

Pure Church: Pure Relationships

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- [0 : 00] Titus 2, 1-10 Titus 3, 1-10 Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive.
- Thanks. Thanks, Kim. So, Titus chapter 2 And pure church Let's pray And ask for God's help as we look at this together.
- Our Father God, we thank you so much for your word. We thank you for this letter written many, many years ago.
- But yet it is still your words written to us today to speak to us not as individuals, but to speak to us as a church corporately.
- And so we gather together under your word asking that your spirit would give us understanding and application to our own hearts and lives.
- [2 : 42] That what we hear and what we listen to and what we talk about afterwards would change us and affect us in how we live.
- So we pray that you would help us now in our time together in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, the big theme of this short letter, Titus, is all about being and becoming a pure church.
- And a key verse for this we see in chapter 2, verse 14. That Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own eager to do what is good.
- So God's desire is that we, his people, would become pure. That we would become like Christ.
- And that in turn, as we become like Christ, that we would reflect his purity and his beauty to the world and the community around us. And today we're looking at what it is to have pure relationships.
- [4 : 12] And the purpose is exactly the same. So look at chapter 2, the end of verse 10. As we think about pure relationships, their purpose, the end of verse 10, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive.
- Our relationships with one another have the potential to reflect the beauty of God our Saviour.
- But our relationships also have the potential to make Christ look ugly. So we're going to look at three things this morning.
- First, getting our broken relationships in order. Second, living in pure relationship with each other. And third, reflecting a Christ relationship to the world.
- So we've got to get our relationships in order. We're going to see how living that pure relationship, what it looks like, and then how that in turn reflects the beauty of Christ to the world.
- [5 : 28] So first of all, getting our broken relationships in order. You can flick that up on the screen there. Getting our broken relationships in order.

In pure doctrine, false teaching has had a direct effect on the relationships within the church. So chapter 1, verse 11.

They must be silenced. These are the false teachers. They must be silenced because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach.

These households are small house churches. And because of the false teaching, they've begun to break up. Their impure teaching has led to all kinds of impure living within the family of the church.

So look at chapter 2. The older men, verse 2, have become grumpy old men. They've lost people's respect.

[6 : 33] They've become uncontrolled in what they say and what they do. The older women, verse 3, have become gossip old bags.

Slandering others as they open up another bottle of wine. The younger women, verse 5, have become celebrity wannabes.

They're too busy looking after themselves and wanting to run off and play and have neglected their responsibility to their children and husbands. The younger men, verse 6, have become obsessed with a playboy status.

They have their heads stuck in men's bags rather than in God's word. The employed, verse 9, have become lazy and arrogant.

Out to make as much as possible by doing as little as possible. So you see, this impure teaching is ruining these small churches.

[7 : 44] It's leading to all kinds of impure living. And the relationships within the church family are beginning to break up and they're not the way they should be.

So how can we begin to heal and restore these broken relationships? Well, look at chapter 2, verse 1. You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

Verse 2, teach the older men. Verse 3, likewise teach the older women. Verse 6, similarly encourage the young men.

And verse 9, teach the slaves or those who are employed. You see, if impure teaching breaks relationships, the solution is pure teaching.

The sound doctrine, the good news of God's grace, taught to the church family and worked out into people's lives are going to restore those relationships.

[9 : 05] It's true, what we take into our lives is what we become. So if we eat all the wrong things, we become very unhealthy. But if we eat our fruit and veg, well, we become healthy.

Similarly, he's saying here, if we are feeding on pure doctrine, if we are drinking it down with the pure grace of God, then he will renew us and he will restore us.

God's grace purifies us. He washes us so that we can live in pure relationship with each other.

So the means to get these broken relationships in order, the antidote, the solution, is a healthy diet of God's word, his grace being worked out in our lives.

So second, getting our broken relationships in order, how do these relationships look like when they're being lived out amongst each other?

