

August 23, 2009
Titus 2 Part 4 v2-10

Alright welcome back. Grab your Bibles and turn back to Titus chapter 2. In our study of Titus we are looking at God's blueprint for his church – what God wants his church to be. This is our 4th week in chapter 2 where we are mainly looking through a wide angle lens rather than a magnifying lens at the chapter even when we are dealing with the specifics like we will again today.

Last week, we started looking at the specific categories that Paul lays out for Titus to instruct in the church. The umbrella over that remains the same – that **at every stage and station of life, Christian character and practice must reflect the effectiveness of the GOSPEL.** And that doesn't happen on auto-pilot.

We dealt with the older men and older women in the church last week and saw a couple themes rise to the surface. **The ideas of a life worthy of respect and a life that is self controlled are weaving their way through EACH of these categories** even when expressed in different terms or descriptions for each. And that will continue today as well.

And part of the reason we need to see these commands - again tying into last week - is how easy it is and yet how strange it is for those of us who claim to know the life-changing grace of Jesus Christ to prefer to camouflage ourselves with the attitudes and behaviors of the society around us so that we are not detectable by the virtues of a life transformed by the gospel – by the beliefs and resulting virtues in the Word of God.

So God through Paul to Titus – to the Cretan believers – to us – reminds us of how and why to be different. So – though we will focus on verses 4 to 10 today, let's start in verse 2 again.

(TEXT)

Remember as well that Paul is not trying to be extensive or exclusive in this list of subjects and commands. But by giving a few example he triggers a response in all of them – and us – about the responsibilities we have. Also - In the same way that it seemed like Paul had a little more to say to the older women than the older men, it seems today like Paul gives a lot more attention to the younger women than to any of the other categories. And I just want to point that out this morning so that if it feels that way, I don't get angry emails as if that were my doing instead of the text itself!

But the fact that Paul does give more attention here and seems to give more specific exhortations here suggests that the behavior of these or this group was creating more problems for the churches in Crete that Titus was having to deal with then perhaps the behavior of the other groups. So let's start where we left off – with the younger women. Remember, God through Paul and Titus charges the older female believers with teaching and training the younger women specifically by example in the areas of life where they have experience. So we see again in **verses 4 to 5:**

“Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.”

You wouldn't think that first part would be needed would you? That they would need to be encouraged to love their husbands and to love their children?

But when we think about the setting – that in a culture where few women got to pick their own husbands, loving a man that was chosen for you might be a great challenge. It is no stretch to imagine that some of these teen age girls were married off to men whom they found unappealing. And yet through Christ and the effects of the gospel working in their lives, they would have the ability to love their husbands and children.

And a large part of that was expressed in the qualities and actions that follow, starting with **“being self controlled and pure.”** There's the quality of self control again. They need to be **SENSIBLE,**

clear thinking about the details of life – self controlled just like the older men and women – **in regard to their actions and the desires behind them.**

The combination with the word pure is not just an issue of sexual purity, but of heart purity. Which again comes from turning away from the things that would fill their thoughts with impurity – it adds to the idea of self control the function of **guarding eyes and ears and thoughts from that which would tend toward COMPROMISE.**

And then Paul lays out the **“to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands”** part. I think William Mounce offers a clear word about the context here. *To be busy at home* is a contrast with the conduct of the younger Ephesian widows – the younger women in the church at Ephesus – who were lazy and ran from house to house. Paul counseled Timothy who was at that church about the conduct of the young women that spent their time in gossip and meddling in other’s affairs and sensual conversation. So with Titus here in chapter 2, Paul has a similar concern with the married young women. **The term he uses here** is pretty rare in Greek – **it does not require a woman to work ONLY at home, but it does state that she does have duties at home.**

What I want to make sure we do here is admit that **we must guard against IMPOSING our own cultural practices into this 1st century world.** Few women would have worked outside the home unless they were bond-servants. Not many opportunities existed for jobs for women. But Paul’s admonitions here show that these women were subject to neglecting their home responsibilities in favor of spending time in idleness and gossip and less-than-noble ends. So Paul reorients them towards their homes with the word ‘kindness’ – that that is how they are to treat their households – and he reminds them that that kindness is expressed within God’s order when he says *“to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the Word of God.”*

Again – the point of this text is to address God’s plan for his church – including what needs to be taught within it – including the behaviors that reflect the truth of the gospel and play into the reaching of a lost world. So keeping with the wide angle lens, let me just make 4 comments on this **submission.** **First – it is everywhere the assumption or the explicit teaching of God’s WORD.** **Second – submission is required in one way or another of EVERY Christian.** **Third – submission in God’s Word does not imply inequality or a lesser VALUE,** as the Bible is often careful to say and is proved by the fact that the same idea of submission is used to describe Jesus’ relationship with the Father. **And fourth – the Bible has a great deal to say about the duties of men and husbands that lay them under the strictest obligation to make that submission a HAPPY thing for their wives and not a burden.**

We are all subject to authority – we are all arranged in orders of subjection. All of us. And the happiness of every human being is shaped in a big way by how willing you are to accept that submission and live in obedience to it.

