

**OLDER WOMEN**  
**TITUS 2:3**  
**ABC 1/10/21**

As we continue or study of Paul's letter to Titus, we find ourselves again in chpt 2. Turn there. Here Paul gives a list of qualifications for the whole church, broken down by age group & gender. God is concerned that His church be characterized by sound, healthy teaching that will result in sound, healthy living by all members, as we talked about last week. The 1<sup>st</sup> 2 groups mentioned are the **older men & older women**. We talked about **older men** last week & there's no such thing as **older women**, so let's wrap it up & close in prayer. The Bible says a lot about the advantages of age. For example, the psalmist says,

**God, You have taught me from my youth, & I still declare Your wondrous deeds. & even when *I am old & gray*, God, do not abandon me, until I declare Your strength to *this* generation, Your power to all who are to come (71:17-18).**

In other words, those who are **old & gray** who've followed the Lord can talk about God's strength & deeds. They can talk about His power because they've seen & experienced it for so many years.

In Ps 92 we have something similar.

**The righteous person will flourish like the palm tree, He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Planted in the house of the LORD, They will flourish in the courtyards of our God. They will still yield fruit in advanced age; They will be full of sap & very green, To declare that the LORD is just; He is my rock, & there is no malice in Him (12-15).**

Those who can best declare the character of God are those who have walked with Him longest. As we all know, America is aging. The graying of America is here. A few stats:

- *The US Census Bureau predicts that in 13 years, 2034, the US will have more people 65 & older than 18 & younger.*<sup>1</sup>
- *If AARP became a nation, it would be the 37<sup>th</sup> largest nation in the world, slightly smaller than Afghanistan.*<sup>2</sup>
- *More than ½ the people in history who have reached 65 years of age are alive today.*<sup>3</sup>

Society is aging & so is the church & that isn't all a bad thing. The Library of Congress doesn't begin to compare to all the wealth of wisdom, understanding, & experience that older Christians possess. The church needs older Christians, men & women alike, if it's to be healthy as God desires.

<sup>1</sup> [www.census.gov/library/stories/2018/03/graying-america.html](http://www.census.gov/library/stories/2018/03/graying-america.html)

<sup>2</sup> [www.worldometers.info/world-population/population-by-country/](http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/population-by-country/)

<sup>3</sup> *Kindred Spirit*, Summer 2000, Vol 24, no 2, p 11

There's a huge need for godly, older women to pour their lives into those of younger women. That was true in the 1<sup>st</sup> century & it is true in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. 1-15

Vs 3 begins with the word **likewise**, which connects vs 3 with what was said in vs 2. This may mean the **older women** are to have the same qualities as the older men. After all, shouldn't every Christian have these qualities? We'd all do well to be **temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, love, & perseverance** (2). The word **likewise** stresses that older Christian women are to have the same moral fiber & maturity as older Christian men. Their character is to evidence God's transforming grace at work in their lives & they're to teach by their example, life, & words the young women of the church. These words to **older women** are part of **the things which are fitting for sound doctrine** (1) that Titus was to speak to the Christians in Crete. Obviously, women are to be a godly resource in the church. They're a rich spiritual resource & deserve esteem & consideration. The later years can & should be some of the most productive spiritually because that is when wisdom & maturity have equipped you with the most to give. That's Paul's point here. Older women of godly character should be training the younger women to be the same. Paul clearly states that **older women** should possess personal godliness, be worthy of respect, & play an essential role in the lives of the young women in the church. The concept of spiritual mentoring is unmistakable in this passage.<sup>4</sup>

As with the older men, Paul doesn't give an age at which a woman is considered older. Smart man! Philo uses the word in reference to women over 60 years old,<sup>5</sup> which is an interesting coincidence with the requirement in 1 Tim 5:9 that widows not be enrolled unless they are 60 or more years old. There older women who become widows are singled out & these ladies who are 60 & older, who've been faithful wives who had a reputation for good works, who brought up children, who showed hospitality to strangers, washed the saints' feet, assisted those in distress, & devoted themselves to every good work, those women need to be taken care of. If they have a family, let the family take care of them. But if they don't have anybody to take care of them, & their only hope is in God, then the church is to take care of them. Those kinds of women are worthy of are

