

1 Timothy 5:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Analysis

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house (εἰ δέ τις τῶν ἰδίων καὶ μάλιστα τῶν οἰκείων οὐ προνοεῖ, ei de tis tōn idiōn kai malista tōn oikeiōn ou pronoei)—'if anyone does not provide for his relatives, especially his own household.' Pronoeo means to provide for, take thought for, care for. Idios means one's own. Oikeios means household members, family.

He hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel (τὴν πίστιν ἥρνηται καὶ ἔστιν ἀπίστου χείρων, tēn pistin ērnētai kai estin apistou cheirōn)—'he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.' Arneomai means to deny, disown, repudiate. Apistos means unbeliever, one without faith. Cheirōn means worse, more evil.

This is one of Scripture's strongest statements: neglecting family responsibility denies the faith and makes one worse than pagans. Why? Because even unbelievers care for their families—it's basic human duty. A Christian who claims faith but abandons family demonstrates that profession is false. True faith produces love, beginning with those closest to us.

Historical Context

Even pagan Roman culture emphasized family duty—the paterfamilias (household head) was responsible for dependents. If Christians neglected their families while

claiming superior virtue, they contradicted the gospel. Paul insists Christianity strengthens rather than weakens family bonds. Faith that doesn't produce family care is dead faith (James 2:14-17)—worse than no faith at all because it's hypocritical.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Why does neglecting family make one 'worse than an unbeliever'—what's so serious about this?
2. How does family care demonstrate genuine faith versus mere profession?
3. What modern circumstances test our commitment to providing for family members?

Interlinear Text

εἰ	δέ	τις	τῶν	ἰδίων	καὶ	μάλιστα	τῶν	
G1487	But	G5100	G3588	for his own	and	specially	G3588	
	G1161			G2398	G2532	G3122		
	οἰκείων		οὐ	προνοεῖ	τὴν	πίστιν	ἥρνηται	καὶ
	for those of his own house		not	provide	G3588	the faith	he hath denied	and
	G3609		G3756	G4306		G4102	G720	G2532
ἔστιν	ἀπίστου	χείρων						
is	an infidel	worse than						
G2076	G571	G5501						

Additional Cross-References

Galatians 6:10 (Faith): As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

2 Corinthians 12:14 (Parallel theme): Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not your's, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

Isaiah 58:7 (Parallel theme): Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Titus 1:16 (Parallel theme): They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Matthew 7:11 (Parallel theme): If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

2 Timothy 3:5 (Parallel theme): Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

Genesis 30:30 (Parallel theme): For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also?