

Live and Teach the Truth

Printed Text: Titus 2:1-15.

Devotional Reading: Ephesians 4:11-16.

Background Scripture: Titus 2:1-15.

Time: A.D. 62 **Place:** unknown

Titus 2:1-15

You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. ² Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

³ Likewise, 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. ⁴ Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵ 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.

⁶ Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. ⁷ In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness ⁸ and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

⁹ Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, ¹⁰ 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 Savior attractive.

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. ¹² It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³ while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

TODAY'S AIM After participating in this lesson, each student will be able to:

- List the behaviors that must be taught to various age groups.
- Explain why sound doctrine is necessary as a background to right behavior.
- Participate in the teaching ministry of the church as both a learner and a teacher.

Introduction

Titus was another of Paul's true sons in the faith (cf. Titus 1:4). He was a young Greek who served the churches under Paul's leadership much as Timothy served under Paul. At the time of the writing of this letter, Titus was in Crete, a large island off the coast of Greece (cf. vs. 5).

In Titus 2:1-15, Paul instructed the young leader in the kind of conduct the Lord commands from various groups in the church. Titus was to address older men, "older women, younger men, younger women, and slaves about various issues of conduct and lifestyle.

Paul's exhortation to godly conduct was first based on sound doctrine. The belief in the Cross and in God as Creator and Judge makes a difference in how we live. Belief and practice cannot be completely separated.

Teaching Sound Doctrine (Titus 2:1)

What kinds of things should leaders in the church speak about? Should a pastor limit his preaching and mentoring work to the subject of doctrine and Scripture? Paul directed Titus to speak about conduct as well as doctrine. At times, people in churches may feel it improper for their leaders to exhort in areas of behavior and attitudes. It may seem to some that the church should teach belief only and stay out of the area of conduct and lifestyle.

Even the Cross speaks to the issue of conduct. The holy Son of God was crucified because of our sin, punished in our place (cf. Isa. 53:5). Those who believe in the Cross cannot love that which crucified our Lord. There is a conduct becoming to sound doctrine. Teaching Senior Members (Titus 2:2, 3)

1. Should a church leader limit his authority to matters of belief (Titus 2:1)?

Mature men in the church should be clear minded, serious, self-controlled, and healthy in faith and conduct. . Paul's choice of exhortations for older men clearly reflects the fact that they are looked to as examples by others.

To be sober means not only to refrain from drunkenness but also to be clear minded. The older men should know God's purpose for the church and be about that business. To be grave means to be serious, not taking the church lightly. To be temperate means to be self-controlled, not given to anger or sinful pleasure.

Paul's exhortation to conduct for older men also included soundness, or health, in the areas of faith, charity, and patience. That is, older men are to have a healthy faith, knowing what and why they believe. They are to have a healthy love, serving others and giving of themselves. All this they are to carry out with healthy patience, not looking down on the younger men and women but teaching and modeling godliness as gentle teachers.

2. Why is the conduct of older men and women particularly important (v.2)?

Just as the older men are vital to the character of the church, so too are the older women. In particular, young women will look to older women as examples.

Therefore, the older women must model holiness. After years of learning and growing in God's ways, the lifestyle, manner of relating to others, and attitudes of older women should reflect Christ.

Paul specifically chose as examples the issues of gossip and addiction to alcohol. In comedy plays of the time, older women were often mocked as gossips and addicted to foolish talk

(Keener, IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament, InterVarsity). Followers of Jesus must stand out from the sinful ways of the culture, so older women in the church were especially to be on guard against the common temptations of their peers and even against false accusations of wrong.

They are to refrain from gossip and much wine. To be enslaved to wine is to be addicted to it. To be addicted to wine is slavery, or being dominated by wine. The aged Christian women must be different in their conduct and not be enslaved to wine. Abstinence will guarantee that objective.

Teaching Younger Members (Titus 2:4-8)

3. Why did Paul specifically mention false accusations as something for older women to avoid?

Women can, learn from men and from male leaders in the church, but the truth of our nature is that most women observe and follow other women who are role models in their life. Paul directed Titus to leave the training of the young women primarily to older women. This is a responsibility for older women and a resource for younger ones.

Young women need to be sober and clear minded about their duties. They need to love their husband and children, meaning not just emotional affection but joyful serving.

