

Adorning The Doctrine Of God

Titus 2:1-10

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I want to read just the first verse of our text, Titus 2:1-10, which is introductory. Paul says to Titus, “But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.”

Paul Gilbert said in a poem,

“You’re writing a Gospel,

A chapter each day,

By deeds that you do

And the words that you say.”

Men read what you write,

Whether faithless or true;

Say, what is the Gospel

According to you?”

In our text, the apostle Paul wants us to do one thing: to adorn the doctrine of God. The key is in verse 10, which says, “Adorn the doctrine of God.” That’s the theme of this entire passage. It means we are to live in such a way that we might adorn the doctrine of God.

There is an interesting contrast between the last verse of chapter 1 and the first verse of chapter 2, our text. In chapter 1, verse 16, it says, “They profess to know God.” The “they” here refers to the false teachers of chapter 1 that Titus was to deal with. The false teachers claimed that they knew God experientially. “But in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.” Their lips profess they know God, but in their lives, they deny Him.

Then, without skipping a beat—there were no chapters and verses in the original text—Paul says, “But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.” The “you” here is an imperative, so Paul is actually commanding Titus to do this: “Speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.”

So the false teachers were professing they knew God, but they were denying Him in their works. Paul wanted the lives of Titus and the believers on Crete to be consistent with their profession.

It's easy to say something with your mouth; it's not so easy to live it out in your life. So Paul was contrasting what the false teachers said and how they lived with what the true teacher, Titus, should do on Crete. Titus should "speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine."

The word "sound" is a recurring word in the epistle of Titus. It's a medical term which means "life-giving" or "healthy." We get our word "hygiene" from it. Just as germs can enter the body and destroy it, so too false doctrine and bad living can enter into a church and destroy it. So we need sound doctrine.

I've always liked this verse in which Paul tells Titus that he should "speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine." "Proper" here means "befit" or "adorn." He is saying Titus should speak things which will become or adorn sound doctrine. In other words, he was to teach the people to live in such a way that their lives adorn the doctrine of God, or let your life beautify the Bible.

Ladies fittingly wear jewelry. They put a necklace on to look beautiful. You adorn yourself. You don't decorate a Christmas tree so it will look ugly. You put ornaments on it; you adorn it. In the same way, our lives are to adorn the Gospel of God. We are to make Jesus beautiful by the way that we live. And that's what our text is all about.

Now I want to give you an outline of Titus 2. Paul sets forth the kind of life expected of each group in the congregation. We will see six groups of people and how they are to "adorn the doctrine of God." And then next time, we'll see the sound doctrine that undergirds these duties. Always it's doctrine before duty. First belief, then behavior. First principles, then practice.

In verses 1-10, Paul lays down the concrete duties of the six people groups in the church. They are to be sound in doctrine and sound in living. Every member of the church is to live out the Gospel. No one is excluded; it's all-inclusive. The doctrine leads to duty, what you should do. What you believe determines how you behave.

The first group in the church is "the older men," verse 2. These aged men need to be "sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience." This one verse is packed with how the senior men in the church should live their lives.

What does he mean by "older men"? At what age is a man "older"? I don't know. But I remember when I was in my 20s, that I thought 30 was over the hill. In my Bible study, there were high schoolers, and an "old guy" showed up to hear me teach. He was 30 years old. I was nervous because there was an "old guy" who came. Then I got into my 30s and thought 40 was old. And when I turned 50, a friend called me and said, "Welcome to buzzarddom! You are officially a buzzard today." Then there was the 60s and then there is the 70s. Now I definitely realize there is more behind me than there is ahead of me.

So we have a new perspective when we get older. David said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread" (Psalm 37:25). Older people, the silver saints, have a perspective that younger people don't have,

because they've lived life longer. So Paul specifically speaks to the senior men.

My Dad used to say, "I wasn't born yesterday!" And now I'm saying that to my kids. "I know what I'm talking about!"

In Luke 1:18, when Zacharias, the priest, was told that his wife, Elizabeth, was going to bear a son, who would be the forerunner of Messiah, he said, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man." It's the very same Greek word used in our text. And in Philemon 1:9, the same Greek word is used when Paul referred to himself as "Paul, the aged."

The word is also used for an elder, an official office in the church, but that's not how Paul is using it here in our text. He's referring to an older man.

I believe the body of Christ should reflect all age groups. And I thank God that Revival reflects all age groups. That's so very important.

