

OLDER MEN
TITUS 2:1-2
ABC 1/3/20

Today we return to our study of Paul's letter to Titus. We spent 5 weeks in the 1st chpt then took 4 weeks to focus on Advent. Last Sunday I was on vacation but today we're back at it. As we saw, chpt 1 deals mainly with the leadership of the church. In chpt 2 the focus changes from leadership to everybody. It's all about what makes a church healthy. Paul gives very specific & practical instructions for every part of the church. When a church obeys these instructions, it will be healthy. Many people are concerned about their physical bodies, but Jesus is far more concerned about the health of His body, the church. This chapter is about being a healthy church. One word that shows this is the word **sound** (2:1). The Greek word gives us our word *hygiene* meaning healthy. 5x in this book Paul draws attention to the need for spiritual health by using this word. God is clearly concerned about healthy doctrine & healthy living, & they're closely linked. For example, in 1:9 Paul writes about **sound doctrine** & in vs 13 he says to live it out by being **sound in the faith**. In chpt 2 he does the same thing. The theme throughout Titus is the teaching of sound doctrine & the call for sound living based on that doctrine. This is all set against the backdrop of unsound doctrine which produces unhealthy Christianity. God is concerned that His church have healthy teaching & be called to a healthy living of that teaching. If a church is to be spiritually healthy, if it's to be sound, it must have sound doctrine & sound living. It's never Paul's goal in teaching that people will simply agree with what he teaches, but that they believe it & are transformed by it. Let's read chpt 2 & get at it. **2:1-15**

1. Overview of Chapter Two The opening & closing vss of this chapter are important for us to understand because in them God demands those in His church to follow these commands. Vs 1 begins, **But as for you**, & that's in contrast to the false teachers described in 1:16. These false teachers were insubordinate, mouthy, & deceptive. They were liars, lazy, & motivated by money. They listen to the words of men & of popular culture, more than to the Word of God. They're infected with a defiled mind & a contaminated conscience, professing to know God but by their

actions deny Him. They are **detestable & disobedient & worthless for any good deed**.¹ Titus was therefore commissioned by Paul to challenge their false teaching & false living & to **speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine**, in order to strengthen the testimony of the churches for the gospel of salvation. Every Christian is called to this responsibility. But what is it? Paul isn't simply saying *teach* sound doctrine. That's already been covered in 1:9 where the leaders of the church are instructed to **hold fast the faithful Word & exhort with sound doctrine**. What he's saying here is you must speak the things which are associated with sound doctrine in your daily living. The word **speak** isn't referring to preaching or teaching, it's just to talk in the normal conversations of life. We're all to help people know the truth & apply it to their lives. We're to tell them the things they need to do that flow from the doctrine they believe. We aren't to just fill people's head with theology. We must also be teaching the right behavior that flows from right doctrine. This isn't a *what it means to me* interpretation but what God meant through the original writer to the original audience based on the original language & context. Paul's emphasizing right teaching & right living. Doctrine & duty go hand-in-hand. The Bible never divorces doctrine from duty, truth from behavior. The fruit of right doctrine is righteous living. & so, in contrast to the opponents in chpt 1, who taught error that resulted in their being **worthless for any good deed** (16), Paul emphasizes that good works are a necessary & natural result of believing **sound doctrine**. To be rescued from sin & death through faith in Jesus must result in a changed life that displays self-control & reflects God's love & grace.² How does a church develop into this kind of body that points people to Christ? Through **sound doctrine** (2:1, 7, 10). All godly living must be built on the sound doctrine of God's Word (2 Tim 3:16-17). & yet there are religions & churches that say doctrine isn't important. But if doctrine isn't important, why's the Bible full of it? Doctrine is important. We must know what the Bible teaches about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, man, sin, redemption, salvation, etc. Why? Because out of that flows the way we live. Our actions are always based on our beliefs. For example, if you're out hiking & come to a deep, raging stream 13 feet wide, what do you do? If you believe you

