

Titus 2:6–8

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[0 : 0 0] Titus 2, verses 6 through 8. Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourselves in all respects to be model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Again, a special welcome to you who might be visiting with us. I'm so glad you're here today.

We do have an awesome God, and he has wonderful plans for this church family, and I am thrilled to see him at work in our midst. I want to title my sermon from this particular text, these three verses, The Good That Can Come From Still Being Young.

All right? The good that can come from still being young. If the reports that you receive about younger men in our country only come from the culture and not the church, then you might get a disheartened sense of our future.

You certainly would get a distorted view on the completeness of things. According to the cultural data, in 2023, the video game industry in the United States generated some \$57 billion in revenue.

[1 : 3 8] That's a true statement. Worldwide, it topped \$148 billion. Why do I bring this up? Because young men between the ages of 18 and 29, we are told, spend between 6 and 10 hours a week playing video games.

The average gamer is a 35-year-old male. Yeah, that surprised me too. If we look to the future, gen alpha with boys between the ages of 5 and 10, they're actually spending more time than the previous generations, such as the cultural data.

In addition, many scholarly journals, books, articles in the fields of psychology, psychiatry, sociology, anthropology, are indicating to us, in truth, that mental health issues among younger men are increasingly common.

Just ask any college president the difference between the incoming students today and those 25 years ago and the plethora of mental health issues that our young men have to deal with are multiplied in this more complex world in which we live.

The causes range. Well, they're wide. Some sense, the isolating effects of COVID have diminished the social interaction and the maturation of our young men and women in that case.

[3 : 1 1] Not only that, but from what I've read, there's a generation of helicopter parents that have been out there hovering overhead of their young ones, hoping to be overly protective in ways that their children are always in safe environments, never having to overcome obstacles.

So, in some sense, the parents themselves, their own anxieties, are a contributing factor in Jonathan Haidt's New York Times bestseller, what he's now termed the anxious generation.

Now, these things all may be true if these are the things you're simply receiving from the culture and its indicators, but it is not the complete story we have to tell on younger men.

Just look in this room, filled with young men. We praise God for this. You should know that here, while the culture increasingly is writing off an entire generation of young men, we will not do that here.

We will, ourselves, give ourselves to you, your growth and development, and I'm pleased to report when you look into the doors of the church, this is where you need to look. This is where you need to take the indicator.

[4 : 26] We've been for three weeks now in this series, standing on the threshold of the church's door, with the cultural winds behind us, but peering in to what Paul would have Timothy, Titus, describe within.

Older men, worthy of following. Older women and younger women. Older men, expressing joyfully this intergenerational life that's leading toward maturity.

And here it is, younger men who have a lot to teach us while they're still young. I want to encourage every young man in our midst, every young mother, every young father, every old man, every young and older woman, that we as a church will build a family where young men are not only valued, but thrive, flourish, grow, and lead as we look to the future.

I want to tell you that at Christ Church Chicago, help will be given to you here. Hope will come from here. The cultural indicators will begin to recede as the church is filled with young men who help us move forward.

Where do we begin? How do we go about it? Who can help us along the way? First of all, I want to talk to the young men. I want to talk to you directly. Look what Paul says to Titus here in verse 6.

[5 : 57] Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Just take a look at that word urge. I want to speak to you directly on this.

This word is urgent. This word is something you need. This urgent need for you to combat the cultural tides that are destroying a generation of hope.

It's an important sermon today. Worthy in its entirety to think strictly about what it is to be a young man. Urge these young men.

And we will do so here over the years. This matter of what we have to say about men and younger men will be a priority. It is a matter of first importance in this church.

How do we go about it? Well, we simply instill, according to the text, a single characteristic or quality in your life. Look what he encourages them to be urged toward.

[6 : 59] Urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Now, when the pundits look at that word, they make fun of younger men.

They might say, wow, look at the younger men. They can only handle one thing. I mean, the older men had four characteristics they had to develop.

The older women had four characteristics. The younger women, well, they had eight characteristics. When it comes to the young male in the United States of America, we all know his mind isn't fully developed until he's 25, so he can only handle one thing.

As though that's the summation of it all. And what I would say if I were still a young man and I'm not, it may be true that he only has one thing for me to look at by way of focus.