---

<sup>4</sup> Thomas D. Lea & Hayne P. Griffin, [1, 2 Timothy, Titus](#), vol. 34, The New American Commentary, p 299

<sup>5</sup> William D Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary: Pastoral Epistles*, p 409

care. They're precious. Though specific age levels vary, those who are older always bear the responsibility for setting a positive example for the younger. For example, High School girls are older than Jr High girls, so they're responsible to model Christianity for their younger sisters in Christ. The same is true of college age women & their relationship to High School girls. & so on up & down the age scale, with older women always in a position of greater responsibility to demonstrate a consistent Christian life-style. Paul doesn't specify the age a woman would have to be to qualify as **older** here. But the context of vss 4-5 suggests these are women who no longer have young children at home as their priority & therefore have more time to minister by encouraging & helping the younger women of the church. This is an essential ministry of all women who are **older** in the faith & farther along in life, at a different stage of life than the younger moms & wives & single gals. They're to disciple or mentor. A vital function of older women is to teach & encourage younger women in the things of the Lord. They also are to minister to each other & to women in the church of any age, single, married, or widowed. Older women have always played a vital role in the church, & that's the way it should be. But what qualities should an older woman have? Paul gives a few characteristics to Titus that **older women** should have. Again, as with the older men, this list isn't exhaustive. They're 1<sup>st</sup> to be...

**1. REVERENT IN THEIR BEHAVIOR** That's one word in the Greek & it's used only here in the Bible. This is an interesting verse to Greek scholars because it contains 3 words that appear nowhere else in the Greek NT, one of which appears nowhere else in any Greek literature. **Reverent** means priest-like & came to refer to that which is appropriate to holiness. Older Christian women are to be like priests. What does that mean? They're to be holy & are to live in such a way that is fitting for those who claim to be godly. They're to be this way since they belong to God by faith in Jesus. This will be seen in their **behavior** or demeanor. It's the outward expression of one's interior character or disposition.<sup>6</sup> In English today the word **behavior** refers to conduct or manners. But originally it referred more to a life condition, to a person's inner characteristics, which would, in turn, lead to an outward behavior. **Older women** are to be godly examples of holiness. Their sound character

---

<sup>6</sup> George W. Knight, [The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary, p 306

should influence every aspect of their lives. We have an example of this in Lk 2 by an older woman named Anna. Anna was advanced in years. She was an elderly widow. She never left the temple, serving night & day with fasting & prayers. She was an older, godly woman who was priest-like & reverent in her behavior. The Holy Spirit allowed her to recognize the baby Jesus when Joseph & Mary brought Him to the temple. The moment Anna saw Him, **she came up & began giving thanks to God, & continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem** (38). What's that refer to? It was a shorthand way of referring to God's covenant relationship with Israel, including the promise of a Savior. She was longing for God to break into history again to console and redeem His people by sending the promised Messiah.

Women who are **reverent in their behavior**, according to 1 Tim 2:9, are women who **adorn themselves with the proper clothing, modestly & discreetly, not with braided hair & gold or pearls or costly ornaments**. They're humble & gentle. These are women involved in good works **as is proper for women making a claim to godliness** (1 Tim 2:10). They're women who receive spiritual instruction with submission & don't exercise authority in the church or teach men. That's the kind of behavior God wants: modesty, discretion, virtue, submission to authority, godliness, raising children in a godly way, & helping strangers. The outward action of holiness is dependent on an inward condition of holiness. & so Paul says to Titus, *You must tell the older women to be holy, to be like priests who enter the very presence of God*. **Older women** are to have a reputation or manner of life that's worthy of respect as a mature woman of God. They're to live in such a way as is befitting a godly person, reflecting the very character of the Lord she loves & lives for & who indwells her as His temple (1 Cor 6:19-20). The reverent woman fears God & lives in His presence moment-by-moment. She should demonstrate the holiness of a heart that is near to God & so should we all. Again, while these character traits are given for a specific demographic here, most apply to all Christians. Paul adds secondly...

