How to approach studying the Bible

1. *Read the book: Establish author, audience and context (completed)*
2. Read the chapter: Identify the message being communicated
3. Identify questions that you want to have answered: Use resources to find answers.
4. Read the chapter: Identify the message being communicated
5. Map the audience & message: Apply the message to your life
6. Compare your conclusions with others: Trace back any differences to the text

Session 6: Understanding Chapter 5

Objective: Identify the message of Chapter 5 and apply it as God's word spoken into our lives.

Step Two: Read the chapter and identify the message Paul is communicating to Timothy

Rules for Relationships

- Men and Women
- Widows
- Elders

Pattern: Do, but don't. See the use of But to indicate the don't.

A New Charge:

1. Within the church, relate to one another as family. The key motivation should be love for one another, not lording position over one another (rebuking)
2. Families should care for widowed mothers/grandmothers in keeping with the 6th Commandment. Failure to do this is failure to be gripped by Jesus (not really part of His church).
3. Younger widows should not rely upon the church, but get married again and be supported through a husband and family. When younger widows fail to do this, they are tempted into bad behavior which detracts from the message of the church.
4. Widows should be supported by the church: if they are older (60+) and have a demonstrated track record of faithfulness and service to their families, the church and God, and they have no other family to care for them.
5. Elders should be honored and supported by the church (Deut 25:4, Matt 10:10).
6. Because of their established character, don't lightly accept charges against an elder. But if an elder is found guilty of sin and will not repent, rebuke him publicly to make the point of why repentance is needed (position does not shield iniquity)

Additional advice

- Don't be hasty to lay on hands (make leaders) because it's not easily undone.
- If a leader is sinning, don't join him because of his leadership – remain pure.

- You don't need to practice purity by abstaining from wine to the detriment of your health
- Sin and good works are evident, if they aren't they will be eventually.

Step Three: Identify and write down any questions that arise out of the chapter. - Use resources to research and answer the questions you've written down.

What is the definition of "rebuke" (is it the same in both places?)

- [BLB.org] Using the interlinear to get to the Greek, this is a unique word in the Bible, only used in this verse. One of its meanings is to strike upon or to beat upon (physically) so the word is pretty aggressive. As used in 1 Timothy, the meaning is "to chastise with words, to chide, upbraid, rebuke."
- [BLB.org] Looking at verse 20 also through the interlinear, the Greek word is more common and less aggressive. The definitions there suggest "to convict or refute" or "to find fault, correct". Here the objective is to return the person to the proper path, not to tear them down as with the word in verse 1.
- By virtue of the translation they look similar, but they are not.

What was the cultural expectation of widows?

- [Unger's Bible Dictionary] Generally widows had neither rights nor recourse. They typically were not able to earn a living for themselves. Care for them generally fell to the oldest son, whose double inheritance would put him in a place to care for his widowed mother.

Was it normal for a woman to take care of her widowed mother/grandmother?

- [Unger's Bible Dictionary] Pursuant to the eldest son comment above, it was not normal for a daughter to care for her mother. However, Paul makes a special distinction that a "believing woman" should step in (along with her husband if she was married) and undertake to care for her widowed mother, indicating a higher level of care inside the church than outside the church.

Why are elders worthy of double honor? What are the 2 honors?

- [ESV Study Bible] As the elders performed hard labor in their preaching and teaching, they were due the respect of their position, but also to be financially supported by the church. This is one explanation for "double." A second explanation is that they were to be generously cared for by the church (double = generous). I tend toward the former rather than the latter.

Was Timothy avoiding wine as a demonstration of purity

- [ESV Study Bible] Drinking only water was a practice of some ascetic people. Paul is telling Timothy that he does not need to pursue purity (v22) all the way to abstaining from wine which would have a health benefit for him.

1 Timothy - A Bible Study

Step Four: Read the chapter and refine the message Paul is communicating to Timothy (now that your questions are answered)

Despite urging Timothy to charge certain people not to teach a different doctrine, Paul concerned that Timothy does not undertake his duties dispassionately or aggressively. Therefore, he lays out the way that people in the church (including Timothy) ought to relate to one another: Family First.

1. Within the church, relate to one another as family. The key motivation should be love for one another, not punishing one another verbally (rebuking) when a correction is needed. Paul emphasized encouragement and purity (not a mixed bag) in relationships.
2. Families should care for widowed mothers/grandmothers in keeping with the 6th Commandment. Failure to do this is a denial of the faith – which is based upon self-sacrificial love for one another (John 13:35). This is a practical display of the love they have received.
3. Younger widows should not rely upon the church but get married again and be supported through a husband and family. When younger widows fail to do this, they are tempted into bad behavior which detracts from the message of the church. It seems like widows had a role to play in dedicating their time (of which they had a lot) to prayer.
4. Widows should be supported by the church:
    a. if they are older (60+)
    b. and have a demonstrated track record of faithfulness and service to their families, the church and God,
    c. and they have no other family to care for them.
5. Elders should be honored and supported by the church (Deut 25:4, Matt 10:10).
6. Because of their established character, don't lightly accept charges against an elder. But if an elder is found guilty of sin and will not repent, rebuke him publicly to make the point of why repentance is needed (position does not shield iniquity). This rebuke is not an attack, but a mechanism to bring him to repentance and restoration.

Paul delivers these 6 commands to Timothy as a solemn charge, invoking the throne room of heaven as a way of emphasizing how serious it its.

Paul has 2 more comments for Timothy outside of this solemn charge:

1. Don't be in a hurry to lay hands on someone to become an elder. Give it some time so that their deeds and any hidden sins have time to become evident. This is a practical measure and also indicates that Timothy is there for the long haul and will have time to observe potential leaders and doesn't need to make hasty decisions.
2. Don't pursue pointless extremes of ascetic purity to the detriment of your own health and body. This seems also to hearken back to 4:4-5 where Paul declares that people are not better because they abstain from external things like food (and drink).

Step Five part 1: Map the Audience (how much and in what ways is Timothy like us today?)
Review and confirm the previous mapping.

In this chapter, the mapping that seems most relevant is:

Timothy is unlike me in that he is the leader of the church in Ephesus – I am an attendee of a church in America. However, I do have leadership responsibilities and I am obligated to use that leadership influence to the same ends as Paul instructs Timothy

Paul is delivering these instructions to Timothy so that they can be properly passed on to the rest of the church at Ephesus. So, in this I am very like the church in Ephesus who would be receiving the teaching from Timothy.

In this, I judge myself as relatively close, and the exhortations given to Timothy are ones that would quite directly apply to me.

Step Five part 2: Map the message to apply to me today

- What commands must I obey?
    - Treat the people in my church like family; there is no cause to abuse or treat them badly
    - The charges around widows don't seem to land as that is a practice that we don't follow today (there are other ways to care for elderly who cannot support themselves), however I need to consider generosity to the church so that there are funds to care for those who can't care for themselves.
    - Respect the elders at my church – positionally and financially. Do not entertain frivolous attacks upon them or their character.
- What truth must I hold dear?
    - Evaluate my own life for hidden sin, expose it and repent of it.
- What error must I flee?
    - I cannot abandon my family.
- How is God revealed?
    - Through the actions of the church. As we love one another, they identify themselves with Him.
- How is the gospel made clear?
    - Through the actions of the church. As we love one another, they identify themselves with Him.

- What actions can I take in the next 7 days that will demonstrate what I said above is real?
    - Identify how I think about the leaders of my church in the Covid state and how I am tempted to become critical when their responses do not align to mine.