

## **Instructions To The Church**

### **Church As Family**

The New Testament describes the church with metaphors and analogies to help us understand what God desires the church to be. The Apostle Peter wrote of the church, “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9) The church is “a holy nation” of believers worldwide and as such experiences unity despite ethnicity, culture and language. Believers have a common fellowship through their spiritual citizenship both here on earth and in the heavenly realm.

In Revelation chapter 5 the church is called a “kingdom” demonstrating that believers have a common goal of submitting to the King of kings and Lord of lords. Peter calls the church a “priesthood” in 1 Peter chapter 2, (vs. 5 and 9). Our Lord Jesus called the church a vine in John 15 emphasizing believer’s connection to Himself and that we are nourished by Him. Paul calls the church a “temple” in Ephesians (2:20-22) that is built upon a solid foundation of the apostles’ doctrine and Jesus being the chief cornerstone. In 1 Corinthians 12:12 Paul writes that the church is a “body” whose every part is important and necessary. Believers have a common life through community and are dependent upon their Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. The writer of Hebrews in chapter 12 calls the church an “assembly” stressing that believers are to come together in worship of our holy God. Peter in his first letter chapter 5 calls the church a “flock” indicating believers common need to be led and fed by the Great Shepherd.

The metaphor I want to examine more closely this morning shows that the church is a family. We find this metaphor of church as family in Ephesians chapters 2 and in 3 we have the prayer for spiritual strength as family belonging to God the Father and in Galatians, “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the **household of faith**. (Galatians 6:10) The term “household of faith” means family. The concept of household or family speaks of intimacy, care and love. A church is to have a deep love, first of Christ and then for each other. Jesus said with authority, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34–35) Love is the foundation of family and families are the foundation of the church and the world is to observe our love of Christ and each other.

### **Church and Correction**

Loving each other as brothers and sisters includes a necessary but often overlooked element; that is the need to confront sin. In the church as well as in family, disobedience must be dealt with. **Proper discipline is a mark of a loving family and church. True love desires that others grow spiritually and receive the blessings of God.** Because of this desire both family and church must not hesitate to confront sin. In these first 2 verses of chapter 5, in Paul’s letter to Timothy, he instructs how sin should be dealt with within the Lord’s family.

Timothy was part of and overseeing the spiritual families or group of churches located in the area of Ephesus. When reading chapters 1 and 2 of Paul’s letter we know that some members of the church family were openly sinning and had abandoned the truth and godliness. Others had shipwrecked their faith. Some women had abandoned their proper role within the church family and were

attempting to usurp leaders. In chapters 3 to 6 we observe some men aspiring to be leaders who were not qualified. Therefore, Paul writes of the qualifications of leaders. Other men were teaching false doctrines inspired by the evil one. In chapter 5 some of the older women were living impure lives, as were some of the younger women. Some of today's churches have the same problems. Both the church in Ephesus and many we see today are in need of correction. If sin goes unchecked the church family, as with individual families and as with individuals become weakened and spiritually sick. This spiritual sickness becomes contagious like a disease and like cancer the church family, families and individuals do not realize the depth of their sin until it is so advanced that their only hope is radical surgery. Paul spoke of this in his letter to the believers in Corinth. "Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? <sup>7</sup> Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump ... <sup>9</sup> I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people — <sup>10</sup> not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world ... <sup>11</sup> But ... with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler ... <sup>13</sup> God judges those outside. 'Purge the evil person from among you.'" (1 Corinthians 5:6-7, 9-10, 11 and 13) Paul is saying leaders must discipline, (which is for correction, not punishment) quickly and firmly with the standards of God, which includes loving care. If though the process outlined in the Scripture one does not repent and correct, then as Paul wrote, do "not to associate ... with anyone who bears the name of brother." We should seek God's correction and discipline. "Behold, blessed is the one whom God reprove; therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty." (Job 5:17) Eliphaz (el·ee·faz) was the oldest son of Esau and he was also the ancestor of a number of Edomite clans. Eliphaz was a friend of Job and here in Job chapter 5 brings forth the possibility that Job's trouble is beneficial and remedial and that God had Job's good in mind and not only His justice.