Now, Paul breaks down the older men group by first saying they are to be "sober." And every group that Paul addresses is to be "sober." It's mentioned in verses 2, 4, 5, 6, and 12. The word means "temperate, moderate in the use of wine, careful in all areas of life and conduct." So it's not just temperate with alcohol; it's temperate in all of life or being sober-minded. Don't be intoxicated by the world. In Romans 12:2, Paul said, "Don't let the world press you into its mold." Don't live by the philosophies of the world. Live by God's Word. Every believer should have a biblical worldview. Our minds should be shaped by the Word of God, and we should live our lives from a Biblical perspective.

Second, these older men are also to be "reverent" or "grave." That means to live respectable, dignified lives.

Third, they are to be "temperate," which is a little different than "sober" or "sober-minded." "Temperate" means to be "self-controlled." It means to have a well-balanced life in mind and living. The contrast would be living carelessly or recklessly.

Fourth, they are to be "sound in faith, in love, in patience." "Sound" here also means "healthy" or "life-giving." Some would say this means "our hope for the Lord to come back." Faith is your relationship to God. You are to be men who trust in the Lord.

My Dad was such a great example to me of a man who trusted in the Lord. He used to say, "John, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths'" (Proverbs 3:5-6). My Dad was a man of prayer. I believe a lot of what has happened in my life is a direct result of my Dad and Mother praying for me. Older men, this is your vertical relationship to God.

"Love," which is the Greek word "agape," is your relationship to others around you. Your "faith" is that you love God, but your horizontal relationships with your wife, your family, other believers in the church involve you loving them. And "patience" is steadfast endurance in waiting for Christ

to come. Our endurance, or our hope in the coming of the Lord, is what motivates us in our faith toward God and our love toward others. Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength....You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31). That's the faith and love, and patience is looking for the coming again of Jesus Christ.

This wraps it up for us old guys. I'll put myself in that group. Us older men are to live lives that are "sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience."

Senior saints, we love you. You are valued, and we praise God for you. When you get old, you have all the answers, but no one asks you any questions! They don't ask you questions because you're not young, hip, and cool anymore. But we value you. We need you so desperately.

It always saddens me when we have a senior saint go to heaven. We rejoice for them that "To be absent from the body [is] to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). But we also need them here. We need their wisdom and their love and their prayers.

As a pastor, I always feel the loss of their prayers, because I know they pray for me. And now they're in heaven with the Lord, awaiting the day when we will be reunited. So we thank the Lord for you; we need you.

To younger people is say, "Listen to your elders. Be thankful for your senior saints. Get to know them, reach out to them, and ask them questions. Get to know their lives. What a blessing they are!" There are no generation gaps in the church of Jesus Christ.

Think about God calling Moses when he was 80 years old. That is officially old. But you're only as young as you feel. His whole life had been preparation for that calling of God. Can you imagine that?! God spends 80 years getting you ready for your ministry. Pretty cool!

How about Caleb when he entered the Promised Land? He said, "Give me that mountain." He was always wanting a new challenge. And as older people, we should always accept the challenges that God gives us.

Now we move to the group of "the older women," verses 3-4. We won't talk about age. "The older women likewise...." Whenever you see that word "likewise," which appears throughout this text, it means that what he has said before applies to the older women as well. "...that they be reverent..." or "holy, sanctified to God" "...in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—that they admonish the young women." So the older women are to teach the younger women.

Verse 3 says they are to be "reverent" in the way they live. The King James says, "in behavior as becometh holiness." This is the idea of adorning the doctrines of God. As an older woman of God, you are to live in such a way as to become the holiness of God.

And they are not to be “slanderers.” The King James says “not false accusers.” We actually get the word “devil” from that. The word is “diablos,” which means “slanderer.” So this is the use of your speech, your tongue. You shouldn’t be slandering other people.

The third thing is to not be enslaved to wine.

Remember that all these admonitions Paul is writing regarding Christians on Crete. It was said that the Cretans were “always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” So this was a wicked group of people. This was an apostolic church with all these problems.

How much more today do we need to take these admonitions to heart! What was good for Crete is good for California. Someone said that when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians it should have been 1 Californians. We need help and the church needs help. It is no different today than the time when Paul wrote this to Titus.

So Paul says don’t be addicted to or enslaved by wine, which was very common at that time, especially on the Greek islands.

Then they were to be “teachers of good things.” That means “virtuous.” And they were to “admonish the young women.” I believe that older women should mentor and teach younger women. So younger women, find an older woman to exemplify. That older woman should mentor and tutor the younger woman how to be a good wife, a good mother and a good homemaker. So the younger women should be listeners.

