

Why Do Good as Groups of God's People?

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Preacher: Andrew Price

[0 : 00] Well, Christmas wasn't that long ago, was it? And I'm guessing you probably heard one of those secular carols last Christmas. And if not last Christmas, I'm sure you've heard it before.

It's the one that goes, he's making a list, he's checking it twice, going to find out who's naughty and nice. And the second verse, I think, is when he sees you when you're sleeping, he knows when you're awake, he knows if you've been bad or good. So be good for goodness sake. Yeah.

So the carol is essentially saying we should be good people for the sake of goodness and to get on Santa's nice list so we don't get a lump of coal for Christmas instead of presents and so on.

But is this why we as Christians are to be good? You see, the world knows Christians are supposed to be good people, which is why when we're not, they're very quick to jump on us and to kind of spray it all over social media. And sometimes they even get annoyed at our goodness because often good behaviour can show up their bad behaviour. But the question is, why are we to be good? Is it to earn a spot on God's good list so that we don't get a lump of coal at judgment day? And how are we to be good? What does it look like for us in life? Well, this week in chapter two, and then next week in chapter three, we'll see some examples of how we are to be good.

[1 : 27] And we'll also see some reasons why we are to be good. But tonight in chapter two, Paul begins by saying how we are to be good. So point one, we are to live lives or good lives that match the gospel. So point one, verse one, have a look there in your Bibles. It says, you, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine.

We'll just look at the verse one there for a moment. I should also say that because the bulk of the text is on this first point, it's going to be the longest one. And then we'll move quicker for points two and three. But this is a direct contrast to the false teachers we saw last week.

So if you just look up to the last verse of chapter one, just see there, the false teachers claim to know God, but by their actions, they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good. But you, chapter two, verse one, Titus, to teach what is right according to sound doctrine, not false doctrine. Because you remember from last week, what we think shapes how we live.

You remember my example with the tea towel and how my wife and I thought different things and so use the tea towel differently. If you weren't here, unlucky. But verse one, chapter two, verse one, Titus, unlike the false teachers who taught false doctrine that led to bad living, he is to teach what is good living appropriate to sound doctrine. In other words, lives that match the gospel.

The word doctrine is the same word as teaching that comes up in verse 10, the teaching of our God and savior. They are not to live like their Cretan culture, remember, which was full of liars, evil brutes and lazy gluttons. That was one of their own saying that about them. Chapter one, verse 12.

[3 : 25] Rather, they are to live good lives that match the gospel. And so it's already worth asking ourselves whether our lives match our culture or God's gospel. When God's word clashes with our world, who wins out? Is it our world that shapes our lives and our thoughts? Or is it God's word that shapes our lives and our thoughts?

Paul now unpacks what this means for different groups in God's family. Starting in verse two, it says, teach the older man to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled and sound in faith. Love and endurance. And now I realize that age is often a matter of perspective. If you ask my kids, I am not old. I am ancient, according to them. But when I talk to the older folks here at church, they say I'm young, which is why I like talking to older folks.

But in other writings of around the same time, this phrase older men usually referred to people who are over 60. Now, if you're over 60, you can decide what it is for you. I'm not going to go there. But either way, these are the elder statesmen of society. Those who by their age and life experience

deserve to be respected, deserve to be examples. Even though in our world today, our culture is fast forgetting this. Our culture often ignores or mistreats older people, doesn't it? But despite this, older men are to be temperate, that is level-headed, not given to fly off the handle, but being forbearing. And not fickle, but faithful, not reckless, but reliable.

[5 : 14] Men who are worthy of respect. Men who are self-controlled, it says. And given the reference to being temperate, I suspect especially to be self-controlled with their temper. After all, there's a reason why there's the expression grumpy old men, isn't there?

You don't have a movie called Grumpy Old Women. And in the Muppets, who are the grumpy Muppets? The old men who sit up in the balcony. But despite this, older men are to be temperate, that is level-headed. They are also to be sound or healthy in their faith, love and endurance. Because of their position in society, they ought to be good examples to others. And so for all men, this is what we're to start growing in. And for those who are already there, this is what we are to be. And so for us here at HTD, can I say, I know there are lots of men in this category who are exactly like this. And not the grumpy old Muppet men, but the temperate, sound in faith men. And for a lot of them I know here, they have health issues to struggle with.