As with older women, Paul exhorted young women to avoid the negative traits of their peers. They are to be discrete, meaning to avoid discussing private matters. They are to be chaste, not having any tendency to flirtatiousness or sexual infidelity. They are to manage the home well and be submissive to their husbands. If outsiders saw Christian women defying the order of marriage, Paul knew the true faith would be slandered.

Therefore the young mother has the huge responsibility of ensuring that the home is a happy, secure place.

In modern culture, those who are able financially to be stay-at-home moms are privileged and blessed. (So are the kids!) Some find homeschooling to be an ideal option, good for both mother and children. The home should be a safe place emotionally, physically, and spiritually for all members of the family. Wives and mothers play a key role in making it so.

4. Why are older women better teachers of younger women than even male leaders (vs. 4,5)?

The younger men are to be taught by Titus. They will be observing, of course, the example of his life. Paul describes this under the broad category of a pattern of good works.

People are looking for consistency in leaders, aren't they? They expect teachers to measure up to what they teach. If we teach others to live by faith, our lives should have evidence of living confidently for Jesus. If we teach the necessity of sacrificial giving, we should be leaders in contributing our time and money. If we teach the importance of godly speech, we should guard our words and not be found using questionable language or slander. Sin of church leaders made public has a huge impact on those who are new believers (and old).

It has been said that the greatest stumbling block for young people in the church is perceived hypocrisy of the leaders. Jesus said that if our hypocrisy causes the children of the flock to sin and fall away, it would be better to have a great stone tied to our necks and be drowned in the depths of the ocean (Mark 9:42). Paul then lays a great responsibility at the door of Titus. He is to live in such a way that his observers cannot doubt his commitment to godliness.

Teaching Slaves (Titus 2:9,10)

5. Who's duty was it to teach the younger men (vs. 6-8)?

A significant number of the population of the Roman Empire were slaves (perhaps as many as one half of the population). Many functioned as servants in households and answered directly to the owner.

We who live in Western democracies no longer have the institution of slavery that was widespread in the Roman world. Yet those of us who are employees and work for a living can find some principles here. We should be good employees so that our work habits show that we are serving a higher master. We should work diligently, not talking back (answering again) or stealing (purloining) from our employer. We are respectful. Again, there is the possibility that our actions are being monitored carefully by someone who reaches conclusions about Jesus by viewing us.

Training a Peculiar People (Titus 2:11-15)

6. Why was it important for Christian slaves to be obedient to their owners (vs. 9,10)?

Having just listed many categories of people, Paul taught that God's grace has appeared to all. He had just given to slaves the motivation of seeing their owners saved as reason to serve well and honestly (v. 10). Just as he asked slaves to keep in mind God's desire to see all saved, so should we keep this in mind.

When God sent Jesus to live a perfect life and die a saving death, He did so in a public manner for all men to see and hear about. Grace, or undeserved favor, was made known to all. God did not intend for the Cross to be limited to Jews, to the wealthy, to the poor, or to any other group.

Paul sums up all of this teaching by saying that we should live as saved people. God did not save us to continue to wallow in the filth of sin. God saves us from sin.

Paul knows that in his day godly living goes against the grain. Nothing is really different in that regard today. We are called to live in contrast to the values of this present world, which are controlled by worldly lusts—namely, self-interest, self-gratification, and general selfishness.

7. How does God's grace teach us to refrain from sin and to practice good works (vs. 11,12)?

In a general sense, it starts as being the salt and light of the world as noted in Matthew 5:13-16. This should lead us to ask ourselves what we've done this past week to make that happen within our circles of acquaintances. Having a friendship with an unbeliever provides an open door. You can speak plainly and seriously to someone who has become your friend. Sincere, friendly

relationships generate mutual trust. It may take a while to establish such friendships, but eventually you will have opportunities to witness to eternal truths through word and deed.

8. How can you, as one of the "peculiar" people, influence the lives of "popular" people?

Not only does grace challenge us to godliness in this present World, but it also calls us to look ahead to the future hope of all believers in Jesus. Jesus' work is not yet finished. By the means of the Cross He redeemed people, but He promised to return and redeem the world as well by establishing His kingdom on earth.

Jesus will appear again at the end of this age. He said that He would come again in power and glory (cf. Matt. 25:31). The angels said He would return the same way He left, coming down out of the clouds onto the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 1:11). He commanded us to pray for the coming of God's kingdom (cf. Matt. 6:10). The return of Jesus is our blessed hope, for we will be resurrected and brought into a kingdom ruled directly by God.

