

Healthy Teaching, Healthy Church

Titus 2:1-10

so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

Introduction: High atop the Andes mountains, the sun strikes the ice and a single drop of water forms. It begins a windy but relentless course downward, gradually joining other drops of water to become a steady stream. The stream gains steam, speed, and strength. Thousands of feet below and hundreds of miles later, what were once single drops have converged to become the mightiest on earth: the Amazon (the river, not the company). Flowing into the Atlantic Ocean at a rate of more than seven million cubic feet per second, the Amazon is more powerful than the next ten largest rivers in the world combined.¹

This is an apt and appropriate picture of the church. A single drop of water, no matter how determined or where its placed, can only do so much alone, but combined with many other drops they form a force that is unstoppable. As we continue our study in the book of Titus on making the truth beautiful, we follow the logic and structure that Paul gave Titus: first he was to set up qualified leaders, who would in turn be able to teach and rebuke false teachers who needed to be silenced. But the church is not just made up of formal leadership. it is a **family on a mission**. It is a an unstoppable force led by an unquenchable power. Titus 2 lays out not only what we are **to be** as individuals in the church, it gives us the **way we are to go about ministering in the church**. There are several considerations and principles that we glean and want to wrap our minds around before looking at its parts.

Four Principle Considerations:

Trickle Down Effect of Ministry

Everyone in God's church is called to a life of ministry. Some are called to a vocational reality as a full-time pastor or missionary, while others are called to the office of elder. But most of the church is made up of the *diakonos*, those that serve and participate in a life of ministry while working, raising a family, paying bills, and functioning as participants in whatever locale they've been placed. There is an 80/20 principle that every church faces: 80% of the work and giving is done by 20% of its people. I would add that it is NOT simply the work or finances that are lacking, it is a MINDSET that must be raised. Far too many do not feel like they are part of the core, are simply attendees, and the work will be done by someone else. This is like water destined for the Atlantic staying frozen in the Andes Mountain peak. The church is at its most effective when the highest percentage of its people realize that they are invaluable members in service and ministry, with everyone playing their role, everyone entering into sacrificial living for the sake of others to the glory of God.

Marrow of Ministry

This type of ministry flows out of a focused, mobilized force that has been redeemed by the work of Jesus, His death and resurrection, faith in His work alone, grace filled repentance, and a new hope to worship God in all things, seeking His glory rather than our own. We now yield to Christ's Lordship in all areas, seeking to know Him and to make Him known through our life, our suffering, even our death. The cry of the church is that life is no longer ABOUT us, but is ABOUT serving God and others through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Only a redeemed force can call others to redemption.

Fighting a Consumer Mentality

¹ David Platt, "Radical Together", p. 1.

We are all born with a consumer mentality, and we live in the greenhouse of consumerism in Southern California. Just about every day, I drive by Popeye's chicken on Erringer. I have never once had a meal there. In about 15 years of living in Simi, I have never frequented this place that serves good food (ironically I consumed some spicy Popeye's in the airport in Atlanta) and is conveniently located on my way home from work. And do you know what? I do not feel guilty in the slightest. I'm sure the people that run it are nice, I'm sure its a valuable business in Simi, but none of that compels me to spend my time or money there. This is my right and freedom as a consumer.

However, we far too often carry this mentality into God's church. We see the church as existing FOR us, rather than worshipping in light of what Christ has done for us. We think, "What's in it for me?", or "I only want to do what I'm comfortable doing, or spend time with people who benefit me, or are like me", or "I'll do the things that fit into our schedule or lifestyle", and the church becomes a tertiary value in the margins of the rest of life. True ministry functions not in the margins, but in the heart of life. Our identity and life in the church is not a secondary reality but rather a primary one. This IS our family, so we are willing to serve those who make us uncomfortable, love those who have NOTHING to offer in return, and sacrifice for those that we would never spend time with outside of the family. A consumer mentality kills ministry, and kills our own soul in ministry.

