

Adorning the gospel of God our Saviour

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Date: 29 June 2025

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[0 : 00] In Titus chapter 2. But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.

! Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behaviour, not slanderers or slaves to much wine.

They are to teach what is good and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a 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. Bond servants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything. They are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

[1 : 18] For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness, and to purify for himself a people for his own possession, who are zealous for good works.

My name's Dave, I'm the pastor here, if you're visiting. You're joining us on the last of a five-week series on men and women, so I'm sorry I won't be able to give full context, but just to give you a little bit of bearing of what we're doing today.

All right, well, why don't we come to God's Word? Let's pray before we do that. Lord, with everything going on in the world, and whatever's going on in our personal lives, we thank you for the truth that we just sang about, that you are reigning, and that your agenda for the world will prevail in the end.

You guarantee it. You've guaranteed it by your blood and your resurrection. So we praise you for that. Lord, as we come to your Word, help us trust that your agenda for our lives is good and is working towards that same goal of all of us knowing and being like you.

So give us humility and understanding as we come to your Word. In Jesus' name, amen. Well, there is a pattern of life. I'm going to get rid of this.

[3 : 08] Hold on. I've just got this alien staring at me with these little lights. There is a pattern of life as men and women that is fitting, that is the fruit of healthy doctrine or truth.

In our passage, Titus 2, verse 1, teach what accords with sound doctrine. There is a way of life that goes with Jesus is Lord, believing that.

And these character qualities, Titus is told to teach. In his own day, that's right, little Albie, in his own day, if Titus didn't teach it, they would just conform to their society in Crete.

In our own day, if we don't listen to what this pattern of life is, our society will teach us. We need to hear this. These descriptions that we're going to look at this morning, they're not premium add-ons that you can add to your Christian walk.

They're not extras. These are things for all of us. They're grace in Jesus, belonging to him. They don't just make these character qualities possible, but we're being urged they're necessary.

[4 : 33] We're to strive for them. Now, just to confuse you all, I'm going to turn to a completely different passage.

I want to start a bit more broadly, a few pages back, in 1 Timothy 2, verses 8 to 10, because it speaks to women and men more generally.

And then we're going to come back to Titus, where it gets a bit more age-specific even. So, 1 Timothy 2, 8 to 10. I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarrelling.

Likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness, with good works.

Our society has some sort of gender stereotype of a real man, probably physical strength, into sports, got a bunch of mates, job titles, money.

[5 : 54] Our society can even go a bit deeper and go, there's such a thing as a good man. He sacrifices for his family. He gives back to the community.

But Scripture is calling us to something deeper, not just good men, godly men. There's a focus in here on hands.

Godly men's hands aren't clenched to fight, whether literally or metaphorically.

So there's something about the nature of men that we're prone to fight, to argue with each other.

Men's hands aren't clasped.

They're lifted up. Now, there's lots of postures of prayer in the Bible, but they're lifted up, holy hands in prayer. Now, there's something very vulnerable about that.

[6 : 52] You're not defending yourself as a man. There's something very humble about that. It's not self in your own ego. You're saying there's someone greater.

There's something that creates peace and unity about that. Men aren't jostling for position and that their will prevails in a certain situation. They're praying for God's will to prevail, his power to manifest.

The older I get, the more... This is my observation. See if you agree with me or not. Reputation means a lot to us men, the older I get.

And look out. If you slightly offend a man that they're somehow weak or they're wrong, it's very easy to slight a man's reputation and we just get into arguments, even in churches, even in elderships.

I think our eldership is healthy at the moment, by the way. That wasn't a subtle jab at our eldership.

The sinful desires for our own reputation are to be replaced with wanting God's name, his reputation to be known.

[8 : 18] Godly men are men of prayer. I love King Jehoshaphat. I don't know if that's how you say his name.

His prayer... Jerusalem was surrounded by an army and he was overwhelmed. He's just like, I don't know what to do.

And he doesn't withdraw from that. He doesn't crumble. He leads his people. He leads his people, but he does it by praying.

And I love his prayer. We do not know what to do. Our eyes are on you. That's godly male leadership.

I'm not self-reliant here. I don't know what I'm doing, but my eyes are on you. Your will be done. I think that's the kind of posture of prayer that we're called to here in Timothy.

[9 : 21] Not self-reliant men who use prayer as a last resort. And I'm talking to myself here. Don't you try everything and then, okay, all right, I suppose I should pray.