But let's be clear. Self-control is the common characteristic that Timothy, that Titus was to put on all of them. Take a look. That word hasn't just come up now to younger men.

[8 : 10] That word about self-control was in chapter 1, verse 8. That word about self-control was given to men, older men, in chapter 2, verse 2. Or to women, chapter 2, verses 5 and 6.

This idea of self-control is characteristic of the family of God. How do we go about that and what does it mean?

I think it really just means, you know, be in your right mind all the time. Be sensible. Have command of yourself rather than just be led around by the winds and tides about you.

I want to talk about this characteristic of self-control to our young men. It's not uniquely a Christian idea. Let's be clear on this. You don't have to be a Christian to have self-control.

In recent days, there's been an incredible uptick of interest in this character quality, especially, I've been watching it among men in business and elsewhere, where stoicism is really back on the rise.

[9 : 25] Writers of ancient days like Epictetus who said, no man is free who is not master of himself is beginning to have resonance in the culture at large.

Marcus Aurelius, many of you will read or have read the meditations where all of a sudden it's in paperback all over the country and people are beginning to consider, I need to be able to control myself.

In fact, the characteristic is universally needed. I recall, and I think I've mentioned it before, times when my own children have lacked self-control.

You might have a six-year-old, you're in the supermarket and of all places, that's where your son decides to have a meltdown. And he's in the middle of the aisle spinning around on his back, not doing break dancing, but just out of control.

And I would look down and I'd say, son, you have got to learn how to control yourself because if you don't control yourself, who will? That's a true statement. It's not a Christian statement, it's just true, generally.

[10 : 34] If you don't control yourself, who will? And he just continued to spin. But it's needed. We need to tell ourselves we must be men and women who exhibit self-control.

But we're going to need more help than the Stoics have to offer us. There's a fundamental difference between Stoicism and Christian faith.

It is true that no man is free who is not master of himself. But it is likewise true that no man is capable of self-mastery.

See, this is a difference. We can call you to something externally. You can even begin to generate disciplines in life that distinguish you from peers.

There are things you do now that demonstrate self-control, but that's not what Christianity is. Christianity is not simply pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps.

[11 : 48] You are not in a church where we're just going to talk to you about male testosterone and you need to be a man's man and get it done and you can have all the self-discipline and you can do it.

Because at the end of the day, what do you do when you can't control yourself? See, there's something about the human being, the human condition that extends beyond being just male.

We have an internal clock that is set to go off when the disposition of sin comes time.

We are not actually as free as we like to claim we are. we're actually enslaved and tiny little things are bigger than our ability to resist or good things as important as we know them to be are not strong enough to pull our heart.

See, this is why in other places in the scripture, self-control, the same word is described as a fruit of the spirits. So here's where you begin with self-control.

[13 : 11] I gotta do it. I gotta be called to it. But I can't free myself fully from my true need which is a sin problem and an internal problem not an external behavioral problem.

We are not here to simply do behavior modification at Christ Church Chicago. We want something more than that. We want behavioral transformation on the outside because there's been an internal salvation at work on the inside.

You need God. You need Christ. This is what Jesus does that when you have faith in him that he in his sacrifice is able to forgive you of all your inabilities for self-mastery and if he actually forgives you and you plead to make him right with you it says that he will give you his spirit and that spirit begins to refashion you, reform you, remake you to where all of a sudden you're doing things beyond your spirit or control.

Self-control comes from God and it doesn't come all at once. We're not asking our young men to be perfect here or our primary school age boys.

We are asking you all to be persevering in getting hold of yourself because if you don't who will? But that means that this church ought to be filled increasingly with young men who know what it's like to call out to God for help and realize I can't always do it even on my own.

[14 : 54] I have other people with me to walk alongside me. How do we go about doing it? We urge you to be self-controlled and by self-control I do mean more than the Stoics meant as helpful as they may be.

Let's talk a little further. Let's say you're a parent here of a primary school-age boy. I'm going to urge you to give yourself fully to helping your son be self-controlled and you need to train them to be self-controlled even before they're Christians who can do it on the strength of the Spirit.

But this also means that this church needs to be praying for every young boy in our midst. Now you've got to be praying for everyone but this text is about younger men. You've got to be praying for the young boys in our midst.

