

1 Timothy 5:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.

Analysis

The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity (πρεσβυτέρας ὡς μητέρας, νεωτέρας ὡς ἀδελφὰς ἐν πάσῃ ἀγνείᾳ, presbyteras hōs mēteras, neōteras hōs adelphas en pasē hagneia)—Timothy must treat older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, 'in all purity.' Hagneia means purity, chastity, holiness—especially moral and sexual purity.

This continues Paul's instruction on relating to different age groups (5:1: older men as fathers, younger men as brothers). The emphasis on **all purity** when relating to younger women addresses potential sexual temptation—Timothy must guard against any impropriety or appearance of evil. Treat them with the respect and boundaries appropriate for siblings.

The family metaphor redefines church relationships. We're not a professional organization or social club but God's household—with all the honor, love, and appropriate boundaries family relationships require. Sexual purity in ministry relationships protects both the minister and the congregation.

Historical Context

In the Greco-Roman world, interactions between unrelated men and women were strictly regulated to protect reputations. The church's counter-cultural inclusion of women in fellowship could be misunderstood or lead to scandal. Paul insists

Timothy relate to women with familial respect and scrupulous purity—treating older women with maternal honor and younger women with sisterly propriety.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does viewing church members as family change our relationships and interactions?
2. Why does Paul specifically emphasize purity in relating to younger women?
3. What practical safeguards protect ministers from inappropriate relationships with opposite-sex church members?

Interlinear Text

πρεσβυτέρας	ὥς	μητέρας	νεωτέρας	ὥς	ἀδελφὰς	ἐν
The elder women	as	mothers	the younger	as	sisters	with
G4245	G5613	G3384	G3501	G5613	G79	G1722
πάση	ἀγνείᾳ					
all	purity					
G3956	G47					

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 4:12 (Parallel theme): Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Matthew 12:50 (Parallel theme): For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Philippians 4:8 (Parallel theme): Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

1 Timothy 5:3 (Parallel theme): Honour widows that are widows indeed.

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