How we live matters to our Mission

It should go without saying, then, that how we live and interact with each other, in our homes, at work, and in our culture matters. We not only call people out of darkness into light in salvation, but we offer a more satisfying, joyful, and real life in Christ. We are a people who have tasted and see that the Lord is good (Psalm 34:8), and offer something better, more hopeful in Christ. This means that salvation is not about "belief in Jesus" but nothing else after it, nor does it mean that we point to our goodness and point out everyone else's sin. We live as wretched sinners saved by grace who seek to live to the glory of God and to magnify Christ in all areas through the Holy Spirit who indwells in us, being quick to forgive, to repent and turn from sin, and living in light of our future inheritance rather than what we can gain now. This is the point that Paul makes to Titus as he leads the church on Crete.

One Overarching Command (2:1)

*But as for you, teach **what accords** with **sound doctrine**.*

Titus was just told by Paul that the elders he appointed needed to muzzle those who were upsetting whole families and to rebuke them sharply, like an expert surgeon cutting out an abscess. This was part of an elder handling the word of God well, able to discern false teaching and courageous enough to confront it in a gracious, loving, hopeful way. Now Paul turns to Titus himself, and a command was given to *continually speak, teach, and declare* teaching that was sound or **healthy**. It meant laying out to the church a smorgasbord diet of not only Biblical teaching **but** a practical example to follow. One can possess and teach solid Biblical information, but if it is not lived out, it does not lead to health. Good doctrine, by definition, must lead to right living. Titus was to verbalize and practice all that he taught in order for the church to be healthy. This is not different than any good parenting, apprentice, or internship model. People learn best when they absorb by what is taught and caught, heard and seen, mentally attained and practically followed.

Five Groups Addressed (2:2-10)

Older Men

Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.

Paul begins with the older men, which would have been those *elders* who had lived long, raised families, and were now at a grandparent stage. These had lived long enough to reach a level of practical wisdom, where theories had become realities and idealism had become realism. These men would have set the pace, would have been models to look to, and would provide an attainable goal. Notice that what Paul focused on was NOT their jobs, careers, or accomplishments, but what they **were to BE**. It did not matter the size of house, the size of portfolio, or letters behind a name as much as the character and quality of who he was. There were four characteristics that older men should have attained. **NOTICE** that these are eerily similar to the list of elder qualifications in Titus 1:5-8 and 1 Tim. 3:2-6. In other words, every maturing Christian man should be on the path of this type of character:

- **Sobriety** - He is clear headed and temperate. He is not ruled by any of the trappings of youth, be it the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, or boastful pride of life (1 John 2:15 - Chasing after girls, gold, and glory). He no longer is controlled by the pursuit of things of this world that cannot satisfy, and keeps his head when all around are losing theirs (and blaming it on you - thanks Rudyard Kipling)
- **Dignity** - He has a seriousness about him, and is worthy of respect. He has been through the rigors of life but has not come out of them grizzled. He is the man that the more you get to know about him, the more he is worthy of respect.
- **Prudence** - He is self-controlled, and his prudence does not mean he is a prude, but knows how to live out his freedoms in Christ well. Youth in life and the faith have a hard time redeeming their freedom, using it for their own selfish desires instead of for others. A self-controlled man can enjoy the pleasures of this world as a conduit to worship rather than an end in itself.
- **Healthy Gospel Life** - When Paul summarized the way of a loving life, he noted that **faith, hope, and love** remain and abide. These are the core realities of a gospel driven, mature, grace filled life. An older man should have a long track record of faith in Christ, a love for others, and steadfastness of hope. His life looks at Christ, looks to help others, and looks forward to an eternal union with Christ, rather than the fears and pressures of the present. He has perspective, joyfully knowing that he is close to his ultimate hope, being with Christ.

Younger Men

Likewise, urge the **younger men to be self-controlled**.⁷ Show yourself in all respects to be a **model** of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity,⁸ and sound speech **that cannot be condemned,**

There is a trickle down seen in these groups of people. In verse 6, the young men are addressed after the older/younger women. Older men would set the example and Titus would work to train and teach the younger men how to continue to grow and mature. Notice a couple of principles here concerning training young men in the church:

- **There is only one characteristic to work on, one overarching principle that encapsulates them all: self-control** - This means that young men struggle with the discipline and sobriety that is born out of self-control. There are positive and negative aspects of self-control. Its keeping away from lustful living and being driven by desires, and engaging in what is most important. Young men can chase pleasure in the form of the seemingly innocuous - like hours and hours of video games - to the outright sinful, engaging their lust on social media or pornography. Each of

these has the potential to control him. Young men also need help understanding what it takes to be a mature man, what to say yes to, learning to serve when he does not feel like it, and seeing what it takes to work hard and have something to offer others.