¹ Daniel L. Akin, [Living Doctrine: The Book of Titus](#), ed. Craig G. Bartholomew & David Beldman

² Thomas D. Lea & Hayne P. Griffin, [1, 2 Timothy, Titus](#), vol. 34, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 296.

can safely jump it, you go for it. If you believe you'll get soaked if you try that, you look for an easier crossing, right? Your actions are based on your beliefs. When Paul comes to Rom 12 & says, **Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God...** & then launches into talking about a living sacrifice & rolls on for several chapters of Christian duty, he's building it all on the 1st 11 chpts of doctrine. That's Paul's standard form, doctrine then duty. God wants us to know His truth & then to live it. In fact, what good is the truth if it isn't lived out? God wants a pure bride, He wants a holy church (1 Pt 1:16). Holy living is inseparable from sound doctrine. That's the point. We're called to teach healthy doctrine & we're called to healthy living because of it. Healthy, sound teaching must be followed up by the call for healthy living. & that's what vs 1 is saying, you must continually in every conversation, be calling people to the kind of holy living that's suitable for truth. Now look at vs 15 & how Paul ends the chapter. He says, **These things**, the things he's just said, **speak & exhort & reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.** In vs 1 he said, **speak these things**, & here in vs 15 he says it again. It's to be on your lips all the time. This isn't just in a general sense but he says, **& exhort**. That's a positive note. Come alongside people, urge, encourage, compel, & admonish them in a positive way. This is how we must live. & then there's a negative. When they don't listen he says **reprove** them. That carries the idea of confronting with the purpose of convicting them of their sin. We have a responsibility to always be speaking about these standards of holy living which flow from sound doctrine & we need to speak them constantly & we need to come alongside people to encourage them to obey. & when they don't, **reprove** them with **all authority**. What is that **authority**? It's the **authority** of God's Word. The word **authority** is always used by Paul in the sense of a divine command. Chpt 2 is a series of divine commands. Scripture isn't a book of suggestions or insights. It's a book of commands. Then he adds, **Let no one disregard you.** That's a warning to anybody who might decide they're going to try to resist the authority of Scripture. **Disregard** is a word made from 2 words, one meaning *to think* & the other is *peri*, which we use in *perimeter*. It means the circumference, the outside of something. To **disregard** is to *think around*. It means to try to rationalize, give excuses, or justify. Paul says don't let anybody try to evade these commands. Some of these commands are very straight-forward. Like older women

are not to be **gossips**, younger women are to love their husbands & children, younger men are to be **sensible**. People are going to say, *But that was for then, not now. Besides you don't know my situation*. No, don't let them think around you by justifying or rationalizing. When someone speaks God's truth & you reject or ignore it, you reject & ignore God Himself. God wants a healthy church, a church that's taught healthy doctrine & is healthy in it's actions. He wants a pure church, a holy & spotless bride. So what makes a church healthy? Holy living, which flows from & is the fruit of healthy doctrine. What God wants has nothing to do with the size of a church, what He wants has to do with the character of the church. That's where our emphasis must be. There's something else we must see here & it gives us an overall feeling for this chapter. The commands & behavior that are given here are required by us. But they aren't just for our own personal good. The issue here isn't the effect of our holiness on us, the issue is the effect of our holiness on others. For all that being obedient does for us, the point here is what it does for those around us. This is stated in 3 purpose clauses. The 1st is in **vs 5**.

A. THAT THE WORD OF GOD WILL NOT BE DISHONORED The 1st compelling issue here is the honor of God's Word. How we live is going to impact how people view Christianity & it either makes it attractive or turns people away. We don't want God's Word to **be dishonored** or blasphemed. How we live determines how those around us feel about God & His Word. The world doesn't judge us by our theology, but by our actions. They decide whether the Bible is really true, powerful, & life changing by whether it changes our lives. Why should people believe it's life-changing truth if your life isn't changed? This phrase has been translated, **so that God's Word may suffer no scandal**.³ The world will judge the truth of the gospel by the character of the people who believe it & say they're transformed by it. The way you live your life is vital to the credibility of the gospel you claim to believe. We see this clearly when David was confronted by Nathan of his sin with Bathsheba & the murder of Uriah. David replies, **I've sinned against the Lord** (13). He's honestly confessing. **& Nathan said to David, *The Lord also has taken away your sin, you shall not die.*** There's forgiveness for the sinning believer. But Nathan continues, **However, because by this deed you have given occasion to**