9. Why is the appearing of our Savior a blessed hope (v. 13)?

Many people do not understand the full purpose of the Cross. The Cross is very much associated with forgiveness, but according to the Bible, the Cross is also a strong call to holiness and good works.

The Cross of Christ is about forgiveness. He died to redeem us from iniquity, taking iniquity's punishment on Himself (cf. Isa. 53:5). Yet Christ also had the purpose of calling and purifying the church. In His death, Christ purposed to gather followers who would stand out from the rest of humanity.

The purpose to which we are called is that of righteousness and good works. Though we are not saved by good works, we are saved to do them. Christ's purpose was not that we would merely be forgiven but that we would emulate Him, laying down our lives to do good for others. We are not merely to do good works or to consider them our duty. Rather, our hearts should be so full of love for the One who died for us that we are zealous for good works, radical in our desire to love and serve God and others.

10. What purpose is there in the Cross beyond bringing forgiveness to those who believe (v. 14)?

Titus was to teach all of these many truths and ways of living to his congregation. The conduct befitting sound doctrine and the conduct befitting the grace of God are part of the message of the church.

Paul directed Titus to teach these by exhorting and rebuking with authority. A man of God must teach and encourage godliness, but he must also be ready to call people to account for wrongdoing, especially when it hurts others or the cause of Christ.

People naturally tend to resist authority. It is part of our fallen nature to want to be our own gods, accepting no other master. Yet Titus was not to allow others to despise his authority.

Looking back at the exhortations of Paul to various groups of people, it is evident that a major issue was how outsiders would see the church. Paul learned from his Master, who said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Godly conduct becomes sound doctrine and is a fitting response to God's grace.

11. How did Paul direct Titus to teach (v. 15)?

Conclusion

Is the Sunday School Dead?

Many churches today have abandoned the traditional Sunday morning Bible school hour. In some cases, all efforts are concentrated on the worship service, which often has been expanded. An emphasis is put on fellowship groups that meet in homes for prayer and support. Is there any place for Sunday school today? Is there a place for regular, systematic instruction in godly living?

If you are using this lesson series, you have answered yes to at least the second question. While "delivery systems" may change over the years, there will always be a place for godly, dedicated teachers instructing children, young people, and older people in the ways of our Lord.

Such instruction should lift up the timeless principles found throughout Scripture. It should also study the lives of the godly men and women in the Bible who practiced these principles. It always should include a modeling of this lifestyle by the teacher. We cannot lead where we have not been or are unwilling to go. In this regard, not all are fit to be teachers (James 3:1).

Has God called you to this ministry? Are you willing to study His Word carefully, prepare lessons, and live up to the principles you teach? The responsibility is great, but the rewards are eternal.

Lifetime Learners

Do we ever progress to the point where the Bible has nothing left to teach us? Do we ever get to the place where we think we've heard it all before? The truth is that some people have spent decades in weekly Bible study, and the material may seem repetitive at times. However, some of the greatest scholars in the history of the church have never tired of studying the Bible.

John Locke (1632-1704) was one of the greatest thinkers of his day. He is credited with being the primary influence in the British Enlightenment, of finally overcoming the antiquated thinking of the medieval period. Locke's writings still influence people today. Some of his essays on government helped begin the era of democracy and end the era of kings and queens. Yet at the end of his life, Locke had some regrets. His was one of the most powerful minds in the history of the world, but he was not content. He once stated that if he had it all to do over again, he would spend more time studying the Bible and learning its truths.

The Bible as the Word of God is an inexhaustible source of wisdom, inspiration, and knowledge. These things are available for everyone who is willing to study it.

Thought to Remember

We never should be too old or too young, too busy or too preoccupied for the serious study of the Bible's principles for living.

Prayer

Holy God our Father, renew our love for Your mighty Bible. May we dedicate ourselves more fully to learning Your Word and to teaching it faithfully to others. Help us set our priorities to include digging deeply into the Word of life. Please, we ask, continue to bless us as we let Your Word transform us. We pray in the name of the living Word, Your Son, Jesus Christ, amen.

Anticipating Next Week's Lesson God is majestic; yet He made man and gave him a special place. Study Psalm 8:1- 9 for next week's lesson. Lesson Summarized By: Willie Ferrell
willie@jesusisall.com