[10 : 19] Flick that up on the screen. As we look at the various relationships within the church family here in chapter two, it's probably hard for us to try and work out, and I've been joking with people through the week, kind of what category are you going to put yourself in?

Are you an older man or are you a younger man? Or are you an old woman or a young woman? Well, I don't want to get myself into trouble and I'm not going to say, right, all the old women sit here and all the old men sit there or anything else like that.

I don't want to cause offence. I'm just going to offend everybody and just say that, well, sometimes we're younger and sometimes we're older.

There's always people who are older and there are always people that are younger. So I think it applies to us all in different contexts, depending who we're with.

So don't be just kind of thinking, well, I'm not an older woman or I'm not an older man, so this doesn't apply to me. I think in some ways it applies to us all.

[11 : 32] And what we're going to do this morning is just look at the older, younger relationships, primarily this morning, just for the sake of time and just to focus in on that.

So we're going to take a look at these relationships and see what they ought to look like in practice. First, older men, listen up.

Verse 2. Teach older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, sound in love, and sound in endurance.

You know, there's a sad fact that as men get older, they become more grumpy. Have you experienced that if you live with an older man?

I don't mean complaints about not being able to use the latest technology and how the mobile phone works and all that sort of stuff. I mean they can sometimes become impatient with people.

[12 : 41] Younger people just seem to become an irritable nuisance. They are not, look at verse 2, temperate or self-controlled in what they say and do.

In fact, as they age, they begin to sadly lose all respect. Older men, we ought to be the kind of people that younger people want to be around and look up to.

Okay, they might want to hang out with you. They might call you your best buddy and go to the cinema with you. But older men, we ought to have this kind of character about us that makes us approachable and that makes us attractive in the sense that people actually want to talk with us.

wise and mature people, verse 2, who are sound in faith, have a good grasp of what God's word is about.

Sound in love, who are solid in their love and in their endurance. They keep going in the faith. So young people shouldn't think of themselves as being an irritable nuisance, rather they should see you as one they can come to for encouragement when they're struggling in the faith.

[14 : 14] That they would come to you for comfort when life brings all the disappointments that it does. That you are a rock, someone who brings stability in times of uncertainty.

for older men. We have a responsibility not just to our own family, but we have a real role to the whole church family.

Younger men should be like your own son. The younger women should be like your own daughter. You should have that shoulder they can cry on.

You should have that gentle word of correction when you see them going a path that is not going to be helpful. You gently get alongside and instruct.

And you are the support that gets around them and encourages them on in their faith. So older men, let the sound doctrine, let the grace of God instruct your mind.

[15 : 31] Let it grab a hold of your heart and begin to shape your heart to be the older man that God has called you to be within the family of the church.

Second, the older women. Verse 3. Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to too much wine, but to teach what is good.

You know, it's also a sad fact that as women get older, they can become gossipy old bags. They become busybodies, poking their noses into people's business and then relaying it to their friends over a few bottles of Chardonnay.

They're out to enjoy their retirement. They've raised their kids. Now it's time to kick back and enjoy life. Don't have kids anymore.

Don't need to worry about them. Let me do the things I want to do. You know, there's something very unattractive about that kind of woman. Not very pleasant to be around.

[16 : 57] Instead, look at verse 3. They are to be reverent in the way that they live. Instead of smelling of stale wine, they should smell with the beauty of Christ as they walk into the room and as they engage and talk with people, there should be an aroma of Christ.

And instead of thinking retirement, which the Bible actually knows nothing about, they should be investing in the younger mothers who are struggling.

Look at verse 4. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children.

That's what older women are to do, to train the younger women to love their husbands and children. And you train the younger women by the things that you say as you get alongside them and the way that you live your life.

The very fact that you're older means that you have a wealth of experience. It's not that you're perfect. It's not that you've done nothing wrong.

[18 : 17] It means you've made lots of mistakes but you've learned from your mistakes. You've been there, done that, you've got the t-shirt. Sweat, blood and tears are your experience and you can pass that on to those who are younger.