³ www.preceptaustin.org/titus_25

the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die. *God will forgive your sin but your sin made the Gentiles, the pagans, the unbelievers, blaspheme God* (2 Sam 12). What do you think the world does when they see Christians live unholy lives? They blaspheme God & His Word by mocking & not believing it. In Romans there's a powerful statement with regard to Israel when it says, **For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you** (2:24). That's the opposite of what Israel was supposed to do. They were a nation called by God to be a witness so God would be glorified. But because of their sin, the name of God was defiled. That's why Jesus tells us, **Let your light so shine that men may see your good works & glorify your Father who is in heaven** (Mt 5:16; cf 2 Cor 3:2-3). You're the gospel they see, you're what makes the Word of God believable or unbelievable. So, when Paul says to Titus,

Here are the standards for older men & women, & for younger women & younger men, & everybody in the work place. Why? Because if you don't live holy lives the Word of God will be mocked, dishonored, & thought little of. People won't be drawn to God.

See how much is at stake in the way we live? & it isn't just for our own blessing. We've got to get beyond a me-centered Christianity. Instead of asking, *What can Jesus do for me?* we ask, *What can my Christianity do for those around me?* That's the issue.

B. IN ORDER THAT THE OPPONENT WILL BE PUT TO SHAME Notice in vs 8 a 2nd purpose clause that gives us the heart of what Paul's saying. We're to live in such a way that **the opponent will be put to shame**, literally to blush because he's embarrassed, **having nothing bad to say about us**. The world's watching us & we want to live in a way that opponents of Christ will be embarrassed because there's nothing to criticize. Opponents of Christianity love it when Christians scandalize the faith. The people in your world do as well. They would love to see you fail so they can justify their unbelief. They don't want to see God transform your life because that's a rebuke to them. But you want to make them embarrassed because they can't find anything to criticize. The proper strategy for evangelism isn't methods, strategy, or technique. The way we reach the world is through holy living that makes the gospel & our faith believable. Peter says,

Beloved, I urge you as aliens & 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 in the day of visitation (1 Pt 2:11-12).

You know what that means? Let them look at your life & let your behavior be so holy that their criticism leads them to Christ. The 3rd purpose is found in vs 10.

C. THAT THEY MAY ADORN THE DOCTRINE OF GOD OUR SAVIOR IN EVERY RESPECT This moves from a negative tone to a positive one. **We want to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.** What's our primary message to this world about God? Are we trying to tell them that God is all-powerful? All-knowing? Ever present? Unchanging? Loving? Just? Are we trying to get them to believe God is the Creator & Sustainer of the universe? That He's sovereign or eternal? That's all true, but what we're really trying to get them to understand is that God is the only **Savior**. We're trying to get them to understand that God wants to save them. How can we adorn the teaching about God as Savior if we don't live like we've been saved? I mean, if I tell you about my barber & you look at me & say, *You look awful*, you aren't going to go to my barber. If I tell you I've found a wonderful place to eat & I've only gotten food poisoning there a couple of times, you're not going to eat there. It doesn't do any good to recommend something that doesn't show up for good in my life. If we're going to **adorn the doctrine of God as Savior**, then we're going to have to demonstrate that we've been saved in the way we live. Saved from what? Sin. We make salvation attractive when we demonstrate deliverance from sin. The word **adorn** is from a Greek word from which we get *cosmetic*. It means to make something beautiful. When we show the order & the beauty of the power of a saving God in our lives we make salvation beautiful & we make God attractive to the world. Do you see what's at stake here? Wrong conduct on the part of Christians leads non-Christians to slander God, whereas holy conduct leads people to glorify God. The issue in holy living isn't self-centered. It's not simply, *I want to be blessed & happy* or *I don't want to be disciplined*. The issue in holy living is evangelism. What makes the church powerful in the world isn't its strategy or programs. It's in its virtue & holiness. What we believe is linked to how we live & how we live is directly linked to evangelism. & Paul gives us standards to live by. They're not negotiable. They're absolute. They're commands, not suggestions. If we're going to have an impact on the world, it's going to be the impact of our holy living.

