

Godliness through the Ranks

Titus 2:1-5 (09/16/18)

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Titus 2:1-5 *But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. 2 Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. 3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.*

Godliness through Healthy Doctrine

Titus 2:1 *But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.*

I'm definitely not big into health food. The thing that amazes me is how healthy most of us are considering all the junk food we eat. You'd think we'd have died years ago from malnutrition or something worse. God is gracious!

But when it comes to your spiritual diet, you cannot grow a healthy, godly life without a diet of sound or healthy doctrine. Last week we saw the end of the false teachers who were teaching anything but sound doctrine. God describes them in Titus 1:16 as detestable, disobedient, and worthless for any good deed. Imagine having that etched on your memorial stone for all to see! That's the result of a deadly diet that doesn't change the heart. You need healthy doctrine for healthy living.

Living a godly life requires feeding on the healthy doctrines of a sovereign, holy God, a glorious, loving Savior, a powerful, heart-changing salvation, justification by faith alone, union with Christ that motivates you to love Christ and live for Christ and much more. In verse 1 Paul commands Titus, and every church leader, to be sure to keep on speaking, teaching, discipling, and counseling the connection between sound doctrine and godly living. Let me give you three simple truths about change and growing in godliness.

First, if you are a believer in Christ, change is possible, regardless of your habits or how people have treated you. You are in Christ, have the Spirit of Christ within you, and the Word of God to guide you. You can change.

Second, change is for every believer, regardless of gender or age or station in life.

Third, change is imperative for everyone. You haven't arrived at perfection yet, agreed? We are all in the growth process. You've been justified, you'll be glorified, but right now you are being sanctified, changing and growing to become more like Christ.

Now let's look at Titus 2:1-5. Here Paul speaks to four groups of people in the church: older men, older women, younger women, and younger men. We'll see what a spiritually healthy congregation looks like in the first three groups this morning.

Godliness among older men.

Verse 2 *Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance.*

Paul starts with us older guys. You never retire from growing spiritually. You may be tempted to kick back and collect sea shells during your autumn years, but that's not God's plan. Listen to what the Psalmist says about aging:

Psalms 71:18 *Even when I am old and gray, O God, do not forsake me, Until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to all who are to come.*

Psalms 92:12-15 The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, He will grow like a cedar in Lebanon. 13 Planted in the house of the LORD, They will flourish in the courts of our God. 14 They will still yield fruit in old age; They shall be full of sap and very green, 15 To declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Aren't those good? Listen, we're aging. America's population is aging. Very shortly there'll be more people over 65 than those under 18 in the United States. We may be slower, duller, and wrinklier than we used to be, but God still wants to use us for His glory! We may be tempted to grumble and complain. If so, we need to cut it out. There is no such thing as a grumpy old godly man. We often think our way is the best way. We may claim that we can't change, we can't read, we can't memorize, blah, blah. We may use our old age as an excuse, "Well, you can't teach an old dog new tricks." But like Jay Adams says, "That may be true of dogs, but you're not a dog!" We need to learn from Caleb of the Bible; he was just as excited living for God at 85 as he was at 40!

Joshua 14:10-12, "Here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me..." Grrrr! Oorah! May his tribe increase!

Here are marks of spiritual health for older guys. They apply to all Christians, but may be a bit harder for those who are older.

First, you must be temperate, or sober minded. It means being thoughtful and keeping your wits about you. You can't go out and spend money you don't have for stuff you don't need. You have godly priorities for your time and money and resources.

Second, you've got to be dignified, or as KJV puts it, grave. That's a tough one. This isn't saying you must walk around with a sour face or never have fun or never be humorous. It does mean not being an old fool, taking nothing seriously, acting goofy all the time. Because you have experienced years of life, you have a seasoned view of life. You've seen family and friends go through hard times, job loss, rebellious children, and death of loved ones. You realize life is short and serious.

Third, you've got to be sensible or self-controlled. You may not feel like doing something, but the sensible man does what he knows is the right thing

Then in the last part of verse 2, Paul highlights three areas of a healthy, vigorous spiritual life: faith, love, and steadfastness.

Older men are to be sound in faith. You know your God and trust in Him, knowing His grace is sufficient for anything that life here on earth brings. You are unswervingly committed to the Bible as the Word of God, knowing it is the source of Truth.

Older men are to be sound in love. You're not perfect. You're still learning to deny yourself, follow Christ, and love the people in your life. This love begins with your wife and children and grandchildren. Older guys need to care about others without being a nuisance. One older man wanted to help his wife so he made an appointment to see the family doctor. "I think she's losing her hearing, Doc. Can you do anything for her?" "Well," replied Doc, "let's do a test. The next time she's in the kitchen working, walk up about five feet behind her and ask in a normal voice, 'What's for dinner, dear?' If she doesn't answer, take a step closer and ask again. Do that until she answers and then tell me how close you had to get." So the old man went home looking for his chance. Sure enough, that evening his wife was working in the kitchen so he sneaked up about five feet away and asked, "What's for dinner, dear?" No answer. He took a step closer and asked again. Still nothing. Finally, about three feet away he asked, "What's for dinner, dear?" His wife turned and said, "Now dear, I've told you three times, pork chops and mashed potatoes!"