Imagine if we became men who go to prayer as a first resort and then decide what steps to take. Now, I'm not saying we don't do it.

We do do this. Let's do it more and more. I'm guessing we're all feeling pretty convicted about our prayer life. But I think that's the beauty of friendships in the church, of being older and younger all together.

because we can just copy you older guys. You older guys who have years of learning how to pray, just copy their prayers.

Copy their phrases. They're usually just copying Scripture in their prayers anyway. There's no problem plagiarizing them. Let's follow the godly examples and learn to be praying like this.

[10 : 32] Make us men of prayer. Please, Lord. And our society has gender stereotypes around beauty for women still.

Still today, all those celebrities and fashion magazines, I don't think they're aimed at us men. They're aimed at you women to be competing with one another.

Society still puts huge pressure on women. You don't have to just be talented and skilled. You've got to be wearing a great outfit while you are talented and pretty.

What are teenage girls learning? You walk down the street and your nostrils are just assaulted by perfume.

Girls, don't you know? What are we teaching the next generation? Don't they know their value in the image of God? The message at school and those ads where you've got the competent woman on her own who's climbed a mountain and looks stunning.

[11:46] She can do anything. She's a self-reliant woman. There's a message in our society, I think, today that you can be anything. You can have that great career.

You can be prime minister while juggling the children and you have to look beautiful while doing it all. I think it's a huge burden that is placed on women today.

Well, I suppose it's all the time, isn't it? Because even back in Paul's day. Now, I don't think this is saying that you can't enjoy wearing clothes that actually coordinate.

You don't have to... Maybe I shouldn't... I keep pulling out of things, don't I? I was going to say...

Everyone was curious last time. I was going to say denim on denim. So I'm really nervous if someone's wearing denim on denim today.

You're very welcome. Who cares what you're wearing? Look, similar to men who are prone to jostling for position and power, I think this is speaking into women not jostling for competition of that ideal picture of the beautiful woman.

[13:09] In the end, if you strive for the external only, it really reveals an internal restlessness, a restless soul that doesn't know its worth.

But Jesus can tell the soul of women, you are desired as you are so much that I gave up my life to have you.

Now, if that doesn't fill the soul of you women, clothes aren't going to do it. Jesus' good works, I think, then replace the idea of what is really stunning.

It fills the imagination of godly women, of what your life should be filled with, not spending so much money on fashion and things, but clothing with good works, compassion for the helpless and sacrificial day in, day out, unappreciated service.

His good works become, that's the stunning woman. So there we have a portrait of godly men and godly women.

[14:32] So turning back to Titus chapter 2, we get a portrait for older men and women and younger men and women. I think these descriptions are explaining the same principle for all of us.

In chapter 2, verse 12, that we are to say no to ungodliness and worldly desires and learn to live self-controlled, upright, godly lives in this present age.

I think there's a principle implied in this whole section. We don't grow in godliness on our own. Just learning doctrine, as important as that is, isn't enough to grow in godliness.

We actually grow in community. There is an enormous power of being in community to shape us and mould us. We need the influence of older saints to set an example and teach the younger.

I think that's why older women are to teach the younger women. There's a calling there. It's probably not that younger men can only handle one thing. Like, young guys, come on, just try and be self-controlled.

[16:00] That's all you can hear. I think it's more older men in the church, if they are demonstrating faith and love and endurance, that's going to benefit the younger men to learn from their example.

It may explain, this principle of the older teaching the younger might explain why the older women are singled out for don't be addicted to wine and slander because same for elder qualifications earlier in chapter one, you're a role model.

You're an example. You have a great position of influence. We need that older, younger relationship in the church.

That's why we're so committed to it as a church, that intergenerational churching. It's how we thrive. I think it challenges our, a bit of our evangelical church professionalism.

By all means, come and talk to Chez and I when you want to, want help in life, but actually, it's a call on all of us to be involved in each other's lives.

[17:16] We need the older with the younger. It's assuming friendship and involvement, serving side by side and you, so getting into some of the instructions then, some of the, I think it's a portrait that he's painting.

This isn't an exhaustive list. We could add to it. We could go elsewhere in scripture and add things to this list. It's not exhaustive. It's just a portrait here. Notice that these qualities go deeper than gender stereotypes, cultural gender stereotypes.