- **Self-Control is born out of walking with the Holy Spirit** - Galatians 5:23 says that a fruit produced by the Spirit is self-control, which means that learning to yield to the Spirit through the Word will lead to more sobriety in life.
- **Titus was to teach and model this life** - Who was supposed to lead the charge of living this way? The man given responsibility to lead the church. Titus was to engage the young men in such a way that they would not only hear what he taught, but would engage and interact with him. Though he himself was a younger man, he would show his maturity by the way he spoke, how he spent his time, what he engaged in, and that he was never out of control, giving his opponents nothing to hold onto. Titus learned from Paul, and he was to teach the older men, who would model for the younger men, who would in turn teach other younger men.

This offers a unique challenge and call to both older and younger men here this morning. To the **older men**, a few questions. Has the course of your life demonstrated this kind of character, maturity, and faith in the gospel? Have you made yourself known to the younger men, giving them a visual of someone to follow? Have you viewed your work now in the church as **different rather than done**? Far too often our older mature men can check out and disengage from the younger men who are thirsty for mentors, for men to show them how to live.

Younger men, are you striving in the Spirit to exercise self-control? Have you humbled yourselves to listen to the older to consider the course of their life, and to emulate their faith? Have we merely multiplied our ignorance by spending time only with those like us rather than those who are more mature, more wise, than us. Men's ministry at this church will be dynamic when men continually and willingly engage with each other, learning from each other, listening, asking, and observing the course of life together.

Older (More Stately) Women

Older women likewise are to be **reverent in behavior**, not **slanderers** or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good,

Paul gives a much clearer and more direct call to the older and younger women (and by older I simply mean more stately, mature, and distinguished - we don't call any of our women old here!). Again, it begins with what more stately women are **to BE**:

- **Reverent in behavior** - They are to operate in a way befitting one who is declared righteous, having a proper **fear of the Lord**, meaning they recognize God's authority in all areas of life and live in light of His Lordship. They are models of support when it comes to their husbands, their church, and their family.
- **Controlled in behavior** - They are not gossips and slanderers, either in person or in what they post. They use their words to uplift rather than tearing down. They are not given to talking ABOUT other people but speak TO them. They are also temperate in how they handle alcohol, not allowing an outside substance to control them but rather are controlled by the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). Again, these are eerily similar to the older men, as these women have lived out faithful lives over time and worthy of respect and honor.

They are then to **teach what is good SO THAT they can train the younger women**. This is a huge concept. Not only do moms teach their kids while in the home, they play that training out with other women in the church. **NOTICE** that this kind of TRAINING involved:

Verbal teaching - Telling what was true, showing what was Biblical

Practical Training - Showing other women **how** to do what they are called to do

Time and Personal Interaction - We often get too caught up in what the next class or training program is being offered. The most **effective** training is life on life, time intensive AND extensive, where one can learn not just one lesson, but layers and layers. In our busy culture, this is difficult but also a must. It necessitates carving out time to be with people, especially older with younger. Here it is the older women who are to train the younger women, NOT TITUS!

Younger Women

and so train the **young women** to love their husbands and children,⁵ to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and **submissive** to their own husbands,

There are 3 areas that older women are to train the younger:

- **In the Home** - Younger women are to learn to love their husband and children (this does NOT invalidate single women, but a starting place of activity). 1) Notice that loving each of these does NOT come naturally, and must be learned. Husbands and children can be selfish and sinful and are thus hard to love. 2) The order is important: love husbands first and then children. When this gets reversed, the ability to love either is compromised. 3) Love is a choice, a volitional decision that is made for those who know they are loved by God. We are called to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. A woman's husband and children are the closest neighbors to play out love.
- **In Personal Holiness** - Young women are called to be morally chaste, to be pure in their activity, words, and actions. This means that sometimes an older woman needs to confront the actions of a younger woman. In counseling, this means that a younger woman needs to be told it IS HER issue, not just her husband or children that is causing the frustration.
- **In Activities and Attitudes** - Working at home DOES NOT MEAN a woman cannot work outside of her home (see Proverbs 31 for a mature woman who managed home life AND had micro businesses that she juggled). It means that the home is a priority, that a job or activity or hobby does not take the place of managing the home and the family. In between managing the home and submitting to a husband is a key ingredient: **kindness**. This means that maturity calls us to work, serve, and support **willingly**, being good-natured and considerate of others, rather than begrudging and duty filled.

