



## [1 Timothy 5:11-13](#)

(11) As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. (12) Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. (13) Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to.

*New International Version*

This is similar to my own experiences regarding people who are unemployed. If they are unemployed for any period of time, if they do not have strength of will, they learn to be idle. "Learn to be idle" is a difficult Greek construction, though the New International Version renders it well: "They get into the habit of being idle." It is not that they sit down and study how to be idle, but over a period of time—even though they may start out looking for a job and using their spare time in a profitable manner—inertia sets in.

Notwithstanding their good intentions, they start rising a little bit later, taking their time doing this or that. They find over time that it is far easier to sit around and drink their coffee, call their neighbors or brethren, chew the fat, and talk about this or that person:

"How is he doing?"

"Oh, fine!"

"But you know he has a problem."

"Oh, does he?"

"Yes. His marriage is not going well."

"Well, you know, I went through a problem like that back a few years ago."

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Maybe I'll give him a call and give him some advice. It is tried and true! It worked for me. If he needs me to, I'll go over and watch his kids for him."

And pretty soon they are fully involved in somebody's marital crisis when they should not have even known about it! It is evident that being a busybody is linked with gossip, tale-bearing, and scandal-mongering. They usually go hand in hand.

Once a person starts messing in other people's business, before long he is telling his friends what is happening and how wonderfully he is advising and helping these people. Soon all sorts of rumors are flying back and forth about so and so and this and that. Like a law of nature, it is only a matter of time before a relationship conflict erupts. What is then present in the church? War and disunity!

Experience shows that it often comes back to bite the meddler! The Old Testament provides a graphic image of what happens to such a person: "He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a dog by the ears" ([Proverbs 26:17](#)). And just a few inches away from those dog's ears are big, sharp teeth! When we meddle in other people's affairs, it comes back to hurt us. No one wins when meddling happens.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

**To learn more, see:**

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