Now we move to “the young women,” verses 4-5. The older women should teach the younger women “to be sober,” in the King James, “love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that...” here’s the reason why “...the word of God may not be blasphemed.” Again, this means to live in such a way as to beautify the doctrines of God, not to distract or bring reproach on God’s Word.

Interestingly, this is the only place in the New Testament where it tells wives to love their husbands. So marriage is not just that husbands should love their wives, and wives should submit to their husbands; wives should also love their husbands.

The older women are to teach the younger women to be “sober.” This is spiritual sobriety, not to be intoxicated by the philosophies of the world. And they are “to love...” or “agape” ...their husbands.” In Ephesians 5, we have the classic passage on marriage, where it says you submit one to another in the reverence of God. So there is a mutual submission. And it says, “Wives, submit to your own husbands.” Wives are to be subject to their husbands, and husbands are to love their wives, as “Christ is head of the church.”

In 1 Peter 3:1-6, the Bible clearly says that wives are to love their husbands. In that day and in that culture, marriage was an arrangement made by the bride’s parents. So she needed to love her husband.

By the way, love is not a passing emotion. It's a decision you make to seek the highest good of the object loved. You ask, "Does that mean I shouldn't feel anything for my husband?" It doesn't mean that. I believe that the commitment comes first; I am choosing, out of obedience to the Lord, to love my husband. As you do that, the emotions will follow. They are the caboose; it's not what drives the train. So love is not a passing emotion; love is a continual devotion. Wives, be devoted out of love for your husband.

Let me give you some simple tips about that. Respect his headship in the home; don't resist his headship. And headship is not dictatorship. It's protection, provision, and care. And don't make major decisions without your husband's counsel. Neither should your husband make a major decision without consulting his wife. Pray and talk about it together. You should also live within your means. Forgive your husband promptly. The Bible says, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

A lot of wives say they'll submit but won't forgive their husbands. They'll submit but won't love their husbands. No, you need to forgive, love, and respect your husband. Don't criticize him, but support him. Sacrifice for him.

So in summary, wives should be sober-minded and love their husbands. They should also love their children. This is so important. And notice that children come after marriage. This woman has a husband. You don't just go out and have kids without first having a husband. First comes marriage, and then God blesses you with children.

How do you love your children? Spend time with them, read to them, teach them, pray with them and for them, and discipline them when necessary.

The younger women are also to be "discreet," which speaks of "self-control." They also are to be "chaste" or "pure," faithful to their marriage vows, fidelity of marriage. And they are to be "homemakers."

In light of these verses, a lot of pastors don't want to preach from this text. It's because whatever I say, I'm going to get in trouble. But I'm just the messenger; I didn't write it.

But this verse does not preclude a woman working outside the home. It doesn't say you can't work outside the home. It's saying that the priority should be your home. If you work outside the home but you neglect your husband and children, is that because you want to get away from your husband and children? If so, shame on you. Then you shouldn't have gotten married. I know that this situation does happen. So your priority and focus should be your home.

From the Greek, the word "homemakers" literally should read "workers at home" or "working at home." J.B. Phillips translate it "home-lovers."

It is tragic when wives feel as though they are second-class because of being "homemakers" and don't have a career. That's what our culture thinks. So don't be intoxicated by the culture.

“Don’t let the world press you into its mold.” If someone asks you what you do, don’t say, “Well, I’m just a housewife.” No, you’re not just a housewife. You are a “homemaker.”

And I think that a lot of the ills in our culture today result from too many wives working outside the home. Husbands are too busy, or there are one-parent families. You need both a husband and a wife, and a wife devoted to their home. Make that a priority; don’t let anything get in the way of that. Husbands need the support and encouragement.

My wife and I are empty-nesters. My wife has been gone for a week, so I need my wife. And the older I get, the more I need my wife. I feel like a fish out of water when she’s not here. It’s just bizarre.

So wives are to support their husbands, pray for them, and encourage them.

Then verse 5 says that the young women are to be “good.” It means “kind.” You are to be a good wife, a good homemaker, a good mother. Proverbs 31:26 says, “On her tongue is the law of kindness.” Harry Allan Ironside said, “If you’re not kind, you’re not spiritual.” You’re not spiritual just because you know Greek and Hebrew. You’re not spiritual because you know theology. If you’re spiritual, you’re going to be kind. It’s a fruit of the Spirit. So this is a Spirit-filled wife, mother, and homemaker in our text.

Also, notice that these women are “obedient to their own husbands,” verse 5. Ephesians 5:22 also says that wives should “submit to your own husbands.” Why is that? Verse 5 tells us, and it’s so important: “that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”

When David committed adultery with Bathsheba, Nathan the prophet told David that God had forgiven him, but David had “given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme” (2 Samuel 12:14).