The Proverbs says that discipline leads to understanding (15:32), knowledge (19:25), wisdom (15:31), honor (13:18) and a happy life (6:23). God sent prophet after prophet to correct the His people - to discipline them for correction. The Old Testament shows a few times the people listened, but often they did not and the results were disastrous. God told the Prophet Ezekiel, “Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel, to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me. They and their fathers have transgressed against me to this very day. <sup>4</sup> The descendants also are impudent and stubborn: I send you to them, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD.’ <sup>5</sup> And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that a prophet has been among them. <sup>6</sup> And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions. Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. <sup>7</sup> And you shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear, for they are a rebellious house.” (Ezekiel 2:3–7) **Fallen men have not changed over time; they still refuse to hear God and are rebellious. This is expected of the unsaved but should not be true of the saved.**

It did not take long for the early church to get into trouble and much of the New Testament is instruction on how to deal with various problems. In Matthew we find the most important passage-outlining discipline for the church family. Reading from Matthew 18, beginning with verse 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. <sup>16</sup> But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup> Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on**

earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 18:15–18) This is the guide for how we need to deal with conflict within our church and with each other. If followed there would be much less conflict in the church and among believers.

## Church Relationships

With this foundation we come to our passage in Paul’s letter to Timothy. Reading 1 Timothy 5:1-2, “Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but *rather* appeal to *him* as a father, to the younger men as brothers,<sup>2</sup> the older women as mothers, *and* the younger women as sisters, in all purity.” (NASB) Dealing with sin must be handled with steadiness and as it is written in Paul’s second letter to Timothy (4:2), “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, **with complete patience and teaching.**” Our first defense against sin is “preach the word” for the Word of God will “reprove, rebuke, and exhort” God’s people to live without sin. The verse ends with “with complete patience and teaching” indicating the patience of God for His children, the power of God’s Word and that as brothers and sisters we are to have patience with each other as we lovingly help each other to correct sin.

Paul says, “Do not sharply rebuke” this is a very strong term meaning to be harsh or even violent in confrontation. I know how I react to being hammered by harsh rebuke – lets just say, there are times that I may not respond lovingly. **To deal with one harshly is the opposite of being loving. Harsh treatment is meant to punish and doesn’t correct.** On the other hand Paul says, “*rather* appeal to *him*” conveying the meaning of encouraging and entreating one to change for their own good.

We need to recognize that Christ died for the salvation of sinners, but He appeals to people, He does not force. “Now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—<sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is

no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. (Romans 3:21–25) My sin may be and probable is different than your sin and we need to recognize **ALL** sin separates one from God. Oh, the consequences may be radically different, but **ALL** sin separates people from the only holy God. We cannot change until we recognize we have a sin problem and desire to change. Meditating on the Word of God at the beginning our day helps reprogram our mind that belongs to a fallen sinner saved by God's grace. Meditating on the Word of God helps us see what is right before God and encourages one to travel the path of righteousness.

Further, time in prayer enables us to commune with God; share our concerns, hurts, needs and joys and know He hears and cares, and then listen to Him. How do we know God hears and cares? By listening to His Spirit that lives within every true believer. Let me show you how Paul brings the Holy Spirit into 1 Timothy 5:1, “**Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but rather appeal to him.**” The word “**appeal**” used here could more accurately be translated as to “strengthen” or meaning to come along side one who is spiritually weak and hold them up. The Greek word is **parakalēō**, (*par-ak-al-eh'-o*) meaning to implore to strengthen, to comfort and it is close, very close to the word **paraklētōs**, (*par-ak'-lay-tos*) meaning intercessor, consoler, advocate and comforter. **Paraklētōs** is the name used for the Holy Spirit in John's gospel chapters 14 to 16. (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7) **We can “appeal” to (strengthen) brothers or sisters by helping them return to the Word of God so that the Holy Spirit may strengthen their minds and hearts to reflect God's Character.**

Brothers and sisters are to be a source of strength to each other. Ananias did not want to help blind Paul, but he submitted to God's will and he went to Paul and Paul

was strengthened. “So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’<sup>18</sup> And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized.” (Acts 9:17–18) Caring for others and strengthening them honors God and brings comfort to ones soul. Is this not what a family is to do? Confronting sin is not to be harsh or violent, but we lovingly confront, strengthen, and encourage our siblings of Christ towards living holy. We come to help with gentleness and with a desire to restore.

Paul said it this way, as “the Lord’s servant *you* must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil,<sup>25</sup> correcting ~~his~~ *your* opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,<sup>26</sup> and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.” (2 Timothy 2:24–26) Is this how we approach those in sin? Is this how we care for each other? We are a family whose Father is Divine. For “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (1 Peter 5:5) My beloved, are we caring for each other in humility? I know you have all heard the saying, “But for the grace of God there go I.” We are to be people who love each other with humility, confront each other gently and correct each other for the purpose of reconciliation. This is why Paul includes not just one type of person that is to be strengthened, loved and encouraged to return to holy living. Paul lists four groups older men, younger men, older women and younger women.

