

Young Men
Titus 2:6-8
 1/24/21

If the church of is to be effective in fulfilling its great commission to **go ... & make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father & the Son & the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that Jesus commanded** (Mt 28:19-20), then we must all live in a godly manner. This is the underlying thrust Paul's letter to Titus who was ministering in Crete. One of the responsibilities Paul entrusted to Titus was to appoint men as elders in the churches in the various cities. They'd be battling false teachers & needed to be prepared by having healthy Christian characteristics of spiritual maturity. Paul begins chapter 2 with personal direction given to Titus about what he was to do concerning these false teachers saying, **but as for you, proclaim the things which are fitting for sound doctrine** (2:1). Titus was to be a contrast to the false teachers described in Titus 1:10-16. They payed attention to **Jewish myths** (14) but Titus was to proclaim **sound doctrine** while living a godly life. How we live our everyday lives is a sermon whether you realize it or not. & for the majority of people in our community & in your workplace & neighborhoods, your life is the only sermon they'll get this week. It's either a good sermon or a bad one, but they're watching. Both a verbal witness & a visual witness are necessary & Titus 2 teaches us they need to be consistent.

2:1-8

It's no wonder the book of Titus begins with the character of a godly leader who is above reproach. But it's not only church leaders who must live that way, & it isn't just pastors the world watches to see if they're for real. Co-workers, neighbors, & unsaved family are watching you to see if you truly believe what you say believe. Titus 2 has been referred to as *The Christian Character in Action*, the Christian life for older men & women, for younger men & women, & for employees (slaves). Concluding this chpt is *one of the most truly beautiful & succinct summaries of Christian doctrine anywhere to be found in Paul's writings (11-14). This chapter is one of the gems of the entire NT.*¹ In the past weeks we've looked at the essential ministry of older men & older women in the body of Christ mentoring & modeling for younger believers how to live godly lives. As we saw last week,

¹ Demarest, G. W., & Ogilvie, L. J., *The Preacher's Commentary Series, Volume 32: 1-2 Thessalonians / 1-2 Timothy / Titus*, p 319

there's an essential ministry of marriage, motherhood, & making home the priority, which older or mature moms in the faith are to encourage & teach the younger ladies. Now in vss 6-8 the focus shifts to younger men. Again, what age does **young** refer to? In Jewish culture, you became a young man at age 12, & this word was used for those into their 20s & 30s. As I said before, the terms can be relative depending on spiritual maturity & isn't merely a magic number. Of course, these truths should be instilled as early as possible in every one of us. **6**

1. Mentoring The word **likewise** connects this verse with what comes before. In the same way the older men & women & the younger women are to demonstrate godly characteristics, so too are the younger men. The instruction for these **young men** is at 1st glance remarkably brief & bland in comparison to the others. Although the statement is rather concise on its own, it's backed up by the qualities which Titus himself is to exemplify for the young men in vss 7-8. Some of these are generally applicable; the others refer more to Titus's own conduct as a teacher, but the character which he exhibits as a teacher & the content of his message will influence others by example. Just as the older women are to be an example to the younger, so is Titus to the **young men**.² As we've seen, mentoring & discipleship are important. Prov 27:17 says **like iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another**. We all need this & it isn't a passive process. It must be **urged** or **exhorted**. The Greek comes from 2 words that mean *to come alongside* & *to call*. It's to call to action as you come beside someone as a friend & sibling in the Lord. It's a stronger word than simply *ask*. It's translated elsewhere as **entreat, implore, plead**, or even **beg**. It's the picture of someone earnestly pleading for your attention. *I beg of you, please, will you do this?* It includes the ideas of encouraging & even comforting, & a related word is used as a title for the Holy Spirit, our Comforter (Jn 14:16). As Christians who are filled with God's Spirit, we're to come alongside one another & help each other become more Christ-like. Kenneth Wuest writes that our manner *should not be a domineering, high-handed, demanding one, but a humble, loving, kindly, exhorting one. The heart will respond to loving, kind treatment where it will rebel against the opposite*.³ The **young men**

