

Text: Titus 2:1-5

Title: Living According to Sound Doctrine, Part 1

Truth: The church must follow sound doctrine so it will honor God.

Date/Location: Sunday June 27, 2021 at FBC

Introduction, v. 1

Paul instructs Titus as to how he is to teach sound doctrine. You might imagine that this describes the ministry Titus is to have directly to the churches in Crete, as if he is planning to visit each one and do some preaching and teaching. That is not out of the realm of possibility, but there is another option. Paul could well be telling Titus how to train the elders he was appointing in the churches. He was to teach *them* so that they in turn could pass this sound doctrine to their *churches*. This would multiply Titus's efforts so that he could reach more churches. In this scenario, he would be following the same pattern as Paul taught Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2.

Whichever is the case, the point for us today is that the things that Paul taught Titus here, and that Titus taught the less experienced pastors in Crete, are the same things that we are to teach in our churches today and in our homes.

Note carefully that sound doctrine is not just "information." It is not complex theological topics you learn in an advanced graduate school seminar or college course. Sound doctrine is what we live by. It is healthy. Consider 1 Timothy 1:8-11 in which Paul speaks of *behaviors* contrary to sound doctrine.

There is *nothing* in these texts that are culturally bound or irrelevant today. These truths are always "fitting for sound teaching" and "proper for healthy doctrine." Without these truths—or with the opposite ideas around today—you have incomplete spiritual nutrition; unhealthy doctrine; and even poisonous teaching.

Titus is to address the various "tracks" in the church based on age and social standing. The instructions here cover everyone in the adult category, and by implication the children as well inasmuch as they are preparing to enter the young man or woman category and

need to know what is proper conduct for such a person, whether Christian or not but especially if a follower of Jesus.

It is helpful to notice the contrast between Titus (“but as for you”) and the false teachers in 1:10-11, 14, and between church members and the general Cretan population (1:12-16). To draw that out just a little, consider Titus’s teaching sound doctrine as opposed to Jewish fables and commandments of men. Or, compare the pattern of lying, evil, and laziness generally found on Crete to the sober, faithful, teaching of good things, chaste, loving conduct expected to be in the people of God.

I. Older Men, v. 2

Who are older men? One suggestion was from ages 50-56. I doubt Paul is being so specific. With shorter lifespans and harder living conditions, 40+ is probably a better age range. With men married by 20, it seems hard to count a 45-year-old as “young man.” He should be very mature by then.

A. Sober. This word is especially focused on the issue of alcohol, but it can also mean restrained, self-controlled in a more general sense. It would seem that older fellows would mellow out some, but mid-life crises, substance use, wasteful financial habits, or other things weigh against that in some cases.

B. Reverent. Dignified, honorable, worthy of respect, serious. He is not silly, trivial, dramatic, etc.

C. Temperate. English translations suggest some different nuances here, like sensible or self-controlled. This concept is found throughout 2:1-10.

D. Sound in faith. The word is the same one used in verse 1 of *sound* doctrine that Titus was called to teach. The older men should be as sound as the Bible is sound. Not sound as the dollar, which is not sound, but sound as the Bible!

E. Sound in love and patience. These two characteristics complete a triad with faith. It sounds like “faith, hope, and love” which are found in 1 Cor. 13:13, 1 Thess. 1:3, and 1 Thess. 5:8. Here, hope is

replaced by the similar *patience*. No cranky old men should be found in the church!

II. Older Women, v. 3

Who exactly are the older women? The modern western-culture pastor can get himself into trouble because “old” is not considered a good thing. In other cultures, it was good because it meant a) you had the wisdom of years, b) you had survived the hazards of youth, and c) you were worthy of respect of the younger people. Still, 40s and up are certainly in the older women category. If you think of younger women as these people did—starting a family in the teenage years, then by the time you were 40, you had 20+ years of adult life experience behind you. You may have older children and know by practice how to live as a Christian in a godless culture.

