

Text: Titus 2:6-10

Title: Living According to Sound Doctrine, Part 2

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

Date/Location: July 18, 2021 at FBC

Introduction

Last time we were in Titus, we examined 2:1-5. We saw that Titus was to teach various groups in the church truths that were specific to their situations. We got through older men, older women, and younger women. Now we turn to young men, the pastor himself, and to servants. The section numbering picks up from last time.

IV. Young Men, v. 6

The term *young men*, like the other age-based categories in this section, does not have crisp boundaries in its definition and it is even less specified than for the young women. We might suggest young men are from early teenaged years up to early 20s or 30s, somewhat parallel to the young women. Given that life spans by this time were shorter, 40s and up would not qualify as young. Someone in their 30s-40s or higher should be quite mature and level-headed. They would, like the young women, typically be married and have children.

I was interested in the fact that only a single instruction is given for young men. Obviously, all of the instructions for older men are applicable as well, because that is what young men should be striving for.

A. Sober-minded.

This instruction uses a relatively uncommon word. It means to be self-controlled, sensible, sober. This is a different Greek word than the *sober* in verse 2, but it is similar. It is far more than just sobriety vis-à-vis alcohol. We find it of the demon-possessed man—after being healed—in Mark 5:15 and Luke 8:35. Young men should not be like the demon-possessed fellow before his healing! All Christians are to have this kind of sound judgment about themselves (Rom. 12:3). The apostle Paul considered the possibilities that he could be considered either crazy or of sound

mind, but either way it was for the sake of the gospel among the Corinthians (2 Cor. 5:13). We all are to be of sober mind and full of prayer because the end of the age is near (1 Peter 4:7).

The Christian young man is called by God to be no-nonsense; levelheaded, rational, reasonable, clear-headed, temperate, moderate, restrained. He is not to be addicted to anything—substances, entertainment, technology, games, pornography. He is not to be lazy. He is not to act wildly like a worldly young man with friends going out on the town or getting into trouble. He is to honor his parents, honor authority, and learn the discipline of hard work, the value of money, self-restraint, education, etc.

- B. The young man Titus himself should be an example to his fellow young men. Someone who is not a practitioner of these things is not qualified to train others to follow Christ. See the next section for details on this.

V. The Pastor as an Example, v. 7-8

Although Titus is not technically a pastor, his role is like a pastor and thus applicable to today's church under-shepherds.

- A. A pattern of good works must be evident in the minister's life. That example should be consistent. Outsiders should not have a reason based on his works to doubt that the pastor really is a man of God. The fact that he is a pattern or model or example is important—other people who may be perplexed about what to do with their lives should be able to see his example and do likewise without fear of being in the wrong.
- B. Integrity in doctrine. Incorruption, which means *freedom from corruption*, is a quality of teaching where the pastor is not propagating error. His doctrine is pure, sound, true, accurate, not deceptive or partial.

One corruption in teaching happens when it is two-faced. As an example, consider the pastor holds firmly to sound doctrine when in one setting, but with other people, he softens his stance. This “political” posturing is meant to save his face, not to honor God.

- C. Reverence. Titus is to be a serious person, not a jokester or lightweight. He is dignified; a cut above ordinary; he is holy.
- D. Incorruptible. The KJV and NKJV include this word, which speaks of the absence of moral corruptibility in life and teaching.
- E. Sound speech that is above condemnation. It is to be beyond reproach. Of course, the world at some point will try to heap reproach upon the minister because he says things that they disagree with. At this point, the minister should have the support of his church family to confirm for him that what he has said is not worthy of condemnation. Make sure the fault is in the opponent, and not in your ministry! Example: if you call sin out for what it is, that cannot be validly condemned by anyone. But if you are mean, unreasonable, etc. in your speech, then that is reproachable.
- F. The result: an opponent would be ashamed because there is nothing evil to say about you. They might resort to lies, but short of that, they would be silenced. These opponents are the people like the false teachers and sinful citizens of Crete (1:10-13, 15-16). When a minister falls into sin, the world is happy because God's name has been sullied, and they have excuse for their sin and rejection of God. Do not think of the most unreasonable person you can conjure up in your mind when you evaluate this point. Think of a fairly level-headed unbeliever, an older man who is a decent guy by the world's standards. Does *he* have anything evil to say of you? Do not think of the standard being set by a young liberal or atheist who cannot saying anything good about anything!

