

Introduction

If you think that Bible doctrine is dull and boring stuff, look at **1 Tim. 1:9-10** for a minute. You see the list of all kinds of sinful activities, and then the Bible says, “and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.” Doctrine, then, is not just a dry theological lecture, but is vitally related to the living of life.

Give someone Christian doctrine, and they then have tools with which to live. Give them some surface application and all they have is a surface Christianity.

The Command to Teach – v. 1 (see also v. 15)

The job given to Titus, as to all pastors, is that he must teach sound doctrine. This is exactly what 2:1 says. “But **you** must speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.” This phrase can be examined from several different perspectives:

1. The Personal Perspective

I printed the word “you” in bold because it is written at the front of the sentence in the Greek. It is as if Paul is saying “*You* remember all those people I talked about in the past few verses? Well, they do one thing, but *YOU* are to do something totally different. *You* are not to look at them for an example. *You* don’t worry about them, in a sense, but make sure *you* do *your* job!” Did you ever hear this: “If everyone were jumping off a bridge, would you do it?” The point is, don’t follow the crowd. You do what is right. There is a huge contrast here (thus the word “but”).

2. The Imperative Perspective

The verb speak is a command word, an imperative. This sort of thing is not an option for a church. It is our job, a requirement, a command, a job description, that upon which we will be evaluated. It is commanded that our churches speak the right things. If they don’t, lock the doors and throw away the key.

3. The Vocal Perspective

“Some things,” the saying goes, “are better left unsaid.” Sound doctrine is not one of them. The other adage that religion and politics are not proper for discussion is just plain false. Titus is to *speak* from his pulpit sound doctrine. So are all pastors today. It’s like the “lifestyle evangelism” kick that’s gone around in years past. Yes, our lives are to adorn our doctrine. But that only goes so far. A person who *speaks* is necessary to convey the truth (**Rom. 10:14-17**). Truth propositions of the gospel are not conveyed by body language! Nor is any type of sound doctrine conveyed that way.

4. The Proper Perspective

By saying “proper” here, I am speaking about the word that is translated “become” in the KJV. It means “fitting” or “seemly” or “suitable” or “appropriate.” If sound doctrine is the mold, then what we speak must fit into that mold. Yes, there are lots of ways to say the same thing, but you have to be saying the things which “fit.”

5. The Correct Perspective

“Correct” here refers to the “sound” part of sound doctrine. I mentioned in earlier notes and messages on this book that “sound doctrine” means that which is free from error. It is, in a word, correct.

6. The Teaching Perspective

Doctrine simply means “that which is taught” or “teaching.” It is a shame when folks make pronouncements about things that they know nothing about (**1 Tim. 1:7**). Let it not be so with us, beloved.

The Content of the Teaching – vv. 2-10

Five groups of people are singled out as needing the teaching of sound doctrine. These are the older men, older women, younger women, younger men, and servants.

One cautionary note: the listed responsibilities are not the only ones that must be observed by folks in each age group. Silence in this passage does not necessarily mean that anything else you can think of is either not required or strictly prohibited. It may be that the listed items for each group as “focus” items for them to concentrate on in their particular stage in life.

Some Notes on The Term “Sober”

There is one characteristic that is listed for three of the five groups of people, and I think that it applies to the other two groups as well. It is the characteristic of “soberness.” I would like to highlight it before going into the specific groups.

First, how can I justify the statement that soberness applies more broadly to all the groups? Well, the older women are to teach the younger women to be that way. This would presume that the older women a) are supposed to be sober so that they can effectively teach that trait; and they b) are supposed to be sober because they were taught this as younger women themselves. I would suspect that servants are to behave the same way. In fact, the first four categories are fairly comprehensive (older and younger men and women) so that they overlap the “servants” category. Finally, note that the word “likewise” is used a couple of times (2:3, 2:6) which indicates that Titus was to exhort them in like manner to like virtues. After all, Christian virtues are Christian virtues. We all need them.