These are big and difficult things for any woman, let alone a young woman. We need people to speak truth, to let us know it's ok to **say no to things**, to allow our kids to cease activity, to not feel guilty for not doing everything everyone else seems to be doing, to rest and trust the Lord in our marriage, family, and work. Our older women can help our younger to breathe, to relax, to have perspective in the midst of the blitz. This can only happen over time, interpersonally with intention.

Slaves/Workers under authority

Slaves are to be **submissive** to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative,¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good faith,

Paul jumped to a final category that encapsulated both men and women, young and old when it came to the slave class in the church (which would have been more of the "middle class" of the church). This was most likely a majority or large percentage of the church, which necessitated a separate category. For us, this shows how healthy teaching plays out in the home, church, and work, since slaves were those under authority, just as our working class is today. They were given 2 positive and 2 negative commands:

Be pleasing - Workers emulating the gospel seek to please God in all things, and thus seek to uplift their company, bosses, and customers.

Do not talk back - This is where submission truly kicks in, when there are differences of opinion or preference with a boss. We want to justify and defend ourselves, but the call of a worker is to submit to the authority over us, and as long as we are not called to violate God's law or our conscience, we are to seek to support.

Do not steal - This is more than just stealing paper clips, its stealing time. It's what I did when I was 19 and working at Grace Baptist, where we'd find a classroom on the night shift as a maintenance worker to hole up in rather than finding things to clean. We steal when we do not work to our fullest, even when our bosses are not looking or will ever know.

Be faithful - We are dependable, hard working, have integrity, can be trusted, and treat others with dignity and respect. Gospel driven workers should be the hardest workers, most dependable, and biggest servants.

Three Purposes Given (2:5, 8, 10)

Why does all this matter. I want to show you three key phrases, each translated "*so that*". These *hina* clauses are key to understand purpose and intention.

For the sake of God's Word and name

that the word of God may not be reviled. (5)

Why is it so important for our men to be taught and be mature and dignified, our older women to be reverent and younger women loving their husbands and children? Because the world is watching, and they are either going to understand the grace and truth of the gospel or see it as a big fat sham, reviling the word of God. It seems like our world's love language is COMPLAINING, whether it is about a spouse, kids, job, boss, government, you name it, we complain about it. When we join in, and yet claim to know the truth about Christ, we offer nothing different, nothing distinct, nothing better. This does not mean we should have plastic smiles and showy marriages. Rather, we live and walk humbly, trusting the Lord and seeking to honor Him each day in all areas of life, knowing that these relationships are ways to show the world the consistency of the gospel.

For the reality of opponent

so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us. (8)

Why were young men to be self-controlled and Titus to match his teaching with good works and integrity? Because the world is watching, and they are ready to pounce on inconsistency which they will chalk up to hypocrisy (and they may be right). Notice that Titus was to act a certain way so that nothing evil would be said about **US!!!!!!!** How you act in this world affects the whole reputation of our church, which affects our mission. What you act like on the ball field as a coach, what you post on social media, and how you act at work reflects on this whole family. We think that we leave here to a private, personal life with consequences only felt ourselves, not realizing that the ripple effects are felt by all of

us. This is why John Bakker sat down with me when I was 18 (never to return to live) and said I was representing Christ and the Bakker family, no matter where I went. This is a proper weight to feel as we exist in this world.

For the attractiveness of the gospel

so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. (10)

The last is my favorite because its positive. Why are we to work a certain way in whatever job or industry we find ourselves in? Because the truth and reality of the gospel is to be worn in such a way that becomes attractive to others! The word "adorn" means layering clothes in such a way as to become more attractive. How you live and work matters! Truth becomes beautiful when we live out the deep realities of the gospel everyday, willing to be wronged, willing to serve, willing to sacrifice.

How we live matters, and we need each other. We have much to offer and learn from each other, knowing that we have more in common in Christ than anyone outside of Him. Are you engaged? Are you here to give yourself or take? And to answer the question of how in the world do we actually do all this, let us stand and remind ourselves of what we are called out of and to:

" But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Titus 3:4-7