One more thing on this category. Obviously most women were married and had children – in those days almost all women had children – and so Paul addresses himself to them. These commands apply to single women and to married but childless women with only the necessary changes being made. The Bible knows of business women – think about Lydia in Acts 16 and of women with no children – think about Elizabeth for most of her adult life in the gospels. The New Testament seems pretty indifferent to gender distinction *most of the time* and most of what it says about the Christian life is says to men and women without distinction and we need to remember that when we hear the Bible speak directly to the primary sphere of life and kingdom contribution of most Christian women like we do here.

And though we looked a couple weeks ago at the end of verse 5 that gives the reason for all this – *so that no one will malign the Word of God* – let me just point out again that **the motivation given in verse 5 again beckons back to a life worthy of RESPECT – a life that reflects the power of what we believe – the effectiveness of the gospel.**

Then we come to the last of the gender and age categories. The young men. Look at **verse 6**:
“Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.”

Now you might be going – whoa – what’s the deal? Why so light on the young men?

Well it is not that young men have no need for soundness in faith or reverent behavior or kindness or diligence when it comes to the family. They need all of that. But knowing young men’s tendencies – and most likely in response to the actual situation in Crete – Paul uses this one word that calls for broad action. Be self controlled. And actually, Paul is sharper here than with any of the groups that have gone before. **The verb *encourage* there sounds weak in English but is the first time in this passage that Paul has used the IMPERATIVE in Greek – the language of command – of insistence – of not messing around.**

And the focus of his command is again the issue of **self control**. It is from that same word in Greek – ***sophron*** – we saw in verse 2, 4, 5, and will see again in verse 12. It is a common word – sometimes translated as sensible – because it means to develop **SELF-MASTERY – self-control – balance, to get their faculties and their appetites, their longings and desires into hand, into control – to develop discernment and judgment.**

This kind of exhortation for young men shows up toward Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:22** where Paul says *“Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”*

And in **1 Peter 5:5** where Peter says *“Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.””*

This quality of self control is essential if young men are going to be godly – if they are going to reflect the transforming power of the gospel. And I want you to notice too that in the NIV the first two words of verse 7 “in everything” really belong at the end of verse 6. There are a number of scholarly reasons why those words fit better at the end of verse 6 so that Paul is telling Titus to teach the young men to be self controlled in everything.

Young men in the church – so potentially volatile, impulsive, passionate, arrogant, ambitions, inexperienced, need to become masters of all areas of their lives – **EVERYTHING needs to come under control. Because to let one area go – leads to and will leak over into another, to another, to another.**

And this category is probably the most important to Titus because he is one of them. He is a young man so he has a unique contribution to make to young men that he couldn’t make to old men nor to women – old or young. So take a look at verses 7 and 8 with me. Having linked “in all things” to verse 6, **verse 7** starts:

“Set them (the young men) an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.”

I think this whole thing relates to young men even as Paul addresses Titus in that what he says to young men in general in verse 6 he says to Titus in specific in verses 7-8 because Titus is to be the example to all young men. **This is a setting of pace – of character – of spiritual DEVOTION that Titus couldn’t set in the same way for older men, much less for the women.**

He is saying to Titus - look for the sake of the young men – exhort them – teach them – confront them verbally but also for their sake, set an example to do those things with the pattern of your life so they can copy what you are.” And again at the end of verse 8 we see the motivation is related to both Titus and the younger men having lives worthy of respect.

Well, let’s go ahead and move on to the last group. **Verses 9-10** is addressing slaves.

“Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.”

Here Paul leaves the age and gender segregations completely in order to have Titus address a section of the local church that crosses all those lines. Slaves made up as much as 50% of the Roman Empire and were the bulk of the work force. Their situations varied – some were well-respected and honored while others likely suffered at the hands of evil masters. Though still slavery and an evil that needed to be eradicated in that time, it is not completely accurate to parallel it with the slavery institution we’ve studied in our own nation.