Second, what exactly is this “soberness” that we are talking about? It is from the Greek *sophron* (σώφρων). The noun form is used in 2:2 (temperate), a verb form in 2:4 (to be sober), the noun form again in 2:5 (discreet), and another verb form in 2:6 (sober-minded). In sum, the words center around the ideas of self-control, prudence, thoughtfulness, sensibility, reasonableness, seriousness. In Greek thought, this included avoiding extremes and careful consideration for responsible action. Aristotle said that “the prudent person is intent on the what, the how, and the when of doing what should be done.”

You might be interested in why the similar Greek terms are translated with different English words. A general answer can be found in the explanation of the KJV translators themselves, where they explain that the sense of the passage can be conveyed, often better, by not slavishly using the same word all the time. We have not space here to copy their statement; instead, if you are interested, please see the last page of *The Translators to the Reader* in the opening pages of the 1611 KJV, available from Hendrickson Publishers in facsimile form, ISBN 1-56563-160-9.

1. Older Men – v. 2.

- A. Sober. Level-headed, restrained in conduct. No wild outbursts.
- B. Reverent/grave. Worthy of respect or honor, noble, dignified, serious, above reproach.
- C. Temperate. See comments above about “soberness.”
- D. Sound in faith. One who heeds the sound teaching of a good pastor (1:9) such as Titus (2:1) and believes correct doctrine himself. The mark of a mature Christian is that he holds to correct doctrine to his latter days. He doesn’t “water it down” or become unstable.
- E. Sound in love. Compassion and concern for others. A “warm regard for and interest in another.”
- F. Sound in patience or endurance. The older men are to be marked by ever-increasing patience and longsuffering. That is, “the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty; steadfastness, perseverance.”

What we see here is a beautiful picture of a mature man who is life is founded on inward sensible thinking. This works out into godly conduct toward others and becomes a model to be followed. He holds sound beliefs and exercises love in the outbound direction, and takes with patience those things that come inbound into his life.

2. Older Women – v. 3-4a.

- A. Reverent behavior. This is a combination of two words “demeanor or behavior” and “reverent or venerable.”
- B. Not slanderers. The word for slander is “diabolos” which is the word used for “Devil.” It means one who engages in slander, that is, to insult, malign, disparage, or smear.
- C. Not given to much wine. The verb here is a perfect passive which indicates they should not “be in a state of servanthood to wine.”
- D. Teaching good things.

The purpose (*that*) of being a woman like this is that there is a need for qualified teachers of younger women.

3. Young Women – vv. 4b-5.

- A. Be sober. See comments above about “sobriety.” Here the idea is for the older women to teach/advice/encourage/urge the younger ones to become sober.
- B. Love their husbands
- C. Love their children
- D. Discreet. See comments above about “soberness.”
- E. Chaste
- F. Homemakers
- G. Good
- H. Obedient to husbands

The purpose (*that*) of these is “that the word of God may not be blasphemed.”

See also Prov. 31:10-31 which I preached in place of the above.

Review

Remember that this whole section deals with sound doctrine as it relates to “practical living” and holy character for different groups of people in the church:

1. Older men, v. 2.
2. Older women, v. 3-4a.
3. Younger women, v. 4b-5.

Interestingly, though many people today clamor for “relevant” preaching, God has already planned out the best way for the Bible to be written and, in just the right mixture, there are passages in it which directly address the requirements laid out for Christians and the underlying reasons and spiritual resources that have been given to achieve these requirements. Many other passages which folks might consider “dry doctrine” are far from that—they tell of the wonders of Christ and salvation and give examples of God’s awesome work in history. If you go straight through the Bible you will get just the right spiritual nutrition (that is, a *spiritually balanced diet*) which God has planned for you!

4. Young Men – vv. 6-8.

Since Titus is mentioned in the “young men” section, I take it that he a younger man himself. As such, he is to be sober, a quality that many young men today could use in larger measure. As we said above, the word “sober” has the ideas of self-control, prudence, thoughtfulness, sensibility, reasonableness, seriousness. This includes avoiding extremes and careful consideration for responsible action. Aristotle said that “the prudent person is intent on the what, the how, and the when of doing what should be done.”

