

Characteristics for Godly Living to Various Age Groups

Titus 2:1-15

Titus 2:1-5 - *“But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: ² that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; ³ the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— ⁴ that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”*

Background Notes

During his later missionary travels, the apostle Paul visited the large Mediterranean island of Crete. When he departed, he left Titus behind. His assignment was to help build up the believers and the churches of Crete. Titus 1:5: *“I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city...”*

Paul wrote to Titus to make sure that the churches on Crete were set up and functioning in an orderly way, and that the teaching in the churches was sound, biblical doctrine. Order in the New Testament churches was important in the 1st century, and it's just as important today. So, the letter to Titus is a good book to study, for every church, in every place, and in every time period!

Setting the churches in good order involved making sure there was good spiritual leadership. It also involved making sure that sound doctrine was being taught, that unsound doctrine was refuted, and that those who were teaching false doctrine were silenced and disciplined. Titus 1:10-11: *“For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain.”*

Every New Testament church today has these same responsibilities. The elders should be providing strong and mature spiritual leadership. They should make sure that sound biblical doctrine is taught, and that false teachers are silenced.

In reference to sound doctrine and sound teaching, Titus 2 contains practical teaching for the various age groups within the church. Instructions for the older men, the older women, and the younger women are given in verses 1-5.

Notice – the instructions for the various age groups are **lifestyle traits of believers who follow sound doctrine**. *“But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine” (v1).*

Doctrinal Points

1. Older Christian men who are sound in doctrine will be respected for their disciplined and unselfish lifestyle.

Verse 2: "...that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience."

The older men mentioned here are *all* the older, mature men in the congregation - not just the church's elders. Where would you put the dividing line between "younger" and "older"? In view of Titus' likely age, I'd say the line would be at about 50 years of age.

The older men should live in such a way that they will be respected as godly "fathers in the faith." They should be sober - not just in reference to alcohol - but rational in thought, word and action.

The older men should be reverent or dignified, and worthy of respect. In fact, they should behave in the opposite way that Pat Boone, a Christian in the "older men" category, appeared in public a few months ago. In order to sell his music, he appeared in ads with false tattoos and wearing a "heavy metal rock star" outfit. Even unbelievers thought this was unseemly and out of character. It certainly was *not* a picture of dignity!

Older men should be temperate, or sensible. The Greek word that's translated as "temperate" means "self-controlled." Self-control and self-discipline are important for all Christians, but especially so for the older men and women, because they are to be models.

Older men should be sound in faith, sound in love, and sound in patience or perseverance. Older men should not only be sound in their doctrine, but they should be *sound in the way their doctrine is worked out* – sound in the way they live their lives!

Have you ever noticed that some older Christian men remain very orthodox in their doctrine - but they become self-indulgent and materialistic in their lifestyle? They give very little of their time, energy or finances to the Lord and their fellow-believers. Other older Christian men remain very orthodox in their doctrine - but they become bitter and vindictive if life doesn't go their way. They don't persevere or endure in the trials of this life. They focus on themselves; they complain, and they cop out.

Selfish lifestyles and discontented attitudes shouldn't characterize the older Christian men in the local church. Older Christian men who are sound in doctrine will be respected for their discipline and unselfish lifestyle.

2. Older Christian women who are sound in doctrine will teach by their reverent and loving lifestyle.

Verses 3-4: "*The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine,*

teachers of good things - that they admonish the young women.”

The older women should live in such a way that they will be respected as godly “mothers in the faith.” The “likewise” in verse 3 means that the characteristics of the older Christian men should characterize the older Christian women as well. Thus, the older women should also be worthy of respect. They should be reverent and dignified in their behavior, sensible in thought, word and action, and sound in faith, love and endurance. Like the older men, the older women are also to be models.

A couple of additional characteristics are added: they should not indulge in “much wine,” and they should not be “slanderers,” or malicious gossips. I’m sure some of you are thinking, “What about the men? They gossip too!” The point is not that men don’t gossip. The point is that the older Cretan Christian women may have had more time on their hands, and rather than using their spare time to help others, some of them were using it to “spreading the news” – negative news - about others.

Gossiping about others was not right then, and it’s not right today. And yet it happens. In a church I know well, the older men and the older women became so involved in gossip and slander and cutting other believers down that they split the congregation, and virtually destroyed the church. They’re an illustration of the truth of Galatians 5:15: *“But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another.”*

Rather than being involved in negative kinds of behavior, the older women are to be involved in teaching. Although God did not call them to be the preachers or teachers in the church services, they were called to teach the younger women (and children as well) by word and example. Church leaders today should make sure that the younger women have contact with the older women.

How many of you ladies would put yourselves in the “older women” category? Where is the dividing line? It doesn’t say “old” - it says “older”! So, in view of what’s said about children and homemaking (v5) I’d guess that a good dividing line would be about 50 years of age. What the older women should teach the younger women, by lip and by life, will be included in our next doctrinal point. Older Christian women who are sound in doctrine will teach by their reverent and loving lifestyle.

3. Younger women who are sound in doctrine will witness by their pure and caring lifestyle.

Verses 4-5: “...that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”

Younger women are to love their husbands and children. The word for love here is “phileo,” meaning “tender affection.” It means being warm, gentle and loving with her family - not constantly irritated and angry and yelling at her kids (or her husband!).

The younger women (whether married or single) were to be chaste, or pure, and they were to be discreet. There's that word for "self-control" again! It's used several times throughout this passage in the exhortations to the various age groups.

The younger married women were to be homemakers, or workers at home. The primary responsibility of the married Christian woman should be her family and home. This doesn't mean that a Christian wife and mother can never have a job outside the home. The point is that her *primary focus* should be her family and home, rather than her career. It's a matter of priorities - even if the lack of a full time second income means a smaller home, fewer possessions, or a frugal lifestyle.

God's authority structure was to be maintained in the home (v5). The younger women were to be subject to their own husbands. Notice - subject to their *own* husbands, not subject to every man in the church! It is assumed here that the husband was a believer and he was not asking his wife to do things that are unscriptural.

In summary, younger women who are sound in doctrine will be a witness to unbelievers by their pure and caring lifestyle. This lifestyle will bring happiness to their homes, and this lifestyle will be a good witness, so that no one will be able to malign the Word of God (v5).

Practical Application

"I'm stuck at home with the kids" is not a biblical concept!

Obviously, this practical application is particularly for mothers of young children. When someone asks you, 'what do you do all day?' do you say, "I'm stuck at home with the kids?" Well, even if you've never come right out and said that, have you ever thought it? It's not a biblical concept! Caring for your children at home is a God-given call for young mothers, as we see in Titus 2:4-5. Feminists would have you believe that if you're "stuck at home with the kids," you're "disenfranchised" or at the bottom of the pile in society! No! Motherhood is a high calling from God, and it's a very important ministry. The children who are the future of the church are in currently in pre-school and elementary school! The future of the church is being molded by mothers!

As most of you know, Margie and I have three children - all of them now grown and married. When our children were born, Margie left her nursing career until the children were out of school. We've never regretted that decision. On the income of a Bible college teacher, it wasn't easy financially - but God provided! And Margie never felt that she was just "stuck at home with the kids"!

Let's not allow ourselves to be brainwashed by the world's idea of womanhood. Remember, "I'm stuck at home with the kids" is not a biblical concept!