² I. Howard Marshall & Philip H. Towner, [A Critical & Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles](#) p 251

³ *Word Studies from the Greek NT: For the English reader* (Tit 2:6)

must be exhorted to be **sensible, sober-minded, or self-controlled**. The word has each of those nuances & Paul has used various forms of this word already in urging this quality. In 1:8 for the elders of the church. In 2:2 Paul exhorts the same of older men. Vs 4 uses the verb form of this for older women. Vs 5 begins with this word for the younger women. Now Paul says, **urge the young men to be sensible**. This is a vital trait for every person in the church, to be **sensible** or sober in our thinking, which will be reflected by self-controlled living. The word includes the ideas of self-restraint, self-discipline, & self-mastery. It's a life that isn't controlled by other forces or sins. It's translated as **right mind** in the gospels (Mk 5:15; Lk 8:35). Young men are to be in their *right minds*, they must exhibit control over their senses. Young men aren't known for being **sensible** but impulsive & risk takers. I'm currently reading a book titled, *Over the Edge: Death in Grand Canyon*.⁴ It's a study of all the deaths that have taken place in the Grand Canyon, whether by falling, drowning, heat, cold, thirst, starvation, flash floods, lightning strikes, falling rocks, & on it goes. Doesn't that sound uplifting? A few quotes:

*The age group at greatest risk of falling off the rims is that between 20 & 29 years old with about 75% being male.*⁵

*Accidental fatal falls in the Inner Canyon are the province of young males.*⁶

*...young male solo hikers are at vastly greater risk of self-destruction...*⁷

*Young solo males are also ... the most prone to making fatal mistakes in all other endeavors in life. Insurance companies figured this out decades ago.*⁸

*Being young has killed ... more solo male hikers in many ways.*⁹

*Being young & male is a greater risk factor in falls than merely being unprepared for environmental circumstances.*¹⁰

Get the point? The authors conclude that the most vulnerable group at the Grand Canyon is young men, who think they're invincible. To prove their bravado, they do foolish things, but the extreme conditions there often take their toll. These young men are not **sensible**. But clearly being **sensible**

⁴ by Michael Ghiglieri & Thomas Myers

⁵ Location 647

⁶ Location 1,359

⁷ Location 1,370

⁸ Location 1,376

⁹ Location 1,378

¹⁰ Location 1,412

is essential to every Christian if they're to be godly. They've got to live life under control & this can only be done through the power of the Holy Spirit. After all, **self-control** is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) to be produced in all Christians. Every day we're becoming someone. The question is, who? Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators, used to say, *You are going to be what you are now becoming*. Who you become is the cumulative result of the daily choices you make. *A long obedience in the same direction*, to borrow a **Eugene Peterson** phrase, is sustained by the small choices we make each day. For example, most of us know the difference between eating vegetables & eating donuts or the difference between a daily workout & spending life on a couch. What I eat & whether I exercise determines the state of my body. The same is true of our spiritual lives. Whether we read Scripture & great books or spend our time binging TV or looking at our phones, will make us into the person we'll be several years from now. We must discipline ourselves, we must be **sensible**, for the purpose of godliness (1 Tim 4:7-8). Following Christ isn't magic. It requires repeated actions on our part, which develop into habits & life disciplines. Our spirituality hinges on the development of these little habits. In putting one foot in front of the other day-after-day, we become the kind of person who grows in Christlikeness. A decade from now, would you like to look back at your life, knowing you've made consistently good decisions about eating right & exercising regularly? Sure. But there's a huge gap between wishes & reality, isn't there? The bridge over the gap is self-control, a fruit of the Spirit. The key to self-control is discipline, which produces a long-term track record of small choices in which we yield to God's Spirit, resulting in new habits & lifestyles. In fact, Spirit-control & self-control are interrelated in Scripture because godly self-control is a yielding of one's self to the Holy Spirit. It's true we're creatures of habit. But it's also true Christ can empower us to form new habits. So how can you start to make the right small choices? Eph 5:15-16 tells us to, **be careful how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of your time**. Why not redeem a fraction of your day that you would have spent on TV, the newspaper, Pinterest, phone scrolling, working overtime, or hobbies? Change your habits. Spend time in God's Word, in prayer, reading Christian books, worshiping & praising God, etc. Make good choices starting today & continuing every day. & remember, we can call upon