**2. NOT MALICIOUS GOSSIPS** What a contrast this is! Be priest-like, not gossips making false & unfounded accusations about others. Older women are to refuse to listen to, let alone spread slander or demeaning words about others. Paul isn't simply referring to idle chatter about someone

else, bad as that is. Do you know what the Greek word for **malicious gossips** is? It's *diabolos*, which, at its root, means to throw things at people. It's used 34x in the NT as a name for Satan. This is one of the few times in the NT it's not translated as *devil* or *Satan*. **Malicious gossips**, & all gossip is malicious, isn't a little sin God's eyes. Nothing is more Satan-like or devilish than malicious slander. Satan has been a slanderer & false accuser ever since he fell from his place of glory & honor in heaven. **There is no truth in him**, said Jesus. **He is a liar & the father of lies** (Jn 8:44). Satan is malicious, slandering night & day. Older women aren't to be Satan-like. Next time someone begins to tell you gossip, cover your ears & yell loudly, *Stop, you devilish person!* Maybe that would help curb gossip. How we use our tongue reflects on & affects everything we do. **Older women** can find themselves with more time on their hands, & because they have less to occupy their time, they could be given over to idle talk, gossip, criticism, fault-finding, & slander. Paul says that's the devil's work. A mature Christian lady isn't devilish in her speech, picking up gossip & spreading it around. This woman has control of her tongue. By the way, if someone starts a sentence to you, *You know, I probably shouldn't mention this but ...*, it's probably a good idea to not let them mention it. Receiving gossip is also wrong. Beware of *Have you heard... Can you believe... Did you see...* Eph 4:29 is a good guide for all of us to guard our lips: **Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.** Women who have time on their hands shouldn't be **malicious gossips**. Paul's exhortation to you if you have more time at this stage of life is don't use this season of life to slander others, use it to serve others! As you grow older, don't grow more critical, grow more compassionate & godly. The godly older woman will be living out what Proverbs has to say on gossip. She'll have no part of it. **For lack of wood the fire goes out, & where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down** (26:20). She'll keep personal information that is shared with her to herself. **He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is trustworthy conceals a matter** (11:13). Or, as Paul says in Eph 4:25, **Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another.** A godly woman is committed to speaking the truth. But remember, 1 Cor 16:14 says, **Let all that you do be done in**

**love.** The godly woman is committed to honesty, to telling the truth, but she's also committed to love. So being committed to telling the truth doesn't mean it's OK to say whatever you want, whenever you want, however you want, as long as it's truthful. Rather, we have to remember Eph 4:15, **but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even Christ.*** The godly woman isn't just committed to telling the truth. She's also committed to only saying things that will benefit & build others up. No Christian, male or female, young or old, should be a **malicious gossip**. Thirdly, Paul says **older women** are ...

**3. NOT ENSLAVED TO MUCH WINE** This term refers to a drunkard & **enslaved** means to be held & controlled against one's will.<sup>7</sup> One scholar points out, *Alcoholism must have been a severe problem since it is an issue in the appointment of church leaders in every list (1 Tim 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7; cf 1 Tim 5:23). While this is true in almost every culture (cf 1 Cor 11:21) ... it was especially true in Crete where they viewed heavy drinking as a virtue.*<sup>8</sup> Often, there's a connection between a loose tongue & drunkenness. One who drinks too much will probably talk too much as well. These 2 things go hand-in-hand. Paul tells Titus that these older believers aren't to give themselves to wine, they're to maintain their senses & not to be slaves to drink. They need to be in full use of their senses for God's holy purposes. They're to be like priests who draw into the presence of God. They're to be controlled by the Spirit (Eph 5:18). Their tongue is to speak nothing but that which is edifying & seasoned with grace. They are never to talk like the devil does, slandering or gossiping & never are they to become slaves of anything that inebriates them or takes away their senses. As Christians of any age, we can go to excess in almost anything we do. But the Bible teaches temperance & self-control in all things (1 Cor 10:23-11:1). A godly, **reverent** woman controls her tongue & her appetite, &, of course, that applies to men as well. Either out-of-control behavior damages the credibility of the life-changing power of the gospel. Instead of being occupied with gossip & drinking, **older women** need to be busy doing something positive. What is it?

