

**First: Discern dependency (whether or not there is genuine need).**

- A. Assist the widow who has been left alone, with [no one](#) to help her but God.
- B. Three qualifications:
  - 1. She must be over 60 years old.
  - 2. She must have been [faithful](#) to her husband.
  - 3. She must be well-known for her good deeds, having a [reputation](#) for godly living.  
Paul gave several illustrations of the kinds of things that should characterize her.
    - has a reputation for doing good
    - has raised her children well
    - has shown hospitality to strangers
    - has served other believers humbly
    - has helped those who are in trouble
    - has devoted herself to all kinds of good deeds

**Second: Don't create dependency.**

- A. Do not assist widows who have family who [could](#) help and who [should](#) help them.
  - 1. In God's economy the first responsibility for caring for the needy falls on the [family](#), not the church and not the government.
  - 2. Christians who do not care for their parents make Jesus and His Church look [bad](#).
- B. Failure to provide for family (word means "to look ahead", "to provide by seeing the needs in advance") amounts to a denial of the Christian faith.
  - 1. Not that the person loses his salvation; rather, it means that such a person has denied the principle of compassionate love that is at the heart of the Christian faith.
  - 2. Failure to care for his family makes him worse than an unbeliever in [practice](#), because even unbelievers knew the importance of providing for their parents.

**Third: Don't encourage dependency.**

- A. Do not assist widows who are younger than 60 years old.
- B. To get on the list a woman had to take a pledge/vow to devote her remaining years to serving the Lord.
  - 1. A younger woman may desire to marry and [break](#) her vow/pledge.
  - 2. A healthy able-bodied person who is not maintaining a living or busy with home and family responsibilities may get into trouble with too much free time on her hands.

Message

Help those who are truly in need of help.

So What? Now What? Action Points:

- Make sure you take care of your aging mom and dad.
- Apply these three principles in all your charity to the poor.
- FTC gives and serves strategically here in our community, and with ministries around the world, so you can feel confident giving to the poor through our ministry.