Besides being sober-minded these young men are to see in Titus a stellar example for their conduct. This example includes:

- A. Pattern of good works. Titus is to be a *type* or *model* for others to follow. Specifically, he is to be a model in the area of good works. If there is any person in the assembly to model your good works after, it should be the pastor—whether young like Titus or not. He should be virtuous and a constant doer of good.
- B. Integrity in doctrine. Here we come back to the teaching ministry of the pastor. His teaching is to be sincere. Coming from a sincere heart, with sincere practice of what he teaches. There is a note of consistency here, not wavering back and forth all the time.
- C. Reverence in doctrine. The idea of reverence is dignity, seriousness, holiness. “A manner or mode of behavior that indicates one is above what is ordinary and therefore worthy of special respect.” That is true of doctrine, that it is worthy of special respect. But also of the preacher, that he is to be serious about this matter, not flippant or irreverent.
- D. Incorruptibility in doctrine. This is the idea of “sound” teaching once again. It keeps coming up. Hmmm...there must be a reason for that! Maybe we could say “right doctrine handled rightly and lived rightly” to sum up the above three.
- E. Sound speech that is un-condemnable. This means speech that is beyond reproach. That’s tough! It is not considered blameworthy. I take it that this speech includes his preaching as well as his other talk. In order for this to happen, much thought needs to happen before the talking is started.

The purpose (*that*) of these is “that the one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.” The opponent is simply one who is opposed or contrary to the ministry, in an opposite direction. (Be extremely careful about labeling someone in your own church this way—our real opponent is outside.) The idea is that that the model life will bring shame to those who are looking for a handle against it. The opponent should not be able to take this “model list” and point out something morally substandard or low-grade in what Titus is doing.

MAP

Introduction

So far, we’ve seen sound doctrine specifically targeting:

1. Older men, v. 2.
2. Older women, v. 3-4a.
3. Younger women, v. 4b-5.
4. Younger men, v. 6-8.

Now, the Scriptures give instruction to bondservants.

5. Servants – vv. 9-10.

First we need to understand who a “servant” or “bondservant” is. It comes from the Greek δούλος *doulos*. The term can apply to voluntary or involuntary servants, but most often refers to one in long-term servitude, in subjection to a master. These would be most simply defined as slaves. Note the following:

- ❑ The servant could be released from debts owed (Matt. 18:27).
- ❑ The servant could be beaten (Matt. 18:34).
- ❑ The servant can be in a position of great authority (Matt. 24:45).
- ❑ The servant has a duty and payment is not due for it (Luke 17:10).
- ❑ See these verses for additional instructions to servants: Eph. 6:5 (obedience, reverence, sincerely); Col. 3:22 (ditto); 1 Tim. 6:1 (honor toward master); 1 Peter 2:18 (submit even to harsh masters).
- ❑ The idea of servitude pales in comparison to the slavery to sin that all unredeemed men suffer (masters included!). See John 8:34.

These verses apply fairly closely to the employer/employee relationship of today.

Note the ways that slaves are supposed to behave:

A. Obedient to their own masters.

Subordination or subjection is the main verb here. While this is an infinitive and could be classed as an imperative infinitive, this kind of use is quite rare. It is better to stick with the italicized text “Exhort” as a supplied word, with the “to be subject” and “to be pleasing” as complements to that, indicating what specifically Titus should exhort.

To be obedient or subordinate is not rocket science. I’m sure you can think of instances in your own life where you have done something to avoid being subordinate to someone over you (parent or employer?), even if you left the appearance that you were.

Think about this obedience in the context of obedience to your Heavenly Master...

The text also emphasizes that slaves have a responsibility toward “their own” masters, not someone else’s. That is helpful – a servant is not everyone’s servant, but just his master’s. It is a tough thing to have two or more people think they are your boss!

B. Please them in all things.

This reflects the positive side of the previous point, namely that you could be subordinate, but just “barely.” The slave’s attitude should be one of trying to please the master, not just doing enough to “get by.”

