

# Practicing Justice and Mercy

**Key Verses:**

***“Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger sisters, with all purity.”  
—I Timothy 5:1,2***

**Selected Scripture:**

***I Timothy 5:1-8;***

***17-24***

**THE APOSTLE PAUL OUT-**

lines in the Key Verse a level of acceptable conduct and respect that all of the Lord’s people should acknowledge and practice. This includes equitable behavior towards those who are advanced in years, as well as toward those of the younger generation. He also extends this sense of justice and mercy toward the widows. (vss. 3-5) Justice and mercy are truly marks that identify the well-established and mature Christian’s character.

The apostle also addresses proper behavior that we should expect from others, “That the aged men be sober [vigilant, *Marginal Translation*], grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.” (Tit. 2:2-6) With the increasing levels of

stress in our modern world, Paul's admonitions of honor and respect toward others have not been as closely followed as it once was.

Those who are servants in the congregations of the Lord's people are worthy of more honor and respect than that which is normally given to others, because of their labors of love. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double [Greek, twofold] honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." (I Tim. 5:17) In further clarification of this line of reasoning concerning those who preach and teach in the household of faith, Paul explains, "The scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward."—vs. 18; Deut. 25:4; Luke 10:7

Paul has directed special attention to this matter of honoring the servants of God. During the period of the early church, it was the usual custom for the apostles, or others who traveled about while serving the brethren, to expect to receive a meal and a place to spend the night wherever they happened to be. Hospitality and temporal blessings were freely offered in exchange for the spiritual food that was given by these servants of the Truth.

Further to this, the apostle gives added counsel, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." (I Tim. 5:19,20) Paul encourages his younger brother Timothy to be aware of all wrongdoing among the Lord's people and to act positively against it. "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring [without prejudice, *Marginal Translation*] one before another, doing nothing by partiality."—vs. 21

Let us resolve to practice justice and mercy toward all of our fellow creatures, and especially toward our brethren. It should be a major feature of our Christian characters, and an important part of our consecrated walk in newness of life. ■