2. Older Men Paul begins his instructions on holy living with the **older men** of the church. He begins

by discussing older believers, but if you don't think you're older, you can't tune out. The whole point is that this model is for you & you must follow the example set by godly older men. Besides that, younger believers also have a responsibility to model these things as well. Paul tells Timothy, **Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith & purity, show yourself an example of those who believe** (1 Tim 4:12). All Christians are to be examples & are to model godliness in what we say & how we live. We're to take pains with & be absorbed with the things Paul discusses here **so that our progress will be evident to all** (1 Tim 4:15). Christians of course, aren't perfect, but there should be observable progress in our life. It should be evident to all around us that the Holy Spirit is sanctifying us. Others should be able to see evidence of grace & growth in us. Likewise, we should seek to encourage others where we see such evidence & praise God for what He's doing in others. Paul's saying, *Titus, start your instruction with the older people because they're vital to the health of the church*. There are a lot of churches that are filled with young people & have few older people. I believe a church needs people who've been where the younger people are going. We need the aged & the wise who have been there to instruct the young to show them the path of righteousness & the proper priorities & values. We need people who can stand with Paul & say, **I have fought the good fight ... I have kept the faith** (2 Tim 4:7). It's the older people in a church that provide strength, stability, & wisdom. A triumphant older Christian who's fought the battle & been victorious is a great treasure to the church. Older people bring spiritual experience, strength, endurance, & wisdom to us all. But there's no value in being old if you're not godly. There's no value in being old if you're not a model & example. Paul gives some very specific characteristics that are to be seen in older Christians. These aren't optional or negotiable, they're required. If the church is to have an impact on the world, if the church is to fulfill its evangelistic mission, then the **older men** must live in such a way that they demonstrate God's saving power, the power of His Word, & silence Christianity's critics. **2**

Older men is an interesting word, it means simply **older men**. Paul uses it in Philemon 9 when he refers to himself as **aged** & he was in his 60s. In Lk 1:18 Zachariah was told he'd have a son. Zachariah responds, *How can I know this for sure? This seems impossible. Why? For I am an old man (same word) & my wife is advanced in years.* There are some ancient sources such as Philo & Hypocrites that use the term to refer to middle-aged people.⁴ Irenaeus said one was young until the age of 40,⁵ but since Scripture doesn't give us a number, I think it's better to just stick with **older** & **younger**, remembering that Paul may have spiritual maturity in view, rather than an age range. Few of us like to admit we're **older**, but most of us are **older** than others (physically &/or spiritually) & all of us have those who are older or more mature in the Lord. In other words, there's no indication about what specific age a man must attain before he's considered **older**. All Christian men are called to be spiritually responsible & to demonstrate godly character. But it usually takes time to get there & so when the older men in a church are holy, godly men, they'll become the mentors & models for godliness for others. Every older man should set as his goal to come to the latter years of his life & be able to say, **I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith** (2 Tim 4:7). Every older man should be able to say, *I want you to be a follower of me as I am of Christ.* That's challenging, isn't it? **Older men** are to live holy, exemplary lives before God, the church, & the world. He's to abandon the recklessness, impulsiveness, immaturity, thoughtlessness, & instability that are common when young. Paul gives 6 characteristics that older Christian men must have. This isn't comprehensive; he's just hitting a few key qualities.

