

Well let's take our Bibles and turn to Titus chapter two. Titus chapter two, we are slow walking our way through the book of Titus. We're in chapter two. And last week, we started a message that I never finished. We're going to not finish it today either. But it's such a good topic. It's young men and what God expects of them and my heart is heavy for them. I want to lay a pastoral and personal challenge before them both today and again next week. And we're in verses six, seven and eight of Titus chapter two. A message I called, Man Up. We are called by God to man up.

David said to Solomon, "Show yourself a man." Paul said to the Corinthians, "Act like men." So we come to a passage and in our culture's minds very radical, but it's just part for the course, Christian discipleship. Take your Bible, stand as we read together verses six, seven and eight. And we return to our message, which we began last week. Likewise, exhort the young man 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. So read God's word, you may be seated.

1910 The World Mission Conference met in Edinburgh, Scotland. It was supposed to be the high water mark of world evangelism, as churches and pastors got together to lay out a plan to make an impact for Jesus Christ. But sadly, liberalism had infested the movement and had proceeded to cut the nerve of gospel endeavor through denials of hell and divine retribution. Tragically, the 1910 World Missionary Conference in Scotland was a tragic step back not forward. Because you see, biblical evangelism is conceived in the womb of divine retribution. At the bedrock of evangelism is this thought, flee the wrath to come. Do you know what? They had betrayed that.

Observing the tragedy that conference was in the betrayal of the gospel it was. Mary Schloesser, from Dundee, Scotland a missionary in Calabar, Africa, said this, "Where are the men? Are there no heroes in the making among us? No hearts beating high with enthusiasm for the gospel?" Men smile in ideas of the old fashioned idea of sin and hell and the broken law and a perishing world. But these ideas made men, men of purpose, of power and of achievement and self denying devotion to the highest ideals the earth has known. "Where are the men?" asks Mary Schloesser. It's a great question and it's not limited to the mission field where women outnumber men, two to one. No, it's a question that needs to be asked more broadly.

Let me ask several questions this morning. Where are the men who will father the children they father? Where are the men who believe that men and women are different? Where are the men who believe that sin, sex, sex is unholy and unnatural? Where are the men who will not be coward by the radical feminists under a mantra on toxic masculinity, under attack on patriarchy? Where are the men who will pick up the mantle of godly and sacrificial leadership in the home, the church and society? Where are the men who have stopped being immature and reckless boys?

In fact, regarding this last point, I want for a few minutes to just kind of target young men. And the scandal today of extended adolescence. I don't know if you have noticed this, but it's just the fact that data proves it, and I'll try and prove it this morning. We live in a world full of men wedged between boyhood and manhood, between childhood and adulthood, between growing up and being grown ups. This kind of mill is as one writer put it, a [ban 00:05:01] not a man, because they're a hybrid between a boy and a man. We need to put a ban on bans.

Listen to these words by John Stonestreet, in his book Practical Guide to Culture. Speaking of perpetual adolescence. He says this, "Strictly speaking, adolescence isn't limited to teenagers anymore. Typical

indicators of adulthood such as moving out of the family home, setting on a career path, marrying and having children are happening on average later in life than ever before." 18 once marked the end of adolescence, today it barely marks the middle. And not only are people leaving adolescence later than ever, they're entering it earlier than ever. Pre-teens have their own television networks, music, cell phones, fashion lines, and subculture. And that's not all, in many ways adolescence is nigh and this may not be missed, the goal of our culture. Where somewhere along the way, we cease to be a culture where kids aspire to be adults, and we became a culture where adults aspire to be kids, or at least adolescence forever.

That's true. Too many young men are suffering from what we might call the Peter Pan syndrome. Remember Peter Pan, the boy who never grew up, who lived in Never, Never Land? Like Peter Pan young men don't want to grow up. They don't want to marry. They don't want to have kids. They don't want to work hard at a career. They didn't want to find themselves to limited commitments, none of that. They'd rather live in a Never land of fun, games, living off their parents, dreaming about their future greatness, doing the least for the most, blaming others and society for their failures. Again, if you don't believe me, there was a secular study, this wasn't done by Christians. It's just a sociological study done by people in the secular culture, was called The Death of the Growing up.

And over a period of time they gathered data from America, England, France and Italy. It's a 10 year period, and the research yielded this. And I'll let a friend of mine Steve Davie to scribe the outcome of the research. This 10 year research project discovered that in Great Britain 46% of adult couples regard their parents houses as their real homes. In Italy nearly one out of three, 30 year olds never leave their parents home to begin with. One case in Italy involved a young man who successfully sued to make his father responsible to give him financial assistance, not just because he was unemployed, but because he couldn't find a job he wanted. He owned his own apartment, didn't live at home, and was in his 30s. In America, the majority of 18 to 49 year old males watch the Cartoon Network more than they watch CNN. Which might tell you how bad CNN is, by the way, but you get the point. The average video game started in 1990 was 18, today he's pushing 30.