Do you know that this church family is proportionately just like screaming boys? boys? I mean the people that prayed for you this morning have four boys.

There are all kinds of individuals in here who are raising boys. And this is our future to raise them well.

[16 : 25] You've got to be praying. Our vision at Christ Church Chicago ought to inform every aspect of our ministry for young men.

This is the importance of kids city ministry. This is why just recently Ethan stood right here and he says it's time now for these children to walk to the back. And I think he said something to the effect of walk back quietly.

What's he saying? Hey, be in control of yourself. You know, you don't just wander up and down and all around and make your way out and scream and yell. No, you've got something else going on here.

See, this demonstration of self-control governs our kids city ministry. It is good for a child to learn to sit and control themselves.

No matter how many crayons you got to bring with you to make sure that it happens. It's good for young boys to respect the voice of an older man or an older woman, a father, a mother.

[17 : 24] Authority figures are real in life and we don't do our children any good to tell them that it doesn't matter. I'm trying to raise you to be free or independent of anyone who's over you.

No, we want well-mannered orderly children. We want more than that, but we want at least that. It's essential for the young men in our youth ministry to demonstrate self-control and the 35-year-old as well.

how is it that we can control all many facets about our life, but then to get on the computer and click something, you like, well, I guess I don't have control of that.

You got to get help? We need help? Get help. You've got to demonstrate self-control. We need young men in our ministry that are junior high and high school who are different than the cultural trends around them.

We need men with self-respect, hope, who are helped, who are listening to God's word, who are demonstrating even in their youth what it's like to be an adult.

[18 : 28] It's essential in dinner and Bible. Every Wednesday there will be dozens and dozens and dozens of university students, young men and women in our midst, learning, being mentored at table, exercising self- control under the word of God, learning his word, imbibing it, talking with one another, growing together in a love for God and his word.

We need young men who are going to fight the isolating effects that COVID brought and they're going to get together anyway. We're going to combat depression. We're going to reverse prolonged adolescence.

We're going to learn young men to respect every woman in your midst as a sister in Christ and treat them as a sister. We're going to be different in this way.

Think of our women's ministry, our men's ministry. This is why the older women circle back on the younger women. Think of the older men here circling back on the younger men.

This is critical for home life. We need to tell our young moms and dads that you're not alone in this. In fact, I want to tell you something different.

[19 : 42] If somebody says to you, you're raising children, you're in that season of life where you're raising children, I hope our people say, I'm not raising children. I'm raising adults. I'm raising men.

And so when your child gets out of control and says, why can't I? Why can't I? Why can't I? Everyone else says, why can't I? You say, well, that's because I'm not Mother Hubbard living in a cupboard with so many children who don't know what to do.

I know what I'm doing. Why can't you? Because I'm not raising children. I'm not raising boys. I'm raising men. And believe me, your son will look at you with an inability to comprehend what you just said.

But you know that you're going to persevere because you're raising men. Not only men who can take care of themselves, we need men who can take care of the family of God. How are you going to take care of the family of God?

You can't take care of yourself. How are you going to take care of yourself and then not be able to take care of your own family? These are the data points. of church life.

[20 : 50] We need an army of men. They're going to grow up right here. We need dads who sit down intentionally with their boys.

I mean intentionally. We need men who read with them. And I don't mean just read a children's story. Every once in a while, pick up the Bible, open up the book of Proverbs and say, I'm going to read this to you tonight for five minutes.

Why are you reading me from Proverbs, Dad? Because Proverbs was written by a king as a father on instructions to his son.

And the very first chapter is son, you better be careful who you hang around with. See, we need that parental work that can be done through the word.

Remember this about proverbial literature. who was the book of Proverbs for? Well, we read it as though it's just universally for all of us.

[21 : 51] But it might be good to remember that Hebrew wisdom as a pedagogical method, wisdom literature, first came in the ancient, ancient world of kings.

And raising those who would oversee the king's household. In other words, Proverbs is to a young man who the writer knows is one day going to lead God's people.

people. This is why you begin to do this. Never forget that your sons are intended for more.

This is kind of like when I was thinking about a title for this thing, I just kept thinking, you know, what am I trying to argue? I'm trying to argue that at Christ Church Chicago, we have young men who know they were made for more.

You were made for more. Don't let anybody tell you otherwise. We need to make better use of our time.