Almost weekly, we read of a pastor who has fallen into moral failure or sin. It causes the enemies of God to blaspheme. Or Christians fall into sin, and that causes the enemies of God to blaspheme. So “God, help us to beautify by our lives the doctrines of God.” What a powerful testimony it is to have a godly marriage, to have a godly home. We need healthy homes.

Now we move to the young men, in verse 6, which is pretty brief. “Likewise...” which means it is all-inclusive “...exhort the young men to be sober-minded.” Your first response to this is, “That’s not fair!” He beats up on the wives, has all this instruction for them, and all he tells the young men to do is to be “sober-minded.” But this involves their whole lives; to be self-controlled in their temper, in their tongue, in their sexual behavior and urges.

I believe young men should be taught and expected to be chaste before marriage and faithful after marriage. I don’t care what the culture says. And if it’s commanded in God’s Word, it’s possible. God doesn’t tell us to do something that isn’t possible. So young men, stay pure, be committed to chastity until you are married, and have fidelity to your wife. Self-mastery is possible because the Holy Spirit can give you strength and victory. And we should encourage

young men to self-controlled living.

And encourage young men by your good example. This, to me, is so very important. Dads, moms, spiritual leaders, and seniors, you can't powerfully affect younger people with your instruction if you don't have the life to back it up. If you want your words to carry impact to your young children, then live it out in your own life. It's not just theory. It's not just, "This is what the Bible says. I don't do it, but you should do it." A father should be able to say to his son, "I kept myself pure for your mother, and I'm so thankful for that to this day."

My Dad took me for a car ride when I was 16 years old and had "the talk" with me. I'll never forget him saying to me, "I kept myself pure for your mother and have to this day." What an impact that made on me. And I knew it was true. I wanted to have the same talk with my son to have that same impact on his life.

So keep yourself pure until you are married, and then stay faithful to your wife. And we have to have lives that back up what we say to our young people, to our young men.

Now Paul addresses Titus himself, in verses 7-8. "In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works." So Titus was to be the spiritual leader "in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent..." the false teachers who may oppose him "...may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you."

Your life is to put to silence the critics. Titus was to be an example by his life. His life was to be a pattern. The Greek word is "tupos," from which we get our word "type." It was an impression made on wax with a signet ring and then put on a letter that was to be sent. So our lives are to be an example or pattern of how to live. Paul was saying that Titus was to be a model for the people to follow.

I grew up in church, and I've been a pastor for over 50 years. What's really important is that the members of the congregation are examples to our younger people and the next generation. They are watching you. All the little ones in our Sunday school, the tiny tots in our church, are looking at the adults. They're looking at your marriage, at the way you live. What is a Christian to be and to do? They may not be your kids, but we need to be an example to them.

My prayer as a pastor is that I would be an example to the young people of our church; that my marriage, my commitment to my wife, to my children and grandchildren, my commitment to the Word of God, my commitment to live a pure life—that all these would be an example to the next generation.

So Paul tells Titus to be an example. And we all should be. And he tells Titus he should be an example "in doctrine..." which is teaching "...showing integrity..." or "gravity" in the King James, which means "oneness" or the opposite of duplicity or hypocrisy "...reverence..." or seriousness about the things of God and how you're living "...incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned..." and why live this way? "...that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you."

Now the last group is the slaves. In the early church, a large percentage of the believers were slaves. Verse 9, "Exhort bondservants..." or "doulos," slaves by choice...to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things."

Though the Bible doesn't directly confront slavery and condemn it, it transformed the institution of slavery by changing men's hearts. The leading abolitionists of slavery were Christians because of their view of Scripture. So when God changes hearts, He changes the culture. But at this time, He gives us instructions regarding slavery, and that would apply to us today as employers and employees.

Paul says to be obedient, to not talk back, don't steal. Remember Onesimus. He was a runaway slave mentioned in the book of Philemon. No doubt he stole from his master. He ran away from his master, Philemon, in Colossae and went to Rome, where he met Paul, got saved, and became a Christian. Then Paul sent him back with a letter to Philemon. So God was changing the hearts of slaves and masters, and they were getting saved. And eventually, this institution of slavery was abolished.

As this applies to us today, if you are an employee, be obedient to, don't talk back to, and don't steal from your employer.

In closing, verse 10 says, "...that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." Verse 5 says, "...that the word of God may not be blasphemed." And verse 8 says, "...that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you." And verses 11-12, which we'll talk about next time, ties in. It says, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age."

Jesus said that we should live in such a way that our Father in heaven would be glorified (Matthew 5:16).

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