VI. Bondservants, v. 9-10a

- A. When servants are mentioned, everyone's mind immediately goes to *slavery*. Stop! This was not always the same thing as chattel slavery, although sometimes it was. We discussed this at length in our introduction to the series in Philemon. Slavery was very common in ancient Rome—30 to 40% of the population! Bottom line: Christianity does not endorse chattel slavery and even encourages slaves to become free. But neither does it tell slaves to revolt or behave in awful ways toward fellow human beings.

- B. Notice that for the apostle Paul, there was something more important than overturning all forms of bondage or slavery. And what was that? The Christian gospel and conduct are top priority. Slavery—as important as it has been in history—is *less important* than the gospel. Why? Because it is a temporary state. A person who is a slave will be fine in the end if they are a Christian; a person who is free but an unbeliever will be far worse off after life is over. The same ranking principle applies to other issues as well: the problem of poverty is less important than the gospel; the problem of taxes is less important than the gospel; the amount of government restrictions is less important than the gospel; and so forth. It is hard to say that abortion is less important than the gospel, but I discern that we must admit that even though the issue of life is extremely important, the church cannot give up the gospel to fight abortion. Even though we cannot do much about abortion on a society-wide scale, we *can* preach the gospel! Certainly, Christianity informs all of the above issues and should guide us in our individual efforts to help people and save lives, but it is the *gospel* and Christian conduct that must be maintained. We have no power to change these society-wide factors as the present time, so we must focus on the gospel.
- C. If you were stuck in slavery, there was a way to be Christian about it, and Paul explains that here. In any unpleasant situation, you can take cues from this portion of Scripture.
1. Obedient to their masters. This is a good testimony and, assuming a generally decent master, will make life easier on everyone.
 2. Well pleasing in all things. What the master requires should be what the servant does.
 3. Not answering back. Do not be argumentative all the time. Not only are these kinds of behaviors demonstrative of Christian virtues, they are practical in that they make things go more smoothly.
 4. Not thieves. You might figure, “The master is stealing my labor, so I can steal from him.” Wrong answer! Two wrongs do not make a right, as they say. Christians are not supposed to steal,

period (Exodus 20:15, Eph. 4:28). The word for *steal* here is not like smash-and-grab steal, but pilfering, holding some back for yourself, embezzling, or things like that.

5. Good faithfulness in their work. Christian servants (and today, workers) should be the most diligent of all and should therefore, all else being equal, rise to the level of their natural ability. If they are given and agree to a task, they should finish it straightaway. They should be trustworthy.

D. Imagine Paul saying: “If you are a Christian, you need to disobey your master, be displeasing in all your conduct, talk back all the time, steal from your masters because they deserve it, and demonstrate a lack of faithfulness.” That is preposterous.

Christians in the plight of bondservice and even slavery are to behave honorably toward God and man. They do not “take out” their rage against others. Instead, they trust God and live honorably. They are the best they can be in those circumstances. They testify of their faith by their conduct in front of their master and their fellow slaves. And yes, do what they can legally and ethically to achieve freedom.

Conclusion, v. 5, 8, 10

The results of the Christian lifestyle in every age and social group are found in verses 5, 8, and 10:

“That the word of God may not be blasphemed.”

“That one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.”

“That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.”

We discern two directions in the purpose of Paul’s teaching. The first is toward **God**. It is not just the reputation of the church or the shame of an individual that is at issue: **God’s** honor and glory are even more important. If we behave badly, the world easily notices and this drags God’s word and name into the mud. That ought to be a deep concern to us. Compare this to Romans 2:23-24. If we live well, God’s teaching is “dressed up nicely” with our conduct

and it makes God and His doctrine all that much more appealing to an outsider.

The second direction in which a truly Christian lifestyle makes an impact is toward **people**. If we behave well consistently and in a loving fashion (not a haughty fashion) then we will have an impact on others around us. They may persist in denying Christ or saying that they do not believe like we do, but they cannot deny that our lives are well-lived and there is nothing evil to say. However, when a church has an incident of abuse or a split or does strange things in the community, that gives the people an excuse to reject not only the church, but God as well.

The church family's ethics must be superb. The church must stand out in a society that is unethical. But Paul's concern is not just that the church be different so it is non-conformist. His instructions are not an expediency to keep the church alive in the Roman culture. His concern is the truth of God, the doctrine which is in agreement with godliness (Titus 1:1). It is applicable in every culture throughout all time. Truth supersedes culture and whether following truth means the church is well-thought-of or ill-thought-of does not matter ultimately. What matters is that God is honored by faithful obedience to His word.

When you examine your own life in light of the instructions for men or women and servants, how do you stack up? Is your life honoring your Savior and Lord, or is it dragging His name down?

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