

Honor Roll

1 Timothy 5:9-10; 3:11

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A. The Who's Who List (vs. 9-10):

1. List - Widows who are enlisted like soldiers on the church's list were those who like Anna, were very involved in serving the Lord. They were dedicated to their families and were church like soldiers.

a) The expression "put on the list" was often used by official registrations (e.g., for troops). "Sixty" was a Jewish figure for the beginning of old age (see comment on Lk 1:7).

b) If a man died in Bible times, his widow often suffered at the hands of the powerful ([Job 24:21](#)). This was especially true if she had no family to provide for her and her children.

c) It literally means "to be enrolled and put on the list." The word was used for the enrollment of soldiers. The early church had an official list of the names of qualified widows, and we get the impression that these "enlisted" women ministered to the congregation in various ways. (Remember Dorcas and her widow friends, Acts 9:36-43?) Paul probably would have told us if they had been officially ordained as deaconesses.

2. Wife of one man – Because she is a widow she was once married. She was a one-man woman, meaning she was faithful to the husband she was married to. It could not mean that she was never married twice because the younger widows were told in verse 14 to remarry. The implication is that the widow was not a divorced woman and would not seek divorce for non-biblical reasons.

a) The Greek here is literally "a one-man woman," the mirror image of the stipulation for both the overseer-elder (cf. 3:2; Titus 1:6) and the deacon (1 Tim. 3:12), and for the same reason (cf. comments on 3:2). [u](#)

3. Reputation - She was placed on the list because she had good, confirmed reports, from eyewitnesses. This confirms the kind of character she has. Her good works led to her being praised.

4. Reputation - A good reputation is like Dorcas of Acts 9:36-42. When a person's character is established by their faith walk it is empowered by the Spirit of God, so it always blesses (1 Corinthians 12:7) others and it is always consistent. Dorcas blessed so many of the women and they could not live without her support.

5. Good works - She continuously served in a manner that is energized by her faith based on the principles outlined in God's word (Eph. 2:10; good – acceptable characteristics). As a result, all she did proved to be beneficial to all those whom she served. This demonstrated that her work was honorable, deserving high esteem (Proverbs 31:10-31).

6. She has brought up her children – This godly woman has affectionately nourished her children with the hopes that they would mature and become productive adults. She was steadfast in her role as a mother. She held this role as an honor from God, so God honors her (1 Timothy 2:15).

a) “Brought up children” can refer either to a widow's own children or the reference may be to orphans who needed a home. If it refers to her own children, then they would have to have died; otherwise, the church would not support her. It is likely that the reference here is to the practice of rescuing abandoned children and raising them to know the Lord.

7. Hospitality to strangers – Without a litany of hotels and people traveling under harsh conditions, caring for strangers who in their travels came to the church, was a great asset (3 John 5-8). In other words, she was not just committed to her family, but also to the success of her church. This means she had to work harder at the home, to entertain these people, again exposing how committed she was to the faith.

a) Hospitality is another factor, for this was an important ministry in those days when travel was dangerous and safe places to sleep were scarce. The washing of feet does not refer to a special ritual, but to the common practice of washing a guest's feet when he arrived in the home (Luke 7:44). It was not beneath this woman's dignity to take the place of a humble servant.

b) “Relieved the afflicted” could cover many kinds of ministry to the needy: feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, encouraging the sorrowing, etc. Every pastor gives thanks for godly women who minister to the material and physical needs of others in the church. These widows were cared for by the church, but they, in turn, helped to care for the church. ^[2]

8. Saints – It was very important as we see explained by John in 3 John 5-8, that the only people who were helped were those committed to the purposes of God so that only sound doctrine was empowered to spread by her sacrifice; again, her commitment to her faith.

9. Assist those in distress - She came alongside with a commitment to relieve, committed believers, from sufferings they were experiencing with no desire to stop until the circumstances were better.

a) Providing water for washing of feet was a sign of hospitality in antiquity; the actual acts of washing someone's feet indicated the posture of a servant or a subordinate (cf. 1 Sam 25:41 and comment on Jn 13:3–8). ^[3]

b) “Relieved the afflicted” could cover many kinds of ministry to the needy: feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, encouraging the sorrowing, etc. Every pastor gives thanks for godly women who minister to the material and physical needs in the church. These widows were cared for by the church, but they, in turn, helped to care for others in the church. ^[4]

c) Actually, he is also referring to concrete deeds of care for weary and dusty travelers who were fellow Christians (ἁγίων, “saints,” used as a substantive for Christians because they are regarded as holy in Christ and consecrated to God; see, e.g., the salutations of Paul’s letters: Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2; Phm. 5).

d) Rendered here “those in distress” (*NEB*). Although this “distress” or affliction may well include persecution (as it does with Paul, e.g., 1 Thess. 3:4; 2 Thess. 1:6, 7), it would seem to be used in a more comprehensive sense here, as elsewhere with Paul (2 Cor. 4:8; 7:5, 6).

10. Devoted to good works - She served the church as a dedicated follower of Christ which was manifested by the integrity and energy with which she served. Whatever she did it was because of her implementation of the Word of God into the life of her family and church. She was a woman of faith.

a) These widows were apparently prayer warriors who committed themselves to serving the church. The age qualification would mean that there would be no chance for remarriage (5:9; cf. 5:14). The phrase “served other Christians humbly” (5:10) is a reference for sacrificial service to others (cf. John 13:1–17). ^[5]

11. Devoted to good works - No one or circumstance could stop her from doing what the Lord needed, because of her spiritual gift designed her to do so.

B. Honor Roll (1 Timothy 3:11):

1. Women must likewise be dignified – Women are responsible to challenge themselves to have such a godly character so that others in the church are encouraged to respect them because they find them to be honorable; so honorable that other women have no problem submitting to their leadership.

a) The same virtue is required of deacons (v. 8) and elderly men (Tit 2:2). ^[6]

b) Paul was always concerned that followers of Christ, particularly those associated with church leadership, demonstrate a life in which the Spirit was working. These women were to live in such a way that they earned the respect of all people. ^[7]

2. Not malicious gossips – The characteristic of being a malicious gossip represents a person who is a slanderer, a person who makes false accusations against another person while

demonstrating much pride. Since women have a tendency to talk more, Paul put this trait with them, more so than a man.

3. Sober - In the midst of much distraction a woman who is sober is temperate, self-controlled not allowing life circumstances to distract her from behaving in a dignified manner and devoted to the things of the Lord whether at home or the church.

4. Faithful - To be sober is to remain steadfast with whatever was entrusted to her proving to be dependable and reliable.

5. Faithful - It is this faithful woman of character that impacted her home and church that the Lord says in 1 Timothy 2:15 "God will preserve" and in Proverbs 31:10-31 says "God will bless". "Her children rise up and bless her; her husband also, and he praises her..... a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised." (Proverbs 31:28-30).

^[1]Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary: An exposition of the scriptures* (2:742). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

^[2]Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (1 Ti 5:3). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

^[3]Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (1 Ti 4:15-5:10). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

^[4]Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (1 Ti 5:3). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

NEB *New English Bible*

^[5] Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). *Tyndale concise Bible commentary* (p. 639). Tyndale House Publishers.

^[6] Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F., eds. (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (1 Tim. 3:11). Moody Press.

^[7] Larson, K. (2000). *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon* (Vol. 9, p. 189). Broadman & Holman Publishers.