Like for men, Jesus probably wasn't into sports. like, who cares if he was or not? It doesn't matter if he was into sports. King David loved poetry. It goes much deeper than cultural pictures of men and women.

So for the older men, despite the many hardships faced over a lifespan, they're not indulging in pleasure in their retirement.

It's my time. They're not bitter and angry at the world. they've got a controlled mind. Despite declining capabilities in older age, there's still this deep inner sense of worth, dignified.

[18 : 54] They're worthy of respect. respect. These characteristics, they've been formed by years of learning faith, trusting God in every situation and learning love, what it means to put another first, and learning steadfastness because the hope of the gospel gives you endurance.

these kind of qualities come from faith, love, and hope. And then we've got older women now to be reverent in their behaviour.

Reverent is describing a holy person. Some described it as she's to act like a priestess in the temple.

Reverent in that she's aware of God's presence in everything in life. There's something about an older woman's behaviour that is just so conscious of the presence of God and it gets into everything in life.

Now the negative instructions perhaps we're to picture these together. Not indulging in slander while drinking.

[20 : 25] An older woman doesn't start a sentence with this might be gossip but I just want you to pray for this but please don't share it.

Can you let me tell you about an older woman? No. She's using her mouth mouth not for destructive empty things like slander and drink but she's using her mouth to teach what is good.

So if you're an empty nester in the room or you're approaching retirement I think the call here is look around this room God has lots of work for you to do investing in the next generation teach what is good.

For the younger women there's an assumption that it's not straightforward to love your husband now that one probably isn't a shock it's not straightforward to love your children how much of a shock is that it's not naturally speaking you don't have to be a Christian for this you die for your children I know you would but sometimes they push every single button that you've got you have nothing left in the emotional and mental and spiritual tank you've got nothing left you don't know what to do disciplining a children what's the right thing to do!

calling on older women to help younger women in guidance in support in prayer some look to the phrase working at home to prohibit secular work I think our interpretation here depends on what Paul is combating what's the situation there is he emphasising the word working or is he emphasising the word home in ancient world there was few avenues for work it's more likely that we find in other passages it's about not being idle but being busy at home Proverbs 31 woman is busy looking after the home but also running a business at the same time so I don't think there's a strong restriction here I think there's a positive call to be busy even if you do have an employment if you if you've chosen marriage and if

[23 : 23] God has given you children there is a call to prioritise and love and embrace the good things God has called you in the home so I don't think there's a restriction but there is a positive call as we saw in Genesis Eve was helper in that she supplied everything that Adam lacked the power he lacked together they ought to have dominion over the world I remember going to a friend's house as a teenager and it was unbelievably awkward when the dad gave a score out of 10 for the dinner to the wife I think it was seven I can still imagine this now I was shocked to find out he did it every night now that's an extreme

I know it's an extreme the reaction tells me it's an extreme but I think there is a really awful burden placed on women when their godliness is evaluated by cooking and cleaning and things like that you guys work out how to order your home just don't call it theology don't put the weight of God onto cooking and cleaning is what I'm arguing for you might have learned good things from your parents of how to set up things just don't evaluate a woman's efforts as a godliness at the same time dealing with the tantrum of a young kid or the rebellion of a teenager that's a high calling you're

disciplining not discipline well you might be disciplining you're disciplining the next generation of the church it's a high calling now

I'm not sure why husbands loving their wives isn't addressed here it's another indication that this isn't the full picture there's a huge call we've already looked at that I know huge call on husbands laying your lives down but perhaps the instructions to young men overlap!

to young marriage as well the self control for young men men I think this could look like not being swept along with the world's message of career ambition just jumping at any job or any promotion or needing money to validate yourself but self control weighing up maybe the self control in terms of your tongue and your temper self control with sexual desire where your eyes are looking the self control of keeping your commitments even when it hurts maybe the spiritual discipline self control I know one guy he's given himself the rule no bible no breakfast I can't go a day without God's word I think this will help all all people self control

I wonder if by this point you're hearing all these things and you're thinking why why what's the reason what maybe this whole series there could be this lurking question what's the goal what's the goal in all this now obviously we trust God's word that he gives it for our good for our flourishing well we should trust God's word that he's giving to us for our good and our flourishing but God's made us rational creatures that we want to know the why and we don't have to invent the why we're given it here in Titus we find it most clearly stated in verse 10 so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour this whole section is bracketed teach what is fitting with sound doctrine and what is that doctrine of