**4. TEACHING WHAT IS GOOD & ENCOURAGING YOUNG WOMEN** To be effective in your personal witness for the Lord, & as a mentor of younger women, **older women** (& all Christians) are not to be in bondage

<sup>7</sup> John MacArthur, *Titus*, p 78

<sup>8</sup> William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, p 410

to the flesh. They must be willing to exercise self-control so they won't be disqualified from the goal of being a spiritual mother. If **older women** have special challenges, they also have special opportunities. Age reduces stamina, strength, & limits physical ability. But godly wisdom more than makes up for physical strength anytime. God can, & will, use their wisdom & experience as they teach & encourage younger women. This gives the **older women** something positive to live towards. Like their godly counterpart, the **older men**, these mature disciples of Christ are to be adept in **teaching what is good**. Paul uses a word here that's unique in all of Greek literature & it very well may have been coined by Paul himself. The focus, in light of what follows in vs 4-5, is informal, one-on-one or small group discipleship. Issues of marriage, family, & child rearing are taught alongside basic matters of spiritual life in Christ. Younger women desperately need the role modeling, teaching, discipling, insight, & practical wisdom that these **older women** can provide, who in turn pass on a godly legacy that will hopefully reproduce itself for generations.<sup>9</sup> **Older women** need to be teaching. Who are they to be teaching? **4**

They're to be teaching the young women. The positive quality of teaching good things reminds older women they're responsible to model the acceptable, respectable, reverent, godly life for younger women. What are they to be teaching them? What is **good**. **Good** here means acceptable patterns of behavior. It contains the implication that one teaches with one's life, either good things or bad things. Godly **older women** will pursue the lifestyle & conversations that will teach what is **good**. The word **good** is often translated *beautiful* or *attractive*. Note that it was the **older women**, not Titus, that were to teach the younger women how to be truly beautiful, namely, to be godly. We'll see the specifics that Paul gives next week. The word **encourage** literally means to cause someone to be of sound mind & to have self-control. It means to make sensible. It's closely related to the words translated **sensible** (1:8; 2:5) & **sensibly** (2:12). Paul wants to make sure that the older women are godly **so that they may encourage the young women** in 7 specific ways. Older women are to play an important leadership role in encouraging younger women. This idea is brought home by the term translated **encourage**. It's not the ordinary term for **encourage** in the Bible. Instead,

---

<sup>9</sup> Daniel L. Akin, [Living Doctrine: The Book of Titus](#), ed. Craig G. Bartholomew & David Beldman, Transformative Word, p 31

Paul opts for an unusual Greek verb only used here. The word literally means to bring someone to her senses. It's the verbal form of the adjective **sensible**, used in 2:5. So in our text, it involves the older women training the younger women to be sensible, or self-controlled, or self-disciplined. It's training them to be godly. The Greek word has a much stronger ring of authority than the English word **encourage** may imply. This is why other versions translate the word **train** (NET, ESV, NIV), **teach** (KJV), or **admonish** (NKJV). Mature women are to be leaders or mentors for younger women. & the clear implication is that the younger women need older women to help bring them to their senses. This important concept of self-control, self-mastery, sensibleness for all believers is again evident. As applied to the older & younger women, the former must have it in order to effectively teach the latter. Younger Christian women sometimes feel overwhelmed by the difficulties of rearing children & keeping the household running. **Older women** should help them think sensibly about the importance of those duties. Having taught their own children well, **older women** now have the responsibility for teaching younger women in the church & encouraging them to also be righteous & godly wives & mothers.<sup>10</sup> That's so important. That's why you have to have these godly **older women** in the congregation to teach the younger ones, to teach them how to raise their children, how to love their husbands, & how to be godly. This is instruction in what is noble & excellent. It includes the **teaching** of **what is** holy & godly.