Christ's strength to make choices that will honor Him, bring us great happiness, & help us become the kind of people we want to be 10 years from now!¹¹ We all must take our thoughts captive & not let our passions & emotions rule. We must seek to discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness (1 Tim 4:7). That includes, prayer, reading the Word, & loving & serving others. You need to be a God-centered person in your thinking. Solomon said at the end of Eccl, **Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth** (12:1) & he then tells us how: **Fear God & keep His commandments** (12:13). Prov 4:23 says to a young man, **you must above all guard our hearts for from it flow the springs of life**. Prov 23:7 says **as a man thinks in his heart, so is he**. It's from the heart that flows out sinful actions & speech. It's not enough to keep up the outward duties & disciplines, although those are a good start. We must fight the battle within, our thought life & desires. Being **sensible** is something all of us need, but it's especially important for older believers to continually exhort & instill in young believers. The language Paul uses is a present-tense, ongoing command. The habits you develop as a young person usually become lifelong habits & become harder & harder to break. Vs 6 could be paraphrased, *Keep on urging the young men to behave carefully, taking life seriously, with God-centered fear.*

The phrase **in all things** better fits with vs 6 than 7 because it encompasses all the areas a **young man** is to be **sensible** in. What is it? **All things**. What does that mean? **All things**, everything, all the time. It's important that young men hear & heed this. Why? Because the future of the church is dependent on **young men** growing up in maturity so they can become the older men to take leadership positions & so they can then train the next generation of younger men to be **sensible**. & on & on it goes all to the glory of God. In prepping for this sermon I ran across a booklet that JC Ryle (1816-1900) wrote, titled, *Thoughts for Young Men*.¹² He begins by saying,

When the Apostle Paul wrote his Epistle to Titus about his responsibility as a minister, he mentioned young men as a group requiring particular attention. After speaking of older men & older women, & young women, he adds this advice, "Encourage the young men to be self-controlled" (Titus 2:6). I am going to follow the Apostle's advice. I propose to offer a few words of friendly exhortation to young men.

¹¹ Adapted from Randy Alcorn, www.epm.org/blog/2017/May/8/cumulative-little-choices

¹² available at www.biblebb.com/files/ryle/youngmen.htm

He goes on & gives his reasons for exhorting young men:

- 1) *There is the painful fact that there are few young men anywhere who seem to be Christians.*
- 2) *Death & judgment are waiting for young men, even as it waits for others, & they nearly all seem to forget it.*
- 3) *What young men will be, in all probability depends on what they are now, & they seem to forget this. Youth is the planting time of full age.*
- 4) *The devil uses special diligence to destroy the souls of young men & they don't seem to know it.*
- 5) *Young men need exhorting because of the sorrow it will save them, to begin serving God now.*

He goes on & gives some special dangers young men need to be warned about. They are:

- 1) *Pride*
- 2) *Love of pleasure*
- 3) *Thoughtlessness*
- 4) *Contempt of Christianity*
- 5) *Fear of Man's Opinion*

& then he gives this general counsel to young men:

- 1) *Try to get a clear view of the evil of sin.*
- 2) *Seek to become acquainted with our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- 3) *Never forget that nothing is so important as your soul.*
- 4) *Remember it is possible to be a young man & yet to serve God.*
- 5) *Determine as long as you live to make the Bible your guide & adviser.*
- 6) *Never make an intimate friend of anyone who is not a friend of God.*

I encourage you to read the whole thing as he expounds on each of those points & it's a great resource on the responsibilities & pitfalls of young men. (link included in transcript of sermon) He applies Titus 2:6 in urging & exhorting men to be godly. Now Paul moves from mentoring in vs 6 to...