[28 : 18] God our Saviour we want to adorn the message of God our Saviour permeates this whole letter the goal of all this series is that individually whether single or married together as a family of God is that we adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour adorning is to make something more beautiful or to arrange it so that the beauty comes out we can't make the gospel more beautiful that's not possible we can't make it more beautiful it's like this precious diamond a jewel and our lives are like a necklace that is the setting that holds this jewel how we live can bring the gospel into disrepute or it can make this wonderful backdrop so that the diamond shines and people see it and go what created that life love love

I listen to this podcast where someone asked the top hundred christian evangelists of their best evidence for the existence of god and one of the answers is the power of the gospel to transform a person's life how we live can adorn the gospel and make it look as beautiful as it is I think an example is this there was a man describing why he had such a strong faith as an adult and the thing he looked back on is the model of his dad his dad was a strong he wasn't a pushover he was saying but to see a competent man on his knees every Sunday in worship had a profound impact on him how we live as men and women can either tarnish the jewel or hide the jewel or it can let it shine make it beautiful make it seen as beautiful as it already is that's why

I think that's the reason why for this whole series we want to live in a way that draws attention to the changing power of the gospel but where does the power come from to change I don't think knowing our callings on us as men and women as singles and married as a church family ministry knowing all these things knowing that they're profitable knowing that our goal is to adorn the gospel I don't think it's enough we need power where is the power to not just acknowledge that God's ways are good God's design is good but to love it where is the power in the hardships of being single where does the power come from where does the power come from when marriage is really hard where does power come from when the beauty of these truths actually expose our failure even more I'm not living up to being a prayerful man where's the power to overcome where's the power to overcome deep hurts in our past verses 11 to 14 show us where the power come from for the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled upright and godly lives in this present age waiting for our blessed hope the appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Jesus Christ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who was zealous for good works this passage is saying the grace of the cross not only forgives and that is wonderful news the grace of the cross teaches it trains

I love Colin Buchanan's song live in the gospel it's not this thing that you leave behind it's we we preach it to ourselves every day or as someone else put it Christians are learners in the school of grace this passage is saying in a sense to live well now whether you're single married as a church family for us to live well now your eyes need to just be not on the present but looking back looking

forward so it'll be anyway I don't know how you do that but spiritually we're called to the power comes from with one eye looking back and that this great and glorious God didn't treat us according to our ungodliness he died to make us his own possession he's that true husband who died for his bride that kind of grace can put us back on our feet whenever we fail that kind grace can heal the deepest of wounds but we also have one eye looking forward to the hope that this present life isn't enough even if we were to live up more and more to what we're called to as men and women it wouldn't be enough we're got one eye on our hope

[35 : 04] I think Sam Aubrey touches into this point in his book Seven Myths About Singleness so he's a pastor in the UK he's reflecting on the goodness of friendships in the church family as a single man but then he says I realise that even if I had the best kind of friends this world could offer it wouldn't be enough it never could be and then he speaks of a married friend of his who said his marriage is much better than I ever expected or deserved it to be but it's not enough he was recognising the limits of even the best kind of intimacy whether in friendship or marriage it's not enough then I like how Sam draws the conclusion the key to contentment as a single person is not trying to make singleness into something that will satisfy us it is find contentment in

Christ as a single person and the key to contentment as a married person is not trying to build a marriage that can make us content it's to find contentment in Christ as a married person it's learning grace that we are bought by him and that our present life actually can't fully satisfy we've got hope of glory he's coming that blessed glory blessed is that state of pure joy and it's coming when we see him so that's how we get power to adorn the gospel you've got to be cross-eyed something shocking and looking back and looking forward not looking at the present to be the men and women and the singles and marrieds God calls us to be we've got to be learners in this grace and preach the gospel to our hearts looking back looking forward and then then as men and women we'll adorn the gospel so that that jewel shines will you pray with me let's pray father forgive us for when we don't live up to being the men and the women you call us to be father I pray that those failures will make us go deeper into the riches of your blood shed for us that we will know your love more and more lord I pray that you might give us power to live up to what you're calling us to help us be men who pray and women who are reverent in their behaviour and lord I pray that you make us a church family who even if people really hate what we're teaching about men and women even may they see the way we relate as a church family and just say something good and different is there lord we pray this so that the gospel will be honoured by our lives and seen for the beauty that it is so in Jesus name I ask it amen