Paul continues tells Titus what he's to teach **older women** & begins saying what should characterize younger women, linking the older to the younger as those who teach what they themselves are striving to be. Godly older women are to talk sense to younger women by teaching what is beautiful & attractive about a godly home. This teaching of an **older woman** is the informal teaching by word, by example, in a group of women here & there & wherever to bring along a generation of godly women. In other words, **older women** aren't to hoard their knowledge or look down on those who don't have it. Instead, they're to pass it on to those who need the advice of those with greater experience. Some of you may be thinking, *I'm not qualified to do that. I'm still learning, even as an older women.* The truth is, if everyone waits to be qualified, none of us will ever mentor anyone.

---

<sup>10</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., [Titus](#), MacArthur New Testament Commentary, p 78



One elderly woman said,

*I have had to realize that young women mostly just want my time & don't expect that I'll know all of the answers. That's God's job! As I am able to direct them to search for God's answers through His word, through what I've learned by my mistakes, & sometimes through successes, they will be able to grow through someone just listening & helping them to hear God's unique direction for them.... More often than not I am blessed to be a part of what God is doing in someone else.<sup>11</sup>*

Younger ladies, if an older woman prayerfully seeks you out, most likely God has something for you to learn. This is a great opportunity for you to be mentored by someone who's been where you are. I fear what's going to happen in the church of the future if godly women today don't teach the next generation because often they don't have a family role model to look to & have no idea of what a biblical family is. This is really about discipleship. If you want to be complete in Christ you must be involved in discipleship. On the receiving end, discipleship involves submitting yourself to the counsel & wisdom of a godly, more experienced person. On the giving end, discipleship involves investing yourself in training another person to be godly.

**Older women** are to teach & model godliness in order to **encourage the young women** to love their husbands, love their children, be sensible, pure, workers at home, etc. That's their primary role, to raise a godly generation of young women. I challenge the **older women** in our church to do that. The young women in your life are crucial. They may be your daughters, your daughters-in-law, granddaughters, your daughter's friends, your friends' daughters, neighbors, nieces, whoever. But they're around in church & in your sphere of influence. I encourage you, Paul commands you, to come alongside & teach them how to live life & nurture them to godliness.

When godly Christian women don't infuse the younger generation with the things of God & model it for them, the church is headed for disaster. Especially today, when many young women weren't raised under a biblical family model & have been inundated with radical feminism. Older women are to train the younger women to learn the art of self-restraint. This process requires that older women be committed to being responsible, encouraging, & affirming in an ongoing relationship with younger women.

Unfortunately, our society has bought into the notion that older people have had their day of

usefulness & ought to make way for the young. But God says differently. With age & experience come wisdom, & many **older women** have discovered secrets of godly living in relation to their husbands, children, neighbors, & in the workplace that could save younger women a lot of unnecessary grief. & when the unavoidable trials come to the young woman, who better to guide her through than an older sister who's been through it before? Somehow we must ensure that younger women have contact with **older women; older women** are to seek out younger women who desire to be trained.<sup>12</sup>

Why are older women to do this? So that they aren't the cause of dishonoring God's Word, so that they aren't the cause of giving the opponent something bad to say about the church, & so that they aren't the cause of people who would doubt God's saving power. A lot is at stake. & you have so much to offer.

If you're an older Christian women you are to assist, mentor, teach, & encourage the younger women, not as interfering busybodies, but as humble advisers & mentors on problems encountered in life. This pictures the **older women**, those who are experienced in life, marriage, & child rearing, taking the younger women under their care & helping them adjust to their responsibilities. It's a needed ministry that can't be accomplished by men (cf 1 Tim 5:2b). Don't think in terms of a program but a purposeful personal interaction. That's your responsibility to pursue, spending time with people who aren't simply peers or in the same stage of life as you, which is our natural tendency. Make plans to spend time with both older & younger & seek to build relationships outside of Sunday where the godly traits in Titus 2 can be modeled & mentored.

