

Discovery Group - Gospel Living

(14) *Marriage and the Community*

Accountability

Share how your obedience commitment from last week went, and who you shared with.

Bible: 1 Timothy 5:1-16

Read *passage* aloud & someone retell in their own words

- What do we learn from this passage about God?
- What do we learn from this passage about people?

Read the *article* on the next page.

- How can church community help us to have better marriages and families? What is the significance of multi-generational relationships?
- What are God's purposes for family? How can we help one another to fulfill those?

Commit

What is Jesus calling you to do in *obedience* this week?

Who can you *share* this with? Who can you reach out to in order to make disciples?

Abide: Read and meditate on the following passage this week:
Titus 2:1-8

Marriage and the Community

Marriage exists within the wider church community, and they impact one another. The church family as a whole is dependent upon the strength of individual marriages, and at the same time individual marriages can benefit from a strong church community. In Titus 2:1-8, older women are exhorted to teach the younger about how to be good wives and mothers “so that no one will malign the word of God.”

In our passage (1 Timothy), Paul advises his apprentice regarding widows in the church. At first glance, this may seem to be primarily about an issue of benevolence - caring for the needy in the church. It is that, but there is more. Paul introduces this section by reminding Timothy of the true family nature of a church, and how that impacts every type of relationship. He is told to treat older men as if they were his own fathers, and likewise “younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.” (5:1-2). As the Titus passage makes clear, older members of the family have a responsibility to train up and encourage the younger. This is an essential role. If this does not happen, younger husbands and wives will learn how to do family from the surrounding culture. We see that happening today, with terrifying consequences. Believing families look more and more like worldly ones, and the glory and nature of God that should be revealed is instead maligned.

In describing a widow who is worthy of support, God’s Word gives us a clear picture of what the matriarch of a family should be. The honorable widow “*has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord’s people, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.*” (5:9-10). This is the kind of person who should be given influence with the younger generation. One whose entire life has been to the glory of God.

We are often made to think that the goal of marriage is happiness or self-actualization or fulfillment of some Hollywood ideal. We strive after this, often wasting time pursuing goals that turn out to be empty. If we instead pursue the kinds of qualities mentioned in this passage, we will certainly bring glory to Jesus while at the same time finding more fulfillment and happiness than had we chased those things as primary.