Slaves ran the gamut from agricultural and domestic workers to doctors, teachers, artists – yet they still did not have the freedom of citizenship enjoyed by the Romans. So how were Christian slaves to respond? Paul tells Titus to teach them not to follow the typical pattern of slaves that argue and bad mouthed their masters and work and stole what did not belong to them. They were to go against the cultural practices of that day – in fact they were to have such an attitude and work at such a level of efficiency that it would shock the minds of the Romans.

Now here is where I want to be careful with this. You would think the obvious application here would be for the Christian employee today in our modern economy. And in truth, that is the best arena for the principles here, but to jump whole-heartedly into that application really dilutes the incredible power of the gospel that would have been seen within the dark and unjust institution of slavery.

The focus of Paul’s teaching here regarding slaves shouldn’t be missed – in fact we have to see it in order to really make application to us at all. **Against the hopelessness of this bondage system, the Christian slave’s devotion to the gospel and the resulting behavior –the resulting godly attitudes and actions would make the ultimate FREEDOM that is only found in Christ attractive in an unparalleled way.** Which is what the last phrase of verse 10 – making the teaching about God our Savior attractive - is all about. Going back to Colossians chapter 3 in the same vein as Titus 2 here, Paul says *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”*

A safe extrapolation from Titus 2:9-10 ties into the idea that God cares about what you do on the job because that’s your MISSION field. If you are a Christian, then you are demonstrating Christ – and chosen ineptitude in that demonstration will lower other’s perception of Christ – so you work as unto and in the name of Christ.

Now just like with the older generations last week, there are significant questions posed today to the younger generations and those in the work force.

To young women, whether you work or not, whether you have kids or not – **does your attitude and the priority of the God-given roles you play in the home bring HONOR to the Word of God in a culture where those things are often de-prioritized** and even mocked in sitcom after sitcom?

Is your life marked by a self control and purity that protects you from COMPROMISE in even the smallest areas?

To young men, **is your life increasingly characterized by self control as well? What drives your decisions – your expenditures – your entertainment – your friendships – your work ethic – your free time? Is it the unbridled desire or hunger of the moment or of the culture, or is it the foundational TRUTH of the gospel by which you claim to be saved?**

To all who are employed or work with anyone else, **does your work ethic look like everyone else's or worse so that no one values having a CHRISTIAN employee or does your being a Christian and working unto Christ whatever you do shock people into wanting more workers like you?**

Where we fall into those categories, we need to deal with those implications, but what I want us to do to wrap up these 8 verses is remember the wide angle lens. There are **two foundational aspects** for God's blueprint for his church that come to the surface as Paul lays out what should be taught in his church to these different groups.

First of all – the quality of self control was repeatedly required, commanded, and demonstrated across the board. **God wants all of us – at every age at every stage in every situation – to exercise the freedom of CHOICE that is ours by the redemptive grace of Jesus Christ.** In a world and a society that is run by lust, emotion, impulse, and every sinful desire, self control becomes a defining quality of true salvation. We should literally look different than the people around us.

But not as freakish lunatics or legalistic joyless robots. Because the other quality that should be taught and comes to the surface in God's plan for his people the church is **a life worthy of respect.** A few weeks ago we looked at the hina clauses – the in order to clauses or so that clauses in this chapter. Run through them again with me.

Verse 5 – so that no one will malign the word of God.

Verse 8 – so that no one will have anything bad to say about us.

Verse 10 – so that we make the truth about God our Savior attractive.

Worthy of respect. **God lays out these categories and commands so that we as his people might know that we are to live lives that are worthy of respect.**

The people around you may not agree with you. They may resent your morals. They might misunderstand your reasons. But they must respect your life within itself. Our character and actions must reflect the effectiveness of the gospel. Anything less and we taint and miss God's blueprint for his church – the missionary aspect of everyday Christian behavior.

Hearing God through Paul to Titus to us lay out these things adds credibility to the words of Brennan Manning that were quoted by DC Talk recently. And this is what we'll close with.

“The single greatest cause of atheism in the world today is Christians, who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, then walk out the door, and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.”

The life-changing effectiveness of the gospel of God produces self control that develops a life worthy of respect as the people of God in God's church and that's the foundation in God's plan for reaching our world.

That is who we are to be and how we are to live.

Is your life worthy of respect?

Is your life more and more marked by self control as you come under the Lordship of Jesus Christ?