- A. Reverent in behavior. Not catty, for sure. The Greek word here is a compound of two words that speak of behavior “fitting to holiness.”
- B. Not slanderers. Not “devils”! The word for slander or accuser is “diabolos” which is what “Devil” means. Older women do not do the Devil’s work with their mouth.
- C. Not given to much wine. Absolute prohibition for any fermented beverage cannot be found. But what is always found is that Christians are not to be addicted to anything, including alcohol. Not only does alcohol cloud your mind and mess with your behavior, being “long at it” indicates a life of laziness which is not to mark a Christian woman—or man!
- D. Teachers of good things. The direction of their teaching is toward the younger women in the church. Immediately we think of “women’s ministry” in the church. But there are problems with this notion.
 - 1. Women’s ministries often focus on many things BUT what is listed here. Such women’s ministries fall short of the mark. This is because older women either did not practice, do not believe, or do not want to teach these controversial things to younger women.

2. A women’s Bible study—even in the church—must not be the primary source of teaching that a woman gets, because she is supposed to get most of it from the pastor(s) of the church, from listening to her husband (1 Cor. 14:35), and from her own study of the Word. A woman can and should receive doctrinal teaching from the pastor. She should not be getting all her instruction from a women’s ministry. A women’s ministry is not a cure-all for the ills of life.
3. The teaching Paul envisions here is not a church-based women’s ministry at all! It happens in day-to-day life, not in church or ladies meetings! The church should not need a specific ministry set aside for this kind of teaching because it should be happening naturally, all the time. Yet many older women do not want to “tell others what to do” or they do not care, or they do not want conflict, or they simply have been brought up and still believe opposite of Bible teaching on these subjects.

It is interesting that Titus should not have to teach on the topics listed in verse 5 to the young women, because they should be well grounded in it by the older Christian women!

- E. The older women are called to teach things to younger women—things that they themselves know from a life of faithfulness and experience. They are not teaching things in theory which they themselves are not practicing. This concept ties together the conduct requirements for the older and younger women so that they are cut from the same cloth.

III. Young Women, v. 4-5

The age boundaries of “young women” are not defined, but clearly they are young wives, that is, of marriageable age. In ancient Rome, this could be as young as 12 years old for girls (and 14 for boys). So any woman teenaged and up to the 20s would be considered young. The vast majority of brides in the 1600s in Great Britain were 19 years and older. We might think of young women in the 19-29 category or mid-30s (?). It is interesting that if you transfer this to our present cultural context, the expectations for Christian young women are very high and very clear. There is no

allowance for a wild period in the life of a young person after which they should settle down. Such wild living times only lead to regrets and may have serious life-altering consequences.

Young women are instructed by sound Christian doctrine to:

- A. Love their husbands. Indeed, ladies, you are commanded by God in heaven to love your husbands, whether hubby is a turkey or not. Love is a decision, as they say, a disposition, not merely a feeling. It is awfully nice when then feeling comes along with the decision, though, isn't it? But consider this instruction in a culture where the young woman *did not select her husband!* In a situation where your parents decided for you, you might not have gotten your "prince charming" who you had a crush on for 5 years!
- B. Love their children. 2 Timothy 3:2-3 reminds us that in the last times, people will love themselves instead of loving others and love/affection even for family will be absent. The love that a young mother has for her children is a beautiful thing to see. This must propel her through the difficult times with the child when the baby is sick or cranky.
- C. Be discreet. This is the adjective form of the word used for young men that means "self-controlled," same as the requirement of elders in Titus 1:8 (sober-minded) and of older men in Titus 2:2. She is able to curb her desires, fencing them in to the appropriate time and place in her life.
- D. Be chaste. This refers to bodily/sexual purity. A wife is to be pure and keep herself only for her husband.
- E. Be a homemaker. The word is used only here in the New Testament and it is literally a "home worker." This does not mean someone who works FROM home, as in having an outside job where COVID has moved you out of the employer's shared office space. It means someone who works IN the home, a woman whose "job" is to watch the house, guard the house, keep the home, "stay at home" although this obviously includes being industrious with regard to going outside the home to bring things into the home that are needful. She is one who tends to domestic responsibilities, cares

for children, etc. She does not go out to war; a man who was a “stay at home” in this context was not doing his job.