2. Modeling in vss 7-8. Paul sums up the character qualities for young men in one word, **sensible**.

Then he turns the focus onto Titus himself, who was probably a relatively young man, showing how he must be an example or model of godliness to others. Paul lists 4 areas where Titus is to be an example. Before we get to them, remember that both verbal & visual messages are needed.

Young men, & all of us, need the exhortation from vs 6 & the example in vss 7-8. Did Paul practice what he preached? Was there ever any better example than Paul who could say with a clear conscience, **Follow me as I follow Christ** (1 Cor 11:1)? That was his life, mentoring & modeling other

men so they could do the same with others. Paul obeyed the Great Commission to make disciples & he wasn't content until they were disciple-makers themselves, reproducing others like them. He mentored men like Timothy & Titus. He seemed to always have companions with him in ministry. He respected church leadership & loved the local church. He had encouraging brothers like Barnabas. He had the relationship with Peter as a peer who he was willing to confront in love when in serious error. If we're to follow Paul as he followed Christ we should also have such relationships. If you want to be a godly man, seek to be around godly men as much as possible, & watch how they live. Young people often model what they see & that's what Paul focuses on here. Mimicking is our nature. What kind of example are you setting for those younger than you in the faith? Men, are you leading the way with your pursuit of godliness? What kind of model are you? & what are the models you want to follow? As the men of the church go, so goes the church. Godly men were desperately needed on the island of Crete when Paul wrote this & it's still the same need today. **I** The word **example** is a vivid & visual word. It's the Greek word we get our word *type* from, in the sense of copy or duplicate. In Paul's day it was used for a pattern or mold into which clay or wax was pressed so it would take the exact shape of the mold. It's an impression left by seal, stamp, pen, sword, or hammer. Paul tells Titus to be a *type* or mold *into which others can be impressed & therefore bear a likeness to him*.¹³ John Calvin said it this way: *For doctrine will otherwise carry little authority, if its power & majesty do not shine in the life ... as in a mirror. He wishes, therefore, that the teacher may be a pattern, which his scholars may copy*.¹⁴ So what are the traits Titus was to model? **An example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech.**

A. Good Deeds Notice that **example of good deeds** comes before the pure doctrine or speech. **Good deeds** make doctrine & the gospel believable. Of course, we don't preach just with our lives, we need to use words & speak the gospel as well. But a godly life should attract & cause people to want to listen & ask us the reason for the hope in us. Jesus said, **Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works & glorify your Father in heaven** (Mt 5:16). The **good deeds** Paul

¹³ William Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, p 413

¹⁴ John Calvin, *Commentary on Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, p 185

mentions here are very much a part of the glorifying of God our Savior, as the end of vs 10 says. Our good works are the platform for the gospel we see in vs 14. Good works are a purpose of our redemption. The gospel should be preached by our lives, not merely our lips. God's grace doesn't just come to us. It's to come through us to others we share the gospel with. True salvation will show up in your life in your **good works**. Eph 2:8-10 says that God saves us by grace through faith, which is a gift of God & not anything we do on our own. It then says, **We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.** We're not saved by good works, but we're saved **for good works**. The point is they go together. Good works should be a normal mark of a Christian's life, though they aren't ever the basis of our salvation. As Paul states later in Titus, **He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we did in righteousness, but in accordance with His mercy (3:5).** **Good deeds** are deeds done in obedience to God's Word, out of love for Him & others. They include everything from listening to someone who needs to talk, praying with them, to very practical things, such as preparing a meal for a family, visiting shut-ins, running errands for someone, & thousands of other such actions. Luther said, *Because the heathen cannot see our faith, they ought to see our works, then hear our doctrine, & then be converted.*¹⁵ Isn't that our desire? & when they do hear our doctrine or teaching, what must it be like?