[23 : 03] You need to counter Neil Postman's observation years ago that we're amusing ourselves to death. I'm not saying your kid or you can never be in front of a video game, but get a hold of that thing because there's other things you need to be exposing yourself to as well.

At home, we need to talk to our young men about their temper. Oh, my, we got men here who talk about the dangers of letting anger get the best of them. Anger gets the best of you.

It gets you into a heap of trouble. We need men in our congregation, dozens of them, who have grown up on the street, done time in the cell, found Christ, and aren't ashamed to say, I've been there, there.

I've done that, and I'm not going to let you go there. I'm pulling you back from the gates of hell. We need all of that mentoring in play because when your anger gets the best of you, you're going to do something wrong.

You do something wrong, they're going to find you. They're going to find you, they're going to put you away. They're going to put you away. Maybe this word then comes back to you on that day. But we've already got a need in our midst to say from older men, hey, I've been there.

[24 : 23] You've got to control this temper. Can't do it. Too much at stake. I don't want you to lose any bit of your life on this. You know, we need men who have control of their emotions.

Now, you know I'm an emotional person. You've probably sensed that the last 15 minutes, but at any rate, emotion is just going to rise.

But you have to have control of your emotion. John Calvin said, the perfection of the faithful consists not in this that they put away or put off all the emotions, but that they be moved therewith only for just causes and that they may moderate the same.

You ought to get emotional, he says, about things that really matter. But you always have to moderate your emotions so that you're in control of them.

They're not in control of you. Now, we begin to do this. All of a sudden, really good things begin to happen, but I'm telling you this morning, this is a collaborative exercise. exercise. We need you and you need us.

[25 : 42] And our culture outside those doors needs to look in the church and go, I don't know what's happening in there, but I'm looking at older men who are living lives worthy of following.

I'm looking at older and younger women who are expressing the intergenerational joy that's learning how to hold themselves well in this world. I'm looking at a church with younger men who know they're made for more and are actually walking it out.

Wow, can you imagine if that is going to happen? Who can help us in this? Who's going to help us? Well, look at the way the argument goes there. He moves on from the younger men.

Interestingly, he brings Titus in. Verse 7, show yourself, Titus, in all respects to be a model of good works and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned.

One gets the sense that Titus didn't quite fit in the category of older men. He speaks of Titus in relationship to his conversation on younger men.

[26 : 56] I don't really know if he was married or single. There's no indications of him being married. But this man who kind of is an example to the younger men.

Isn't that what it says there? He's, in one sense, to be a model in all respects of good works. This word model is fascinating. It's tupas.

It's a type. It's the word that Paul will use of himself in regard to his Lord. so that Paul's behavior models, exemplifies, is a type to Jesus.

So to Titus is to exemplify and model this to the men in all respects. I love the word show. Show yourself to be a model. This manifestation of typology is in play.

Titus is the perfect man for this. I've thought about this this week. He pops up in the book of Galatians. That was not an easy place for Paul's ministry.

[28 : 06] But Titus is on assignment. Titus got the tough assignments. Titus had to deal with Paul and what was going on, the heated conversations over circumcision in Galatians.

Titus plays an important role, you might not know this, in the Corinthian correspondence. Especially 2nd Corinthians, four times. And if you know anything about 2nd Corinthians, there was a rupture between the pastor and the people.

And who's in the middle of all that? Who's got Paul, who's Paul got with him on that? You got Titus. Titus is an interesting person, four times in 2nd Corinthians, but Paul calls him my partner, my fellow worker.

Titus is the guy that had to go off to Dalmatia to get something done. Titus is the guy that had to run over to Nicopolis to get something done. And now Titus is the one who's got the assignment in Crete.

What's the deal in Crete? That's one tough island. You got to get some stuff in order. Titus had the tough jobs. He's the perfect man to be an example to the younger men.

[29 : 11] man. And we need those men in our midst. We need those men who don't describe themselves as simply older or younger, but a model to the younger and exemplifying sound speech and teaching in contrast to those going astray who are older.

how do you in this place as that kind of man show in all respects, you do it in two ways, the life you lead and the teaching you provide.

The life you lead, good works, good works. I was thinking of my son Noah when we started this church.

He was young. He was nine, just a boy. He's 35 now and an elder in his church in Indianapolis, but back then he was nine. He didn't have any friends.