So I'm going to push the boat out this morning. I've already called the older men grumpy old men and women old bags so let's push the boat right out.

Those who go to polo, I think it's primarily younger women, why don't you invite some of the older women, I'll let you decide who they are, to come and share God's word with you, to let them sit to encourage you and to support you as young mothers.

That's the role of older women. And those of you who go to the ladies' study, on the Thursday, think about how you can practically help those with young children.

What can we do to support the many young families and those with younger kids in the life of the church? Now we might kind of struggle with that and think, hmm, not so sure about it, but this is what the family relationship looks like.

[19 : 52] responsibility to one another. So, let the sound doctrine, let the grace of God, older women, instruct your minds, grab your heart, and shape your heart to be the older women that God has called you to be.

third, the younger women, verse 5. they are to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, to be subject to their husbands so that no one will malign the word of God.

you know, it's also true that many younger women live life regretting that they ever got married, regretting that they've ever had children.

They would much prefer to be out gallivanting with their friends, not having to be at home, changing nappies. They have neglected their responsibility to their children and husbands, and are still running about living as if they are single.

Instead, verse 5, they are to be self-controlled, pure, busy at home.

[21 : 38] Or better translated, I think, that busy at home is working at home, loving their home. Because there's a big lie out there today that says, caring for children and looking after the family home is actually a downgrade.

If that's what you do, it's demeaning and it ruins your chances of a real career. Well, I want to address and I want to encourage every mother of children represented here, especially those who are younger mothers.

far from being a low position, this is a high position, far from a second rate career and as if you're kind of taking a step down, this is a step up.

This is a great career, this is a God-given blessed career. Of course, it doesn't mean that mothers can't pursue an outside profession.

Of course they can. But it will never be to the neglect of their own children and husbands. Young women, if you are married and if you have children, your primary responsibility, as God's word is saying here in verse five, is to love them well, is to care for them well.

[23 : 18] That's your first responsibility. And to love your husband, verse five, is to be subject to your husband.

Of course, that doesn't mean that the wife is this obedient one around the house who obeys the husband's every beck and call as if she were kind of subhuman.

And below everybody else, that is not the right interpretation. That's wrong. We know from the rest of scripture that a husband's responsibility is to serve his wife with sacrificial love and care.

Sacrificially. So to be subject to your husband is to live under his loving and protective care and not to be out gallivanting or running around looking for that love and care from someone else or something else.

This is God's beautiful design for home and for family relationships. So, younger women, let the sound doctrine, let the grace of God instruct your mind.

[24 : 35] Let it grab a hold of your heart and shape your heart to be the younger woman that God has called you to be. The fourth in this list of relationships that we're looking at is younger men.

Verse six, similarly encourage the young men to be self-controlled. It's true that young men today have one aim in life.

That's to meet lots of young women and to have sex with them. That's the average young man's outlook on life. Go to college, interview them, that's what they're about.

And sadly, it's becoming the practice within church life. Now, from what I know of the young single men within the family of this church, and I do try to keep tabs on you all, have my spies out there, I don't think that is necessarily the case.

However, what I want to say to the younger men is that you must be very, very careful how you treat younger women.

[25 : 56] You are to learn, verse five, to be self-controlled. Self-control covers every area of our life. It covers our words and our actions, how we speak, how we behave, but in particular, and I want to focus on this, self-control over your sexual life.

Instead of watching internet porn, delight yourself in God's word. here is how you must treat younger women.

Go back a couple of pages to 1 Timothy chapter five. There are a lot of parallels between Titus and Timothy.

1 Timothy chapter five, verse one. Here is how younger women should behave.

Sorry, younger men should behave. Paul is writing to Timothy, who is a young man, and so he says to the young man, and I think here is the principle for us, young men do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father.

[27 : 18] Treat younger men as brothers. Treat older women as your mother. And here is the point. Treat younger women as sisters with absolute purity.

I hope you got that. And I want to say to you young lads, enjoy your relationships with the young women, by that I mean your friendships. hang out with each other in the safety of a crowd.