The whole idea of this is very disfavored in our culture, but it is very favorable to God. It is the plain teaching of God’s word.

1. This implies several things. First, it means that women who are homemakers actually WORK. They are not on vacation. It is a luxury, in a sense, not having to go out to chase the almighty dollar or be exposed to unbelieving men in the workplace. But homemaking is not a luxury in that it is *work*. Granted, some tasks are repetitive and menial, and so it is not exciting. But if you are not keeping the home and instead are on social media all the time, you are not a homemaker, and you are disobeying this portion of Scripture. In fact, the Facebook-at-home-mom is the modern technological version of 1 Timothy 5:13.

If your house is dirty or unkempt or unorganized and you do not want to have guests over and hospitality is out of the question, then you are not keeping the home. In that case, you are a *dweller* at the home, but not a *keeper* or *worker* in the home.

2. This instruction implies that husbands must be responsible enough to maintain a family and home without the wife having to go out and scratch up extra income with all of her time. She cannot be a homemaker if she is a factory worker with most of her waking hours! He must work hard enough, long enough, be educated enough, skilled enough, or whatever combination he can muster, to make it happen.
3. Homemakers must be clever to use the resources they have to support their family and make it easier on their husbands who are working outside the home so that they do not have to work so hard to keep up with the bills. They can use their time to save money, to make food, to grow food, invent better ways to do the things around the home, clip coupons, or whatever! The opposite of this is a wife who goes out and spends like crazy, and wants more, more, more. She wants to keep up with the Jones’s and have the latest everything and the most expensive clothes. That is not doing her job in the home.

4. A big part of the work at home is raising sons and daughters who live according to Scripture, who are diligent, who have and do chores, who balance their lives properly, who do their schoolwork or homework, etc. This means that mom includes the children in Bible reading and study and teaches them everything she can in the precious few years they are with her. Part of her work is to be systematic about that, not haphazard.
 5. Although much complaint is made today by women who want to be pulpiteers and provide pastoral care, I perceive that not so much emphasis is placed upon the fact that mothers play a crucial role in training their daughters in the next generation's work of the home, and their sons in becoming providers, being caring men who treat women properly, and being godly men. If you are a woman who aspires to influence the work of God, do so through the children you raise and teach! That is how you can serve God without aspiring to serve in ways that God has prohibited (1 Timothy 2:12).
- F. Be good. A young woman is to be kind, a person of high standards and merit.
- G. Be obedient to their own husbands. Everyone wants to take this out of the wedding vows today, but it is in traditional vows for a reason, because God knew exactly where problem areas would be in the home. God has appointed the husband as the head of the home; this means his wife and children should follow his godly leadership.

As always, obedience is offered by the wife, not demanded by the husband. It is right for him to expect it from her, but he cannot force it upon her. The Christian virtue is voluntary submission to authority, not forced or begrudging submission.

If a wife is not obedient to her husband, the word of God will be blamed. Her pagan husband will blame the Christian teaching for her contrariness and that will be the end of any hope for him to receive the gospel. The society around will see the dysfunctional home and blaspheme God. The woman who is disobedient *should* be blamed, but in the natural state of unbelieving women (= feminism), the disobedient woman is praised.

Note that these concepts are not taught by God through the apostle simply to “accommodate” to a male-dominant patriarchal culture of the time. Someone might suggest, “That was true then so that the church could thrive and not come into conflict with society, but it is the opposite today.” This whole line of argument is not one that is faithful to the text of Scripture. Rather, its fidelity is to the cultural whims of the day, and it contorts Scripture to fit its mold. Could we say that *any* of the other characteristics listed in Titus 2:1-10 are temporary or changeable? Sobriety, self-control, love, patience, loving children, chastity...are these qualities accommodated to a particular culture? It should be obvious that is not the case. Neither are the other instructions for the young women—we cannot ignore things that seem hard.

To be continued...

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