You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do themselves. – Abraham Lincoln

# Intro: So many hurting people

1. Compassion means using gentle words to share hard truths
2. Being family means we need to have hard conversations

v. 4 if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household

v. 7 Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach.

Matthew 18:15 If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

1. Being family means we treat each other as family

vv. 1-2 Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.

Matthew 12:49-50 And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

* How would you correct your father? What does that teach you about how to say hard things to older people?
* How can you treat fellow Christians as brothers and sisters?
* What would it have meant to be called brother or sister by Jesus?

1. Compassion means you prioritize support
2. It’s not unchristian to confirm that the need is real

v. 3 Honor widows who are truly widows.

v. 5 She who is truly a widow, left all alone …

v. 9 Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age …

1. God prioritizes the righteous sufferer

v. 9 having been the wife of one husband

v. 10 having a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work

Psalm 103:13 As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.

Galatians 6:10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

* Why is it sometimes necessary to put conditions on who you help and how?
* Why does Galatians 6:10 say to do good to everyone but especially believers?

1. Compassion means knowing when helping hurts
2. Compassion hurts when it undermines what people should do for each other

v. 4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household

v. 8 But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

v. 16 If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows.

1. Compassion hurts when it undermines what people should do for themselves

vv. 11-12 But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their passions draw them away from Christ, they desire to marry and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith.

v. 13 Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.

2 Thessalonians 3:11 For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies.

1. Wrongly treating someone like a victim makes them vulnerable to temptation

vv. 14-15 So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. For some have already strayed after Satan.

1. Grace errs on the side of generosity

Matthew 5:42 Give to the one who begs from you …

Romans 12:20 if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink

* Why would it matter if the church gave to a widow whose family could support her? Why not support younger widows?
* Why didn’t Jesus give extra conditions for when to give to someone in Matthew 5:42? Isn’t feeding your enemy unwise?

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| **Study Ahead** | **Next week, we’ll study 1 Timothy 5:17-25** |

Notes