

Characteristics for Godly Living to Young Men and Christian Slaves

Titus 2:6-10

Titus 2:6-10 - *“Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded,⁷ in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,⁸ sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.*

⁹Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back,¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”

Background Notes

Following his first Roman imprisonment, the apostle Paul visited the Mediterranean island of Crete. On his departure, he left Titus, one of his fellow workers, on Crete to help build up the churches. He had sent Timothy to Ephesus, to help pastor and build up the church there.

In chapter 1 the apostle reminded Titus that one of his responsibilities was to denounce the false teachers who were circulating in Crete, and refute their false teaching. About the false teachers, Paul said, *“Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain” (1:11)*. The false teaching had disrupted entire families, so some of the incorrect teaching may have involved the family, the roles and behavior of men and women, and the authority structures in the home and in the church. In chapter 2, false teaching about the roles of men and women in the home and in the church was addressed.

Five different groups of Christians were addressed in verses 1-10 of chapter 2: older men, older women, younger women, younger men, and Christian slaves. All these different groups were told to live lives that were appropriate, or “proper for sound doctrine.” Titus 2:1: *“...speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine.”*

We’ve already studied the instructions to the first three groups. Our doctrinal points will discuss the other two groups: younger men and slaves. But before we go on, remember the importance of the older generation. Those of us who are in that older generation need to be encouraged to recognize that we’re not shelved yet! We have an important role to play in the family and in the church. We are to be models of godly living.

In this letter to Titus, Paul used the term “sound doctrine” a number of times. Sound doctrine is **more** than orthodox, or correct, doctrine. Sound doctrine is not only correct doctrine - it is doctrine that leads to the spiritual health of Christians.

A balanced diet is key to physical health, and balanced teaching is key to spiritual health. For example, spending all your time teaching the book of Revelation and other biblical prophecies about the future is *not* sound doctrine. Even though your explanation of eschatology or future things may be correct, it won't lead to the spiritual health and growth of the believers in the church. Why not? Because it's not **balanced** doctrine. Teaching of the **whole** Word of God is important.

Sound doctrine involves more than just the correct interpretation of the books of Daniel and Revelation. Sound doctrine involves teaching about godly living as well. Sound doctrine is healthy doctrine, and it leads to the spiritual health and growth of believers.

Doctrinal Points

1. Younger men who are sound in doctrine will display integrity, dignity and good works in their lifestyle.

Verses 6-8: *“Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.”*

Notice that Titus was told to exhort the young men directly. He was not told to instruct the young women - he was to encourage the older women to do that. It's easy to see the wisdom in this instruction, and it is good advice for today as well. In order to avoid the appearance of evil and temptation, it's better for older women to counsel younger women. If the church would follow this biblical guideline today, there would be far fewer cases of sexual sin and scandal within the church.

In verses 7-8 Paul told Titus that he was to be an example of godly character traits, because Titus was in the “young men” category himself. Titus was probably about forty years old at this time, so the “younger men” category means more than just young men in their twenties.

In verse 6, the young men were instructed to be “sober-minded” – or self-controlled. There's that word again – self-controlled. It's used so often in these exhortations. Self-control is a top priority for living in line with sound doctrine. Do you have self-control? Men - what good is all your theological knowledge and talk if you can't control yourself as a Christian husband, as a Christian father, and as a Christian example to others?

Three characteristics of young Christian men are mentioned in verse 7: good works, integrity and dignity. Young men usually have a lot of energy and zeal – more so than older men. How should the zeal and energy of young men be channeled? It should be channeled into good works and service for the Lord! That's the main point here. Young men - channel your zeal and energy into Christian service. Yes, it's OK to spend some of your spare time playing golf or skiing -

but not *too much* time! (You see I'm speaking to myself here as well as to you!) Young men, remember that you have a limited number of years of energy, so use it for the glory of God! You'll never be sorry!

Young Christian men should also be characterized by integrity. Their motives for preaching should not be to make a name for themselves, or to build up a big ministry with their name on it, or to make money. Their sound doctrine will be associated with pure motives, if they're following the exhortation here.

Young men who are sound in doctrine will be dignified. They will not be clowns or self-promoting entertainers. This does not mean that Christians can't laugh or enjoy happy moments and joyful life experiences. No! "*God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment*" (1 Timothy 6:17). But young Christian men should be serious about the things of God, and they should treat His Word with dignity. Young men who are sound in doctrine will display integrity, dignity and good works in their lifestyle.

2. Employees who are sound in doctrine will make Christ attractive by their honest and trustworthy lifestyle.

Verses 9-10: "*Exhort servants 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.*"

Slaves probably formed more than half of the population of the Roman Empire in the 1st century. It was the outworking of Christian principles that finally abolished slavery. Although the exhortation here is to the Christian slaves of the 1st century, it certainly can be applied to Christian employees today.

In the New Testament epistles, Christian slaves were instructed not to revolt, or to try to escape, but rather to be obedient to their masters. Christian slaves were not to pilfer the belongings of their masters. Pilfering, embezzling and stealing by slaves were a rampant practice in the 1st century. In many ways, the slaves of the 1st century ran the economy of the Roman Empire. They literally knew all the tricks of the trade.

Christian slaves were not to serve their masters reluctantly, but faithfully. They were to be polite and respectful. They were to please to their masters. No wonder Christian slaves brought higher prices in the slave markets in the 1st century. They served their masters well and faithfully!

It's quite likely that Christian slaves formed a considerable part of the 1st century churches within the Roman Empire. We know that some Christian slaves won their masters to faith in Jesus Christ. We know that some of those Christian slaves were elders in the churches, even though their masters were not elders! You can imagine how important a slave's respectful attitude would be, in that kind of situation.

The exhortation to Christian slaves certainly applies to Christian employees today. Christian employees will faithfully put in a good day's work. We won't steal company property, and say we're just "borrowing" it for a while. We won't steal from the company by doing our own thing (or even the Lord's work) on company time. We'll respect our employer, and be model employees. Obviously, if our employer were to tell us to do something that is contrary to the Word of God, we would have to respectfully refuse – even if it cost us our job.

Christian slaves were to be different, and Christian employees are to be different. Why? Model employees will "*adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things*" (v10). Our exemplary lifestyle will reflect our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, and it will be a good witness to unbelievers.

Employees who are sound in doctrine will make Christ attractive by their honest and trustworthy lifestyle.

Practical Applications

1. Let's not provide ammunition to the enemy.

Titus and the young men of Crete were to use "*sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.*" That exhortation is for us as well. Non-Christians are watching us.

No argument is as effective as a holy life – and by holy life we mean **walk** as well as **talk**! Non-Christians will excuse all kinds of wrongdoing among themselves, but they surely won't excuse it in a Christian. They will find fault at the slightest inconsistency. We need to be extremely careful of what we say and do so we don't provide ammunition to the enemy.

2. Let's be attractive "ornaments" on the "Christian tree"!

I know that practical application sounds a little trite - but that's just about what verse 10 is saying: "*that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.*" Our lives and lifestyle should "adorn" the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. In fact, this verse can be considered the theme of the epistle to Titus.

As tasteful ornaments adorn a Christmas tree and make it beautiful and attractive, so believers should make Christianity attractive. Are you an ornament - or a blemish - on the Christian tree? Let's be attractive ornaments that adorn the Christian tree!