A. TEMPERATE When you think of a temperate climate, what comes to mind? Someplace without extremes, someplace bearable. The word means *not drunken*, but came to mean moderate, sensible, level-headed, not indulgent, extravagant, or unbearable. It indicates *complete clarity of mind & its resulting good judgment*.⁶ The **temperate** man is to be able to discern what's important & valuable. He uses his time, resources, & energy more carefully & selectively than when he was younger & less mature. His priorities are in the right order. He's found that what he thought would

⁴ *The Works of Philo*

⁵ I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p 239

⁶ PJ Bud, *NIDNTT*, 1:514

give him satisfaction when he was younger, never did. He's come to a right value system & has his priorities right. He knows what experiences were valuable & they've made him the man he is. Godly **older men** know what relationships have real value & that's crucial for them to teach to the younger generation. Where there are moderate, non-indulgent, non-extravagant, sober-minded men with years of experience, you have wisdom that needs to be passed down. Older men are to be **temperate**.

B. DIGNIFIED They're to be **dignified**, serious in purpose, worthy of respect, honorable. It doesn't mean they're boring, gloomy, grumpy people. It means they're not frivolous or flippant but serious in life. It refers to someone who lives in light of eternity, knowing that very soon they'll stand before God.⁷ They've lived long enough to see that life is a serious thing. A 28 year old *Psychology Today* article says this: *When boys most need practice being a man, their fathers are off somewhere playing at being a boy.*⁸ Unfortunately, that's too often too true. But older godly men are beyond that. They're over the feeling of immortality & invincibility that is common in younger people. They've lost loved ones. They've borne the burdens of their own life & those of many others with whom they've shared life. They've learned the value of time & opportunity. They better accept & understand their own mortality, the imperfections of this world, & the inability of material things to give lasting satisfaction. Older Christian men have reached a level of maturity where they see life the way it really is. Be temperate & dignified.

C. SENSIBLE The 3rd thing Paul tells us about **older men** is they should be characterized by what's **sensible**. This is a requirement for elders & for all believers (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8; 2:12). Be **sensible** & not foolish old men. Rodney Dangerfield was once asked why kids identified with him. His response? *Because I never grew up.*⁹ It's a tragedy when we don't grow up as we should. But when we do mature & grow we'll have the discretion, discernment, & good judgment that comes with age & godliness. Older Christian men have gone through experiences of life & have developed a devotion to what's right & have learned to control their instincts & passions. **Sensible** means

⁷ William Barclay, *Letters to Timothy, Titus, & Philemon*, p 247

⁸ Jan/Feb 92, pp 78-83

⁹ www.rogerebert.com/interviews/rodney-dangerfield-on-the-set-of-easy-money

they've got the loose ends of their life tied down & under control. They have discernment & discretion. They **think so as to have sound judgment** (Rom 12:3). They think soundly. Paul goes on with 3 more qualities they're to be **sound** in.

D. SOUND IN FAITH Mature, godly men are to be **sound** or healthy in their faith, in their confidence & trust in God. This kind of faith is rooted in a daily walk with God & an immersion of their life in the Scriptures. This man not only knows what he believes & why he believes it, but he intimately knows in Whom he believes. They have a spiritual faith that's solid. Their faith in God is unwavering. They've seen & been through enough to know that God can be trusted at all times. They don't doubt & question Him. They don't lose their trust in God's good intention or their confidence in His plan. This is made clear in the old hymn, *What'er My God Ordains is Right*.¹⁰ I don't know the circumstances that caused the writer to compose it, but it's truths are wonderful. A couple of weeks ago I sent these words to Jeff & Tana, hopefully to encourage them.