This is balanced by the teaching of Eph. 6:5 that the work one does it not *just* for the sake of pleasing men, but it is done with the idea of pleasing God ultimately. The phrase “all things” has to be qualified somewhat as well. This has to be balanced with the fact that you cannot please anyone who desires you to sin on their behalf. This is sometimes forgotten by those who teach an excessively rigid “chain of command” structure. They say that you must do whatever your authority tells you (parent, husband, employer), even if it is sin, because if you don’t, then you won’t be obeying the chain of command that God has set up “in all things,” and that is itself sin! But this logic is far from spiritual. See Acts 5:29.

C. Not answering back.

The same verb “to speak against” is used in Titus 1:9. There, the folks “behind” the word seemed to be unbelievers. They “spoke against” the truth. Here the reference is to the

servants who might ‘speak against’ their master. They are not supposed to do that! It sort of sounds like a mother saying to her child, ‘Don’t talk back!’ It’s the attitude that the words reveal, not so much the words themselves.

D. Not pilfering. The KJV has “purloining.”

This is an interesting word. It is not the normal word for stealing, but it means specifically “to put aside for oneself, keep back...engagement in a type of skimming operation.” This sounds like embezzlement and indeed that is what it is. Insider advantage is not to be used to take a little here and a little there. That *is* stealing.

Illustrations from 760 WJR News (www.wjr.net) in the last few months: April 19, 2005: Michael Bowdell was charged with embezzlement by a public official over \$50 for allegedly taking some \$36,000 cash over a five year period from an elderly couple to pay their property taxes. Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Maria Miller picks up the story from there: “When the couple found out that they had received a foreclosure notice they realized instantly that the money had not been correctly applied.”

February 9, 2005: Police say she confessed to her crime, and that the former Grosse Pointe Woods church treasurer is facing a court date on an embezzlement charge. 45-year-old Janis Ferworn worked at Christ the King Lutheran Church from 1997 until last year. She’ s accused of embezzling some 700,000 dollars. The money apparently came from a building fund at the church, which is now undergoing major renovations. Authorities say she contacted the church pastor and admitted to stealing the money over several years. If convicted, she could get up to ten years in prison.

The bottom line? A slave should be totally trustworthy, as Joseph (Gen. 39:6; 39:23).

E. Showing all good fidelity.

Fidelity here picks up on the idea of embezzlement in the previous portion of the verse. True, rather than being a thief, the slave should be faithful to his employer. But I think the reference is wider than that. The slave is to demonstrate or manifest his **faith** (Christian faith - *pistis πίστις*). This comes by outward actions and attitudes, so that we can say he must demonstrate his Christian faith by his works. That includes being a faithful employee, but more than that demonstrates the reality of one’s faith as working out in a demonstration of an appropriate life. In other words, it is possible and necessary to demonstrate the reality of your faith.

Purpose and Conclusion

The purpose (*that*) of these is “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.” To adorn means to cause something to have an attractive appearance through decoration. In this context, it means to do credit to, to make Christianity look nice by your actions, to show its beauty. So often the faith can be given a black eye by our actions.

“God our Savior” is a loaded phrase. Let me put it this way. We understand that the Spirit of God inspired the writing of this passage. But in addition to that, these words indicate the very nub of Paul’s thinking about his Savior. He thinks of Him as God Himself. Jesus is not some fifth wheel way out there who paid for our sins and that’s about the extent of our need of Him. Perish the thought! Jesus is very God of very God. Salvation is a relationship with Him, with God Himself. The Bible plainly teaches that Abraham “believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:6). We basically do the same thing today since we believe in Jesus Christ, who is God our Saviour! Certainly we are blessed with more revelation, but it boils down to this: are you right with God our Saviour or aren’t you?
MAP

Quote of the Day and Food for Thought:

“If the professed convert distinctly and deliberately declares that he knows his Lord’s will, but does not mean to attend to it, you are not to pamper his presumption, but it is your duty to assure him that he is not saved.”

C. H. Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner*. <http://www.spurgeon.org/misc/sw01.htm>

Bibliography: BDAG is where most of the quotes came from here. In fact, many of my notes take definitions from there without citation. No plagiarism intended! I cannot make up these definitions myself!