We didn't have a youth group. We didn't have any momentum. We were just a couple families trying to get something off the ground. We prayed for friends.

[30 : 25] God kind of said, well, you're not going to get them. We cried for friends. God never gave them. But there were young men in this congregation, university students, undergrads all, who looked at a nine-year-old and they exemplified.

They were a type by their good works in ways that took them alongside. My son had advantages that many don't ever have, not having peers who love Jesus.

He had undergraduate men who loved Jesus and knew his name. And a group of them could say, we're going to the Sox game because you know the Sox won the title in 2005.

Let's make that clear. They said, why don't you go to the Sox game? Can you imagine that? A group of university students taking a nine-year-old in our youth ministry off to the Sox game, demonstrating through the model and the behavior of their life what he ought to be chasing and what he ought not to be chasing.

That's an example. That's a model. You know, we've got four pastoral ministry apprentices in our midst this year. Four of them. Two of them are married.

- [31 : 46] One's getting ready to have his first child. One recently had a child. Two of them are single. These four men need to be like Titus. They need to be a model in all respects.
- We don't need fewer men like this. We need more men like this. Because how are you going to hold the growth of the gospel in our midst without men who can exemplify this very thing?
- Not only through their good behavior, but it says the teaching they provide. Some men in our midst need to be trained to handle God's word because God will call some men, not all, to actually lead God's family long after we've gone off the scene.
- And that teaching has to be sound. We need to instill in you the word of God in ways that it is without corruption. That's the sense here of integrity.
- It's uncorruptible teaching. It's not going bad on the vine. In a sense it's dignified.
- [32 : 55] it's sound. By that I mean it's healthy. It gives life. This is what needs to happen in our midst.
- And as this happens those on the outside will look at this church they'll only gaze at it from the threshold at first. But as they get to know you, as they get to hear about you, as they begin to watch you, they will say something's happening there that fights all the cultural trends I keep reading about.
- Yeah, there's a lot of good that can come from being young. If I could do it all over again, I'd be young again. not because I have regrets, because I like to see all the good that can get done.
- Here's the argument. What I've been trying to prove from this text, a church worth joining has younger men who by example show that they were made for more.
- You want to be a church worth joining? We need younger men who show by their example, I was made for more.
- [34 : 16] I was made for responsibility. I was made to lead. I was made to give hope. I was made to give my life to Christ.
- I was made to be transformed by the power of the Spirit. Older men in our midst, you were made to give wisdom the crooked road you may have walked should help younger men here make sure they don't walk down that road.
- Grab them, pull them back, speak into one another's lives. I was thinking of an image to shut it down on and I'm going to do it now. What are we out for?
- I'm always thinking visually. when it comes to our younger men, I can't think of a better image than Da Vinci's Vitruvian man.
- You might not know this. Google it this afternoon. It's probably the most famous drawing ever done with a pencil. He was trying to capture that intersection between mature life, manhood, but in the culture and the world as it should have been.
- [35 : 38] We are out to develop young men in terms of the Vitruvian man. Da Vinci combined art, anatomy, math, the squaring of a circle, the humanities, theology that has had an impact for church design and where you fit in the world.
- Have you ever seen the drawing? It's absolutely perfectly balanced. It's a man at one level like this, at another level you can see him like this, and he perfectly fits within a circle.
- and the circle perfectly fits within a square. And what he's communicating is, here's a man among men in a world that makes sense.
- Young men, I urge you, be self controlled. Others among you, I call upon you.
- Share your life from the street to the cell to Christ that brings others back from the gates of hell.

[37 : 07] Parents, I urge you, love your children. You are raising men. Persevere. not demanding of yourself perfection, lest we all be discouraged along the way, but in perseverance and through your prayers that God would do things you can't do.

Church members, love our boys in Christ. Encourage them to what they can be. Nurture them into what they should be.

Call them to what they must be. And as we do, we become the antidote to culture's conventional wisdom.

Our Heavenly Father, this is going to take a new heart. It's going to take all of us. I pray, Lord, that we would be out to make men in the likeness of Christ and that here, if nowhere else, here, young men would be valued, encouraged, built up, strengthened to get hold of their life and in doing so enable them to get hold of ours as well.

In Jesus' name.