The last area Paul mentions for a vigorous spiritual life is being sound in steadfastness. I love this one. You don't quit even when it becomes uncomfortable and a bit hard. You hang in there, whether your 60 or

85. You don't let other people trip you up or let trials get you discouraged. You stay focused on Christ. You endure because your hope is getting close and burning brighter and brighter. Howard Hendricks said the older we get the more fired up we should be; we're getting ready to blast off into God's presence! You don't wallow in self-pity. You continue running the race set before you with endurance. Even if you can't get out of your chair, God has things he wants you to do. Like Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:7, "I've fought a good fight, I've kept the faith! I know I'm going to see my Savior very shortly." This is healthy spiritual godliness in older men.

Godliness among older ladies.

Verse 3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women

First let me say, we think the world of you ladies. There's nothing like a godly older woman. You are the diamonds and pearls in the body of Christ. Remember Dorcas in Acts 9:36? After she died, this is how they described her: "...*this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did.*" There's a godly woman. Proverbs 31 describes a godly woman as kind, encouraging, a diligent worker, blessing her husband. Some ladies have had it hard. They've had physical aches and pains, disappointments, tragedies, and hardships. Some have lived with husbands who over time became selfish and demeaning. But godly women learn to cast their cares on Jesus Christ. They grow in grace and in love for Christ. They patiently and quietly and gently live in marriages less than perfect. Instead of holding bitterness, they give God glory and learn to be thankful.

God says older women are to carry themselves in a reverent manner, which word is used only here. She isn't a man; she's a lady, acts like a lady, and keeps her heart set on pleasing God.

Older women are to guard their speech. They are careful to avoid gossiping or slandering or talking negatively about others. The word gossip is *diabolos*, translated devil, so when you gossip or slander someone, you mimic the devil who loves to slander. Guarding your speech takes sensitivity, discipline, and wisdom. When ladies gather at work or the playground and begin the gossip routine or spout off inappropriate language, a godly woman will stand apart.

Older women can't be enslaved or addicted to any substance, which isn't unusual in our day. Women may resort to drugs or alcohol if they become self-focused, stew in self-pity, or let loneliness, fear, or discouragement overwhelm them. Crete was known for heavy drinking. A godly woman knows God is her refuge and source of hope and strength; she takes her troubles to God.

Older women are to teach what is good to their children and grandchildren and younger ladies. How blessed our church is to have so many ladies who love Christ and love the Word and enjoy teaching the Word. Teaching what is good may also mean teaching what is kind, beautiful, and virtuous.

Older women are to encourage and minister to the younger set. Older ladies are far better suited than an elder to say some things. For an older man to tell a young lady her dress is immodest may result in great offense, but for a kind, gentle, older lady to lovingly counsel her may well be accepted. It doesn't mean older gals should push in where they aren't asked, or stick their finger in other ladies' soup. They are not to be busybodies (1 Timothy 5:13), but as opportunity opens, these wiser older ladies can give good counsel for the younger group.

Godliness among younger ladies.

Verses 4b-5 to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

God gives a seven point outline of spiritual counsel for the younger ladies: love your husband and children, be self-controlled, be pure, be homemakers, be kind, be subject to your husbands.

First, love those husbands. The word love is *philos*, and means a warm, affectionate, loving care. So be excited about your husband. You're his cheerleader and challenger. Remember when you were dating?

You were on time, looking good, aiming to please, having fun, laughing at his goofiness, always encouraging. Love that guy. Even when you don't feel love for them, learn to love them in spite of your feelings.

Then love those children, as if you don't already. True or false, kids can really test your patience? Love them by praying for them and teaching them. John Newton's mom died when he was seven, but she had showered him with love and filled his little mind with Bible stories, Scripture verses, and Isaac Watts hymns. She often told him, "When you grow up you will be a faithful minister of God." And after going far astray into slave trading and even becoming the slave of a slave, God saved John Newton and made a faithful minister out of him.

Keep your priorities right. Don't so idolize your children that you neglect your husband. Your children are just passing through, but when they leave the nest, you've still got your husband. Proverbs 31:12, "She does him good and not evil all the days of her life." And he says to you, "Many have done nobly, but you excel them all."

For the third time in this passage Paul uses "sensible." You are prudent, frugal, learning to make good decisions, not letting your moods and emotions overpower your love for Christ and your family.

A godly young lady is committed to unquestionable purity. There isn't the slightest hint of her willingness to indulge in immoral behavior.

She's a worker at home. Seriously? God said it, I didn't. Radical feminism may despise this kind of teaching, but the fact is, God has ordained the home be the main focus of a wife and mother's ministry. This is where she sets a godly example for her children. This is the noblest calling a woman could have. She may become a CEO of a major company, but it isn't as important as this. God bless you moms who take mothering seriously and have fun and maintain the structure and order in the home.

She's kind or good. She is productive. She doesn't overburden herself, but she does look for ways she and her family can serve others.

Finally, she's submissive to her own husband. She appreciates God's order of headship and submission and gladly serves God by serving her husband. The godless world may mock at a woman who has that gentle, quiet, respectful submissive spirit toward her husband, but they may also ask for your counsel when their own marriage is falling apart or discover how empty their life is.

This is godliness through the ranks. The gospel changes the hearts of older men, older women, and younger women and men. This is the beauty, the joy, the blessing of a healthy congregation who is growing in grace and the heart knowledge of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior! For ancient Crete, a land full of liars, evil beasts, and lazy bellies, the population needed to see godliness in their flesh and blood neighbors and family members. God uses the testimony of a godly body of believers. The world doesn't understand predestination, providence, or propitiation, but they take notice of godly virtue. May God help us to keep on feeding on healthy doctrine that promotes godliness, regardless of our gender or our age.