Some of them have even lost their wives of 60 plus years, and yet they continue to be sound in the faith and in love and endurance. And they are great examples to follow.

And if you're one of those here, then thank you for being a great and godly example. Well then, verse 3, we go down to the older women.

[6 : 56] Likewise, verse 3, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. So just as Titus is to teach older men, likewise, he is to teach older women. This time to be reverent, godly, if you like, and not to use their spare time to drink too much, which probably just applies just as much to men, or to slander others. Like, oh, did you see what they were wearing the other day? Or did you see what they let their children do in my day? Or whatever. Rather, they are to teach what is good.

Now, apart from the elders last week in chapter 1, this is the only other group here who are told to teach. People often think that Paul is anti-women's ministry, but he's not. He sees older women who teach as essential for the church. For they are to teach and disciple younger women. In fact, it seems not even Titus is to disciple younger women. Because if you look in verse 4, Paul says, then they, the older women, not Titus, can urge or literally train the younger women. You see, the dangers of men, young men discipling young women are just as great back then as they are today. And so older women are to teach and train younger women, as well as being reverent. And again, I know many older women who are great examples of this, who despite their own health and issues and circumstances in life, are reverent, and are great and godly examples to the others around them. I've mentioned some of them before in sermons. And I've also seen some who do teach and train younger women in a way that I can't from the pulpit because I'm not a woman. I don't always get it right. And in a way that I won't one-to-one.

In fact, I know of a women's Bible study group here that meets at our church where the young mums have actually said to me how much they enjoy having the older lady lead their group because she has so much life experience and wisdom as a Christian and so often encourages them and helps them to put into practice their Christian lives as younger mums. Though I wonder whether we as a church could do better at encouraging our older women, and not just older women, but all women, to disciple and train other women. Well, for these younger women, then verse 4, moving on to them as a group, then they, the older women can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind and to be subject to their husbands so that no one will malign the word of God. And now I realize that these verses are not politically correct today, so let me point out what they don't say. At first, they don't say you have to get married. Paul promoted singleness and was single. Jesus himself was single. It just assumes that most women will get married, and the majority still do today. But there are still many who remain single, many at our church, who are great and godly examples to others. But it's not saying they have to get married.

Secondly, they don't say women must stay at home. In fact, there are examples in the Bible of women who work, like Lydia, the cloth maker in Acts, or Priscilla, who was a tent maker along with her husband, Aquila, or Tryphena and Tryphosa, women who worked hard in the Lord. Rather, when they're at home, it says they're to be busy. You see, again, the assumption is that the majority will get married and have children, and so at some point, will spend some time at home. And when

they are, then they're not to be like the mums of those TV shows, Desperate Housewives, or whatever there are.

They're to be productive and kind, which again, I know many of our mums at our church are. They work really hard, actually. In fact, I've spoken to a number of husbands who, over these holidays, are actually now looking forward to going back to work, because staying at home with the kids is so hard. That's how hard the mums work.

[11 : 34] And thirdly, these verses don't say younger women are less able or less valuable or less equal than men. Nor do these verses say that younger women are to be a doormat for their husband, or should stay if there's domestic abuse. No, they should get out and get help straight away.

These verses are not saying things like that. The word to be subject here is not about worth. It's about role. Our problem is our world works differently to God. Our world says our role determines our worth. So if you're a doctor, you're up here. And if you're one of those lawyers, you're down there. No, I'm just joking. But that's what our world says, doesn't it? It assigns worth to role. But God doesn't do that. He assigns worth to identity as one of his people who are made in his image. If we are made in God's image, we have inherent worth. And if we are one of God's precious children bought by the blood of Christ, then we have even more worth. These verses are not saying that younger women are less than younger men. It's not saying that. And bonus, by the way, that these verses are directed to the younger women. It's not directed to the husbands. And so the husbands cannot demand the wives submit or subject. Rather, it's up to the wives to voluntarily submit or be subject. It's not that something the husbands demand. It's something the wife voluntarily gives. Of course, one might say, well, hang on a second. It's just the culture of the day.