Enjoy those young years together, have fun together, but young men, treat them as your sister with absolute purity.

Be a big brother to them, not a creepy leecher. love love love so young men, let the sound doctrine, let the grace of God instruct your mind, let it grab a hold of your heart and shape your heart to be the godly younger man that God has called you to be.

so older men and older women, younger men and younger women, that's all of us who are here.

[28 : 57] Our relationships within the church family are to be pure and we need to pray that God by his Holy Spirit will purify us so that we are eager to do what is good.

Third, reflecting a Christ relationship to the world. You see, the purpose of getting our broken relationships in order, the reason for living in pure relationship with each other, is beautifully described at the end of verse 10.

Yes, it's talking there primarily about employees and employers, but I think it applies to all relationships. Look at the end of verse 10. Here's the purpose, here's the reason, so that in every way, they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive.

So, class, listen up, question time. What will make someone want to listen to the grace of Jesus Christ?

What will make someone want to listen to the grace of Jesus Christ, to the teaching?

Answer, they see lives within the church family that have been transformed by the grace of Jesus Christ.

[30 : 23] Our relationships are to make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive to the world and to the community. Church family relationships between the older and the younger, between men and women in all their various forms are to be lived under the grace of God and when they are lived under the grace of God they are incredibly beautiful to look at.

The church of God is the most wonderful thing to see. And when we see our pure relationships in action they are deeply attractive.

There is nothing more beautiful to see older men and older women and younger men and younger women living their lives under God's grace. That is beautiful. You don't see that anywhere else in the world.

That's what the church is about. So as people watch us, as people admire, they are drawn into the teaching about God our Saviour.

And pure relationships are worth putting the effort into. They are worth working hard for. Look at the end of verse 5, the very last sentence, so that no one will malign the word of God.

[31 : 46] That we actually begin to look like the Christ that we talk about and that we say we follow. Our pure relationships are what we work towards.

look at the end of verse 8, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. In other words, that we behave in such a way that it proves the Christ we believe in is true.

If our pure relationships have the ability to attract people to Christ, then the opposite is also true.

Impure, broken, damaged relationships make Jesus Christ look ugly to the world and to the community around us.

So what kind of Christ do people see when they look at our relationships one to another? what kind of Christ do we display to the world?

[32 : 59] A small diamond stone, just a tiny little stone, has value, has worth, and it has a certain beauty.

But when the jeweller takes that diamond stone and then he places it into a little gold band to make a ring, and then he lifts the diamond up on the ring so that the light catches it and it begins to sparkle and to shine, then and only then do we see the diamond's true value, its ultimate worth and its excellent beauty.

And in the same way God has placed the diamond of God's grace, the grace of Christ, into our lives. love and love and it's embedded into our lives when we've trusted him and when we begin to live out our relationships with each other as he intends, then and only then can the world see the true value, the ultimate worth and the excellent beauty of God, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

It's only as we begin to live out our faith that the gospel begins to shine brightly and people are attracted, they are drawn in to the teaching of God, our Saviour.

That is something wonderful that the church has. So let me say this in closing to us all. Let the sound doctrine, let the grace of God our Saviour instruct our minds, let it grab a hold of our hearts, let it pummel it and shape it and transform our hearts so that we become pure in our relationships one to another.

[35 : 08] and reflect the beauty of Christ to the community and to the world around us. Let's pray.

Amen. older men, older women, younger men and younger women, may the grace of God work deeply in our lives so that we become the people you call us to be.

That you would continually purify us and shape us. And in your mercy and in your goodness that we would let the gospel shine brightly.

that as we walk into this world and into this community that people will be attracted to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We thank you so much for this church family. Thank you so much for every single person and every family represented here. thank you for bringing us together from all different kinds of backgrounds.

[36 : 59] Thank you for your work within our lives. Thank you that we are here by your design, by your pleasure. And please will you go on working in us.

We pray this for your honour and for your glory alone. In Jesus' name we all pray. Amen.