B. Purity in Doctrine **Purity** means *without corruption*. It only appears here in the NT, so there's some debate as to its exact meaning. The general idea seems to be not morally corrupt or vile. It's the absence of self-seeking & all perverse motives such as deceitfulness & guile. It implies teaching or doctrine that's free from error & characterized by soundness & integrity. Titus was to be pure in what he taught. He was to teach the pure Word of God. He wasn't to add to it & he wasn't to take away from it. He was to use it to promote holiness in his own life & in the lives of his listeners. Unfortunately, many churches & young men have drifted from **purity in doctrine**. False teaching about physical health, financial prosperity, & works salvation have misled many. Titus was to be

¹⁵ *Luther's Works*, Vol 29, p 57

an example of pure doctrine in what he believed, in what he taught, & his demonstration of that in how he lived. We're to do the same. The next trait Paul says should be modeled is...

C. Dignified which can be translated *seriousness, reverence, or gravity*. This is the same characteristic we saw for the older men in vs 2. It refers to both the outward dignity & decency of good manners & conduct & to the inward thought life & attitudes that should mark a spiritually mature man. This doesn't mean he never smiles or has fun & is a stick in the mud. A **dignified** man can have a good sense of humor, but there's also a seriousness that keeps him from being flippant, frivolous, & laughing at what's improper. There's a certain weightiness, heaviness, or depth required of a man of God when talking about things of the gospel, eternity, & the holy God before whom we must one day give account. This is the opposite of those who preach like entertainers, stand-up comics, or clowns. Young men are more naturally undignified, but a godly man is to have a seriousness about him & great reverence for the Word of God. John Stott writes, *Perhaps the most important emphasis here is that people will not take serious subjects seriously unless there is a due seriousness in the preacher's manner & delivery.*¹⁶ As the puritan Richard Baxter put it, *Whatever you do, let the people see that you are in good earnest ... You cannot break men's hearts by jesting with them.*¹⁷ Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones made the same point saying, *I confess freely, I cannot understand a jocular evangelist ... Go back & read the lives of the men whom God has used in the mightiest manner, & you will invariably find that they were serious men, sober men, men with the fear of the Lord in them.*¹⁸ **Example of good deeds, purity in doctrine, dignified, &...**

D. Sound in Speech Sound speech is *healthy, blameless speech*. It's the Greek word we get *hygiene* from, meaning *healthy, wholesome, or balanced*. Vs 7 speaks of our life & vs 8 now comes to our lips or our speech. Eph 4:29 commands, **Let no unwholesome word come out of your mouth, but if there is any good word for edification according to the need of the moment, say that, so that it will give grace to those who hear.** Sound communication doesn't lie or deceive but expresses the truth in love (Eph 4:25) with the goal of building up those who will hear. It takes into account the situation

¹⁶ *Guard the Truth: The Message of 1 Timothy & Titus*, p 190

¹⁷ *The Reformed Pastor*, p 145

¹⁸ *Romans 1*, p 332

& seeks to bring God's grace to bear so others are encouraged. Titus was to be an example of godliness in his every day conversations. He was to speak in such a way that no reproach could be brought against him or God. How can you tell if an individual is really spiritually mature? It's demonstrated in the conversations of life. We all should be self-controlled in our speech & working on making sure our speech is sound & **beyond reproach**.