Paul is saying how they operate in the culture they find themselves, kind of like slaves in verse 9. After all, Paul doesn't promote slavery in other parts of the Bible. He simply says, this is how you are to act since slavery exists in that culture. But while we can say that of slavery, we can't of marriage. Because elsewhere in the Bible, a marriage is built on not culture, but Christ and the church. Like in Ephesians 5. Ephesians 5 also helpfully tells us that husbands ought to lay down their lives for their wives, like Christ did for the church. So the example I've used before is me saying to my wife, Michelle, don't wash up, let me do it. And then she submits by going, okay. That's what it's meant to look like. In fact, even this morning at St. John's, before the service, I noticed one guy, a husband, his wife was coming down carrying all this stuff.

And he said, oh, can I take something for you? And she goes, yes. There you go. That's what it's meant to look like. The problem is our world has twisted it and Christians have messed it up.

Now, there's a lot more to say, but we don't have time to say it. The Bible gives a lot more on this topic. But if you do have questions, please feel free to ask me later. For now, whether you are single or married, young women are to be self-controlled, pure and kind. But now for the young men, verse six, similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled in everything, set them an example by doing what is good in your teaching, show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned so that those who oppose you, Titus may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Now, it seems like the younger men only get one verse, verse six, because verse seven and eight are really directed to Titus. Now, is that because young men are so together that we only need one verse of instruction? I'm glad some of you laughed. If you think that you've never met young men, we, I say we, we probably need the most instruction. Well, perhaps it's because the one instruction that is given, self-control, covers quite a bit. And it's the characteristic that's repeated for most of the groups, actually. Well, more likely, it's because Titus himself is to disciple them.

[15 : 48] Hence, verse seven, about being an example, not just to the church in general, but to the young men in particular. Either way, young men are to be self-controlled, whether it's on the road as we drive, or with what we watch and how we use our eyes, or in our speech. Do we speak to build others up according to their needs, or to win an argument? When we tell jokes, do we tell them that where we know the other person will laugh, or just when we will laugh? We live in a culture that often jokes around, but do we, are we like our culture, or are we different, and speak and tell jokes that are only good for the others who hear? And then there's slaves, verse nine. 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 or doctrine about God our Saviour attractive. Now, obviously, we don't have slaves in

Melbourne today, even though a lot of workers may feel like that. What's more, slavery in Paul's day was not quite as bad as the slavery we often think about with William Wilberforce and the African-American slavery, and so on. It was kind of in between, somewhere in between African-American and our work situation today. But given it's kind of somewhere in between, and given that these principles are pretty general, I wonder if we could still apply them to us who work. You know, at work, are we known as someone who can be fully trusted? Who does not steal? You know, that pad of paper here, that pen there, or answer back in a rude way, or behind the back of our boss? It does what is asked of us, provided the reasonable requests, of course. You see, do we live in a way that is different to our culture, in a way that shows we are good? This is how we are to live, to be and do good as different groups in God's family. This is how we are to live lives that match the sound doctrine or the gospel.

But why? Is it simply for goodness sake, to be good? Or is it to get, you know, the present of eternal life and avoid the lump of coal? Or no? Rather, the purpose of being good is firstly to beautify or promote the gospel. We've seen this in our passage, haven't we? So just before verse 6, at the end of verse 5, we're told, so that no one will malign the word of God. Or verse 8, the end of verse 8, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us. Or the end of verse 10, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

You see, people are very quick to judge Christians when we don't do good, aren't they? And sometimes they're right to judge Christians because they have done the wrong thing. And sometimes they're just having a go because they don't really want to think about being a Christian or whatever it is. But either way, we're not to give them the chance, Paul is saying. Don't bring the gospel by your lives into disrepute. Rather, be walking advertisements for the gospel. Our lives are to beautify or adorn the gospel, make it attractive to others so that they might be drawn to it, hear about it, believe and be saved. And it does work. A couple were baptized here from the 1030 service last year, and they said it was seeing how we treated one another that got them interested in Christianity. They came to church because they were looking for something to start with. They were disillusioned with Islam. So they came to church anyway, but they saw how we treated one another and wanted to find out more. So they went to a Christianity Explored course, decided to believe in Jesus, and some weeks later were baptized. You see, even though our good lives might sometimes seem weird to others and even sometimes annoy others when our good behavior kind of highlights their bad behavior, deep down, people know it's right and good and are drawn to it. Because it comes from God who built us to live like this. That's why deep down they know it's good and are attracted to it.