## **Church and Grace**

“Do not sharply rebuke an older man” does not refer to an elder of the church but rather the father or patriarch of the family. Paul is calling for Timothy to confront

older men's sins but to do so with the respect he would show his own father. The Bible teaches that we are to show respect towards older men. In Leviticus it is written, "You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man..." Respect is to be part of the training for all Christians. Yet, it goes beyond training, as verse 32 continues "... and you shall fear your God: I am the LORD." (Leviticus 19:32) If we fear and respect God then we will show respect to older men. Our society no longer teaches respect for older men. They are a burden and are better off in a senior complex. The Bible teaches the opposite of what society does; older men have a wealth of knowledge obtained primarily from two sources, many years of studying the Bible - by hearing sound preaching, meditation upon God's Word and prayer. Secondly, older men have gained a wealth of knowledge by having survived many years of life. One's perspective changes as one grows older having experienced failure and success and looking beyond the immediate to knowing the value of the future both on earth and in heaven.

Disobedience to ones father in the Old Testament was a serious matter with serious consequence. In Proverbs we read, "The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures." (Proverbs 30:17) One could even be put to death for disrespecting their parents, "Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death." (Exodus 21:17)

When Daniel approached and rebuked King Nebuchadnezzar it is a model for us on how to do so with respect. Daniel said, "Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you: break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed, that there may perhaps be a lengthening of your prosperity." (Daniel 4:27) Daniel showed respect, he approached the king with gentleness and care, but the king did not repent before God and 12 months later God took away his kingdom.

Confronting sin is every believer's responsibility. **"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."** (Matthew 18:15) When the sinning brother is an older man one must make even a greater effort to show respect.

As verse 1 of 1 Timothy chapter 5 continues, we see we are to appeal or strengthen or counsel **"younger men as brothers."** Treating younger men as brothers assumes no air of superiority, as an older brother often does with a younger brother when they are boys. It implies the absence of hierarchy. Think of Joseph and his brothers before Egypt and after. We are to serve each other as equals, children of God whose concern is that we help each other live by the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome sin and honor Christ with our lives.

**The Bible commands respect for older women.** You should treat older women as you would your own mother. The Bible commands we respect our mothers. In Exodus we are commanded to, **"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you."** (Exodus 20:12) It is the 5<sup>th</sup> in the 10 Commandments and contains a promise for fulfilling it. Deuteronomy contains a number of passages instructing care and respect for both one's father and mother.

There were two women in Philippi creating trouble in the church. Two women who Paul knew, he does not harshly condemn but gently asks, **"Therefore, my brothers, whom I love ... I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life."** (Philippians 4:1 & 3) Paul's desire was for these women to be corrected gently and end the conflict so that the church would be in unity with Christ and each other.

The fourth group is “younger women.” One of the duties of men is to protect women. As we care for younger women, we are to treat them “as sisters”, exhibiting only pure thoughts and protect their “purity.” Paul is instructing Timothy to treat younger women carefully, as he is a younger man. He must deal with younger women with honor and avoid temptation. There is nothing lower than a pastor who helps a young woman and takes advantage of this relationship and yet it happens all the time. Setting up the right boundaries that allows one to help but not violate is essential within the church. The church must be a place where all are safe and loved in purity.

## Closing

Paul ended chapter 4 instructing Timothy, “Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (1 Timothy 4:16) From this he moved directly into how Timothy needed to relate to people within the church who where is some way sinning. “Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but *rather* appeal to *him* as a father, to the younger men as brothers, <sup>2</sup> the older women as mothers, *and* the younger women as sisters, in all purity.” (1 Timothy 5:1-2) It is all about the proper relationship. Of first importance is our relationship with Christ. This relationship can only be right if we spend time with Christ, as is true with any relationship. It is an investment of time and effort. Time and effort spent in knowing Christ through the study of His Word and prayer and submitting to the Holy Spirit that He has given to guide us and empower us to overcome sin. Second, we must invest time and effort in our earthly relationships both with our personal family and our church family. We should always think the very best of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Even when they come to us out of love and concern to correct us so that our relationship with Christ is restored and we can again enjoy Christ to the fullest. Be brave enough and loving

enough to gently correct others. In turn, accept the correction of others with grace and a willingness to listen.

I pray Canyon Bible Church will be such a loving community, safe community and healing community. Our heart verse, the very words of Christ are, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”<sup>31</sup> The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30–31)

Amen and Amen!

### **Benediction -**

“For me, and I hope you, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (Philippians 1:21) Go forth from here and live the spiritual life our Lord Jesus Christ has called you to and this includes richly loving those you see here this morning.