To put this in context, Titus's example for the young men is to be the reverse of those opposing Paul's teaching in the Cretan church (1:16). The false teachers are **worthless for any good deed** (1:16), but by his example Titus is to **be beyond reproach** (1:7). The false teachers deceive (1:10), lie (1:12), & **turn away from the truth** (1:14) for **dishonest gain** (1:11). But Paul tells Titus to have **purity in doctrine** (2:7). This probably refers not only to the character of Titus but also to his uncorrupted message. This again is in contrast with the false teachers who with their polluted gospel are **defiled** & to whom **nothing is pure** (1:15). The false teachers are **empty talkers**, uttering empty, senseless things (1:10), but Titus is to show seriousness & soundness of speech that cannot be condemned (2:7-8). What the false teachers say & do causes them to **deny** God (1:16), but Titus's words & example should cause no one to deny the validity of his message or the character of those who deliver it (2:8).¹⁹ Which brings us to our final point...

3. The Motivation of a godly life. We've seen the mentoring & the modeling. Now, what's the motive? Why are **young men** to live this way? Why are young women to live this way? Why are older women & older men to live this way? Here's the purpose clause at the end of vs 8: **so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us**. Why must we live this way? So that we'll silence the critics of the faith & they'll be ashamed when they criticize Christianity. The word **bad** means worthless. Don't let them say we're worthless. Don't let them say our Christianity has no value. Don't let them speak evil against us. Silence them & put them to shame for the falseness of their accusations by the godly life that you live. If people refuse to come to Christ, let it be the gospel message they say "**NO**" to, not the messenger who, because of an ungodly life, hides the purity of the gospel of Jesus which alone brings salvation. As someone has said, if you

¹⁹ R. Kent Hughes & Bryan Chapell, [1 & 2 Timothy & Titus: To Guard the Deposit](#), p 332

were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you? Would your **opponent** be put to shame or would you? We don't know whether Paul had a specific **opponent** in mind here (the Greek word is singular). Perhaps the ringleader of the false teachers, or if he's generalizing, anyone who comes against the gospel. His thought is that when opponents of the gospel attack the character of a Christian leader, they shouldn't even have a shred of substance to their accusations, so that others will see through their false charges.

This is the 2nd of 3 **so that** or purpose statements. Vs 5, **so that the Word of God will not be dishonored**. Vs 10, **so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect**. God's glory & gospel is at stake in the way we live our lives. When someone who's hostile to a Christian makes an unfounded accusation against them, the conduct of that Christian's life should be such that the obvious & public testimony of their character should put the accuser to shame. The sense here is that the person to whom you are being slandered responds, *I know the guy you're talking about, but what you're saying doesn't match his character*. The **opponent** will be put to shame by your godly character. As your godly character becomes more well known, they won't even be able to say anything bad about you personally or other Christians in general. Your reputation is important not only for yourself but also for the glory of God. If your walk with the Holy Spirit doesn't match your talk about Jesus, then no one is going to believe your message & the name of God will be blasphemed. But if your conduct is godly, as it should be, then God will be glorified & your message will gain a hearing. Peter gives further instruction about the importance of living a godly life & the results it will have.

Beloved, I urge you as foreigners & strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul. Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God on the day of visitation (1 Pt 2:11-12).

The result of Titus living as such a godly example is *not* that his critics will vanish. No, he'll still face opposition. Jesus assured us of that. It's interesting that Paul doesn't say at the end of vs 8, *about you*, but **about us**. He uses the 1st person plural pronoun, which designates the Christian

community as a whole to indicate that the misconduct of any Christian has consequences for the entire Christian community.²⁰ How we live impacts other Christians around us.

Let me close with some of JC Ryle's applications. Here are his special rules for **young men**:

- 1) Resolve at once, by God's help, to break off every known sin, however small.*
- 2) Resolve, by God's help, to shun everything which may prove an occasion of sin.*
- 3) Resolve never to forget the eye of God. Remember that you have to deal with an all-seeing God, a God who never sleeps, a God who understands your thoughts...*
- 4) Be diligent in the practice of your Christianity.*
- 5) Resolve that wherever you are, you will pray.*

Although given for young men, this is good advice for every Christian, no matter the age, gender, or spiritual maturity level. Let's work on being a **sensible**, healthy church **so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.**

²⁰ George W. Knight, [The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text](#), p 313