It's what Israel were to do in our first reading. Do you remember? Moses said, when you follow these laws or be good, live God's way, then other nations will say, what a wise and understanding this nation is, and be attracted to Israel and then to God. It's like we sung in that other song, May the mind of Christ. One of the verses, I think it was the last one, says, may his beauty rest on me, live lives like Jesus, as I seek the loss to win. We are to be walking advertisements for the gospel. But this is not always easy, is it? It's hard to be self-controlled when people really do annoy you, or when you're tired and haven't had your coffee, or when it's really hot, thankfully not today. And so to help us, we are to remember God's grace. Point three, verse 11. So just verse 11, for or because, live like this, because the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.

[22 : 02] And now, just in case you've forgotten, the word grace means God's undeserved generosity, his unmerited favor towards us. You see, God graciously gave his only son, Jesus, to die for us, and to pay for our sins, and save us from judgment, even though we did not deserve it.

Rather, what we deserved was punishment, was judgment. I mean, you know the saying, if you do the crime, then you do the time. Yeah, that's justice. That's what we deserve. But God's grace gives us what we don't deserve. It gives his son to take the judgment in our place.

This is how, verse 11, God's grace has appeared. It's appeared in Christ. And this grace in Christ offers salvation to all people, if they believe. And so we are to live good lives that advertise the gospel, so that people might come and hear this offer, believe and be saved. Because this grace has appeared. It's now available for them. I mean, imagine you're on a ship, and it was sinking, and there was a life raft right next to you that could save everyone. So you have to worry about getting pushed out. You'd save everyone. Would you not then advertise it to the rest of the people on the ship? Come over here. There's a raft that can save you. I assume you would, wouldn't you?

Well, we had to live good lives that advertise the gospel. By saying, you know, this is how it is to live with the gospel. Come over here and find the life raft of Jesus and be saved. For God's grace has appeared. It's now available. If only people would come hear this offer, believe and be saved. And if you're here tonight, and you don't yet believe in Jesus, then can I plead with you to consider this offer? That he died to save you from judgment and guarantee you life eternal, if you believe in him. But this grace in Christ that offers salvation to non-Christians is the same grace that has already saved us Christians. And now it teaches us to live good lives. Verse 12.

[24 : 19] It, grace, teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, there it is again, self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the 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 wickedness and to purify for himself the people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. See, God's grace teaches or trains us, it motivates us to say no to ungodliness and yes to godliness. How? Well, by filling our hearts with gratitude for what Christ has already done.

A couple of months ago, the guy called Ross, 24 on the next slides, this is November last year, so not long ago, died saving his mum at a beach in England at Dorset. His mum was caught in a current that was sucking her out to sea and so he held on to his mum and pushed her forward. She said she, in the article, she still had the bruises from when he grabbed her and reeled her out of the current but as he did so, the current then took him. They found his body the next day on the beach over. But this article goes on to say that Ross Parker sacrificed himself to save his mum, Samantha. And did you notice the next line? It was this act of grace, yet knowing that Ross gave his life for her that helped her to keep going. Do you see that?

Now, Sam didn't deserve to die, nor Ross, but we deserve judgment, what the Bible calls hell. Yet Christ sacrificed himself, verse 14, took hell in our place to save us, redeem us from it.

That's grace. And when we remember and reflect on just how amazing this grace is, the Spirit fills our hearts with gratitude and moves us to keep going.

You see, we seek to live good lives, not for goodness sake and not to avoid a lump of coal, not to earn our salvation, but out of gratitude and thankfulness to Jesus, who has secured already our salvation. It's God's grace in Christ that moves us to keep living lives for him. Lives that match the gospel about him. Lives that are self-controlled, good and godly that advertise him. And so I don't know how you're going in your lives at the moment with that self-control and godliness. Perhaps there's something from our passage that you've been challenged to work at. I know there has been for me. But don't work at it out of fear of judgment or trying to earn God's good books, placing God's good books. Christ has already taken that judgment. You're already in God's good books. Rather, work at it out of appreciation, gratitude for God's grace. His amazing grace that not only offers salvation to all people now, but that has already saved you and me. Remember it, reflect on it, and let it move you to keep going in godliness out of gratitude for him. Let's pray.

[28 : 07] Our gracious Father, we do thank you for this reminder this evening of your amazing grace that gave your only son, who has died for us and secured for us salvation and life eternal.

And so Father, out of gratitude to him, help us, we pray, to live good lives that advertise the gospel, that attract others to the Lord Jesus who died for us. We ask it in his name. Amen.