worthy of honor help those in need. I know a lady, Cherris Curtis, who runs a benevolence ministry. She helps with clothing and personal items for those who are going through hard times. The ministry is not easy and requires compassion, firmness, and wisdom. I have seen her strive over and over again to help the afflicted. She is like the many we have who serve in our Care Center, helping provide food for those in need. We have men and women down there, but as we recognized in our service a couple of weeks ago, the women have kept it running for the last 25 years.

We will end our service by praising God for these women who are worthy of honor. In each section, we will have them stand as we gather around them and pray over them. We praise God for women who show Christ to us in their words and lives.