*What God ordains is always good:
His will is just & holy.
As He directs my life for me,
I follow meek & lowly.
My God indeed in ev'ry need
knows well how He will shield me;
to Him, then, I will yield me.*

*What God ordains is always good:
He never will deceive me;
He leads me in His righteous way,
and never will He leave me.
I take content what He has sent;
His hand that sends me sadness
will turn my tears to gladness.*

*What God ordains is always good:
His loving thought attends me;
no poison can be in the cup
that my Physician sends me.
My God is true; each morning new
I trust His grace unending,
My life to Him commending.*

*What God ordains is always good:
He is my Friend & Father;
He suffers naught to do me harm
though many storms may gather.*

¹⁰ Samuel Rodigast (1649-1708)

*Now I may know both joy & woe;
some day I shall see clearly
that He has loved me dearly.*

*What God ordains is always good:
though I the cup am drinking
which savors now of bitterness,
I take it without shrinking.
For after grief God gives relief,
my heart with comfort filling
and all my sorrow stilling.*

*What God ordains is always good:
this truth remains unshaken.
Though sorrow, need, or death be mine,
I shall not be forsaken.
I fear no harm, for with His arm
He shall embrace & shield me;
so to my God I yield me.*

Mature, godly men understand this & don't accuse God of disappointing them. They don't doubt the truth of Scripture. Their faith is sound because a life of believing has taught them to trust God. God has proven Himself faithful over the years. In all the hospitals, at all the funerals, in all the losses & disappointments of life, God has been faithful. Through all of the sins, temptations, trials, confessions, & repentances, it's been as God said it would be. God can be believed. & that kind of mature faith holds up the church. It gives us a faith to follow.

E. SOUND IN LOVE Older men are also to have a healthy spiritual love. They're to have this love toward God & toward others. They're men who love & aren't bitter. They love sacrificially & serve others. They've learned to love when love isn't returned or is rejected & isn't even deserved. They love patiently & kindly. Their love isn't jealous & doesn't brag. It isn't arrogant & doesn't act unbecomingly & seek its own. It isn't provoked. It doesn't take into account a wrong suffered or rejoice in somebody else's sin. Theirs is a love that bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, & endures all things. Their love never fails (1 Cor 13). This older man that the church desperately needs is healthy in his love. He doesn't love out of emotion, he loves out of principle. He loves with his will not his feelings. He loves because it's right.

F. SOUND IN PERSEVERANCE Finally, the godly older man is to be sound in **perseverance**. They have the ability to endure hardship, accept disappointment, & be satisfied in spite of personal desires &

plans that aren't fulfilled. They've learned to graciously live with physical weaknesses, loneliness, being misunderstood, & unappreciated. They don't lose heart when things don't turn out the way they'd hoped & expected, but have the perfect confidence **that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose** (Rom 8:28). The godly older man is tempered like steel. His body is weaker, yes, but his spirit is stronger & he can endure to the very end. In contrast to society all around, Christian **older men** with these attributes will stand out like a lighthouse on a dark & stormy night, a beacon offering life & hope to all who see them. The mature, godly man doesn't lose heart, throw in the towel, or drop out of the race. Rather, he runs the race with endurance, fixing his eyes on Jesus, the author & finisher of faith (Heb 12:1-2). Often times **older men** think they're not good for anything. They've given their best years & now have to sit it out on the sidelines. If you're an older man & think your best years are behind you, let me remind you that Moses was 80 when God called him to lead Israel. Moses gave many excuses why he couldn't do what God called him to, but age was never one of them. What about John Wesley? He traveled 250,000 miles by horseback or on foot to preach 40,000 sermons. He wrote 400 books & knew 10 languages. At 83 he was annoyed that he couldn't write for more than 15 hours a day without hurting his eyes. Get this, at 86 he was ashamed that he couldn't preach more than twice a day. & he admitted there was an increasing tendency to lie in bed until 5:30 in the morning. What a terrible decline in character that is!¹¹ Godly **older men** have much to offer that we all desperately need. We need you to teach us, to model for us the godly life. Don't underestimate your capability. You are crucial to the life of our church. **PRAY**

COMMUNION

Jesus is our example of a temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, love, & perseverance Man. & it's because of Him that we can be like Him in that. Jesus persevered to the cross to die for us so that we could receive His righteousness & be accepted, adopted by God Himself. Not only that, He sent the Holy Spirit to indwell us & give us the power to live a life that brings glory to God.

¹¹ MacArthur, *Titus*, p 73