Not long after the beginning of the black power movement & the start of the group called the Black Panthers, a 67-year-old lady named Margaret Kuhn of Philadelphia decided she wanted to get in on the Movement only from a different standpoint, so she started the gray power movement & started an organization called Gray Panthers. Her whole idea was to get a bunch of gray people to make a change in the world. She said this, *Much of senility is not irreversible; it is induced by despair & frustration. Fixed retirement is dehumanizing. It shows how stupid our society is in making scrap piles of the elderly. We're not mellow, sweet old people. We've got time to effect change & nothing to lose.*<sup>13</sup>

What about in the church? We're doing a great disservice & great harm if we *make scrap piles of*

<sup>12</sup> Philip Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, vol. 14, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series, 2:2.

<sup>13</sup> *7700 Illustrations*, #4031, p 931

*the elderly*. If you're an older, godly man or woman, you're a powerful force in this church. We need you. God's call to you is to engage yourself purposefully in seeking to help mature yourself further & mature others in the process. The ministry of older believers is one of the most desperately needed & a church isn't sound or healthy, as vs 1 says, until vs 2 & following are taking place. Let me blunt here. This is a priority God has set for you. You may need to take a hard look at what you're doing & determine if you're doing what God wants or what you want. You may need to spend some time studying the Scriptures, praying, & talking things over with those who are godly to determine if you really are doing what you should be doing & what needs to change.

The great advantages to the church of having those with marital, child-rearing, & Christian living experience is when they understand how valuable their willingness to communicate the responsibilities of the faith to those with less experience. Teacher & student will grow in the realities of grace as spiritual truths are taught, modeled, reflected upon, & passed along. When these dynamics are multiplied many times through the spoken & unspoken example of mature women throughout the church, the entire body is nurtured by the influence of these spiritual mothers.

What might this look like? A few ideas:<sup>14</sup>

- Talk about yourself. Share your life, thoughts, and struggles. Let younger women see your own progress (1 Tim 4:15).
- Ask lots of questions. Listen. Be interested. Be slow to give unsolicited advice.
- Tell them what you've been reading or thinking about. They might not say much, but they are listening.
- Keep on hand some favorite, solid Christian books to lend or give away. Ask follow-up questions.
- Share how you read the Bible and pray. Talk about how you deal with temptations to worry or gossip.
- Invite women into your home. Let them see how you run things. Don't try to make your house look perfect.
- Enlist young women's help in helping others. Spend a day together cooking for shut-ins. Visit an old peoples' home. Teach Sunday school together.

---

<sup>14</sup> Jean Williams, *Woman to Woman: Answering the Call of Titus 2*, <http://thebriefing.com.au/2010/03/woman-to-woman-answering-the-call-of-titus-2/>

- Be generous with praise and encouragement: *It's great seeing you reaching out to women at work! Or, Your children are a delight. You're doing just fine; hang in there.* But don't flatter for the sake of it.
- Be intentional when you go to church. Sit next to a younger woman and ask how she's going as a Christian. Pray for the women at church.
- Befriend the teenage girls in your church. Go out of your way to strike up conversations with them.
- Be involved in women's lives. Call or text them. Remember their details and ask about them.
- Write a younger woman an encouraging note, telling her how you've seen her grow in godliness.
- Call a young woman each week and ask how you can pray for her.

We're all to be motivated to live the Christian life because there's always someone watching us & because that's there's someone younger than we are who doesn't know the ropes like those with spiritual maturity & age. They need to be encouraged along the way in living the Christian life. Ideally, all of us are an influence for good on those younger in the faith & are being influenced by those more mature in the faith. Every one of us fits into this somewhere. Let's pray that we each are faithful in doing as God commands in this passage. But we can't do it on our own strength. We all need to be relying on the God who saves us through His Son who died for us who sent His Spirit to indwell & empower us to do as God commands.