It's kind of scary. In fact, did you notice the tragic story came out of New York just a few weeks ago. That a young man aged 30 Thomas Gilbert Jr, whose father was paying his \$3,000 a month rental and threatened to cut down his allowance by \$100 a month and so the son shot the father dead. I know that's an extreme case. But we're watching all around us the death of the growing up. Young men living the Peter Pan syndrome. The Never Never land of fun, living off others, dreaming without doing, doing the least for the most. And if that's the reality, and that's where we're at, and it is. We need to eagerly return to Titus chapter two, verses six through eight. Where the Apostle Paul through Titus tells the young men of Crete to man up. To step up their game.

The time we're done this morning and the next time we're together, we're going to see that Paul encourages Titus to teach these young men to be serious, to have a life marked by good judgment, to be constrained in their behavior, to exhibit a pattern of Christian works, to be doctrinally signed, and to live a life that's a compelling witness to the world. I think Paul knew that young men are vulnerable to immaturity. So they need to be challenged to be sober minded, to exhibit self control and restraint within the will of God. You know what this text is saying young guys? This text is saying, here's what God wants from you. He wants you to be a Boaz not a bozo. You remember Bozo the Clown of television in 1950s and 60s. When someone's feeling or falling down on job, he's a bozo.

But if you read Ruth chapter two verse one, you'll read about a man who's described this way. Naomi had a relative of her husband. A worthy man of the clan of [inaudible 00:10:32] whose name was Boaz. The word there, worthy man in the ESV written in the Hebrew means a powerful force. Don't be a bozo be a Boaz. So let's come back to our text. There's several things we were working our way through. We've only covered two of them and that's about as far as we're getting again today. The encouragement, exhort these young men.

The emphasis exhort them to be sober minded. The example, Titus was the flesh always asking of them in being a patron of good works. The education, these young men like Titus, were to be marked by integrity, reverence and incorruptibility in doctrine. And then the effect, hopefully their lives lived for Jesus Christ, driven by the gospel will indeed have the effect of silencing those who have something evil to say about the gospel. Let me just go back over this idea of the encouragement very, very briefly. That likewise exhort the young men to be sober minded. It's a present tense, imperative. This was something that Titus was to do on a repeated basis, because maturity takes time. He was to beat this drum of self control and discipline long and [inaudible 00:12:00].

The word exhort, which again is the role given to an elder looking at chapter one, verse nine, holding fast the faithful word, as he has been taught that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince those who contradict. It's the word that kind of means to come alongside. It's a word connected to a description of the Holy Spirit, the power [inaudible 00:12:20] to us. The one who comes alongside and Titus was to be a means in the hands of the Holy Spirit, to come alongside the young men and encourage them to go forward, to exhort them, to refresh them, to stir them up on the love and good works. And that's what we're called to be. The church is called to be a community of encouragers. We need to be a little bit more than the church that Matt Proctor describes. He's the president of Ozark Christian college.

And he looks back in a time in his life when he was a young preacher, and he knew that he had preached that morning in this little small country church. A pretty poor sermon, but you know what? Many of the older ladies came up after the service with a smile on their face, shook his hand and said, good sermon. Now he knew better, but they wanted to encourage him. But after several of these ladies had shook his hand and said good sermon one of old crusty veteran come up, shook his hand and said, "Nice try." Now we want more than that. We've got to come alongside young preachers and young people and courage them to be more than they are in Jesus Christ. I hope you aren't an encourager, not a critic of the generation that's coming up behind you. You need to be a Jonathan to a David.

We looked at Barnabas last time but the other example that came into my mind was First Samuel 23 verses 15 to 18, where we read when David was on the run from Saul. Remember Saul's jealousy. And yet in the midst of Saul's jealousy, God gave David a friendship with Saul's son. And as one writer said that the jealousy of Saul never entered into the heart of David like the love of Jonathan. And you read that, out in the wilderness, on the run, Jonathan [inaudible 00:14:14], and it says he strengthen his hand in God. He strengthened his and in God. He gave David a greater grip on grace. That's what you and I ought to be doing. That's the encouragement. What about the emphasis, while again, the emphasis is singular.

Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober minded in all things. Paul zeroes in on one dominant indispensable quality, sober mindedness. So it's a Greek word that carries the idea of serious, good judgment, responsible, restrained and constrained. The exercise of self control. You know that in addressing the other categories that Paul says to the older men, a lot more than one thing. And he says

the older women a lot more than one thing. He says to the younger women a lot more than one thing. Why does he limit his exhortation to young men to this one thing? Because this one thing is most important. And of these young men can become self controlled, there will be a domino effect, that will touch the rest of their lives. Plus, this is the sin of young man, isn't it? Lack of control. Young men tend to push the envelope. Young men tend to experiment with sin. Young men tend to act impulsively, young men tend to think everything's a joke. Young men tend to think that life is about their rights and not their responsibilities.

Maybe that's why David in Psalm 25 verse seven says, Lord, do not remember the sin of my youth. I think every man that grows up looks back with some embarrassment of the sins of his youth. The immaturity, the pushing of the envelope if not downright rebellion. This is the issue. Paul has other virtues he could have selected from. But he understood the domino effect of self control. When a man by the help of God's grace and through the power of the Spirit, constrained by the will of God's word. Concentrates his efforts, says yes to that which is essential, unites his heart and mind for the glory of God, rejects foolishness, serves something other than himself, he will be a great husband. He will be a good father. He will be a faithful friend. He will be a productive citizen and employee, and he will be a true servant of Jesus Christ.

Paul wants these young men to turn a corner towards maturity, responsibility and strength under control. Because remember chapter three, verse three, they were leaving a lifestyle of wildness and wickedness. For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior toward men appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. And even within the church of God, false teachers are trying to undermine true discipleship. Did you notice in chapter one, verse 10, when we studied it? One of the marks of a false teacher on what he produces, here's what we read. For there are many insubordinate. The insubordinate is not self controlled. The insubordinate is unsubmitive.

The insubordinate is out of control. So these young men were leaving a lifestyle behind them where they lived an out of control life. They're not in the church being told to be sober minded, but even there, there are false teachers that are telling them to be insubordinate. I think Paul understood, this is the vital virtue. I like what Tim Charlie says about this. In Paul's letter to Titus, he gives age and gender specific instructions to four groups of people, young women, older women, young men and older men. It's not worthy that what he provides a whole list of instructions to the other three groups. He has just one instruction for a young man. Urge the younger men to be self controlled. Self control perfectly addresses immaturity. It is immaturity that keeps men endlessly glued to video games instead of enjoying them in moderation.

It is immaturity that keeps young men obsessed with pornography instead of living in purity pursuing a bride and finding the light in her body. It is immaturity that traps men and fear and apathy and keeps them from making bold decisions and taking big steps. Immaturity is a modern day plague for young men. The path out of immaturity is the path to self control. It's true. So that's where we left off. And then we started to look on high. We've kind of answered why. Why should we be telling young men to be self controlled? Because this is the sin of youth. And once this sin is governed by self control, it has a domino effect that sets a young man on the path to significance and success and service within God's kingdom. But how? I decided just a drill down on that before we move on into the text and see the other elements of this teaching to young men. Because Paul just says one thing, this is what you need young man you need self control.

If this is the vital virtue, how do we pursue it? How do we obtain it? How do we develop it? Number one, it involves dependence. We kind of touched on this the last time we were together, right? It involves dependence. Self control is not something we can achieve on our own. Don't mistake Paul, Paul's not telling you to pull up, pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. Paul's not telling you to grit your teeth and through self effort, restrain your impulses. No, self control is not something we can achieve on our own. It is a gift from God. It is a fruit. It is a result of the Spirit's work. Go over to Galatians chapter five verse 16. Paul says this, walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. You scroll down to verse 22, but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, verse 23, gentleness, self control.

You'll see from this text that self control, restraint, a putting off of the old man, a mortifying of the flesh is a result of the end dwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit within the life of the believer. And dwell in us, is the presence of God through the Holy Spirit. And he releases to us grace and strength, and vitality, to overcome sin. One example of that would be Romans 8 verse 11, listen to this verse. It's an astounding verse, if the spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you. Or as the Phillip's translation puts it, will bring your whole being new strength and vitality. So when you and I are faced with the gravitational pull of our flesh, and the pressure of the surrounding culture, how do we survive that pressure, that pull?

By the enduring presence and power of the Holy Spirit, we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. He will produce in us self control. That's a wonderful thing. And you and I need to pursue that. Let me remind you of this fact that walking in the Spirit means that we obey the Holy Spirit's instructions on how to live as we find them written in Scripture. Right these two verses down, we don't have time to go to them, but Ephesians 5:18 and Colossians 3:16. If you look at those two verses, the filling of the spirit and the dwelling of the Word of God richly in our lives produces the seam of fact. We end up singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, we end up showing gladness within our heart to the Lord. And you connect those two verses, you'll see that the filling of the Spirit, the control of the Spirit, the influence of the spirit in our lives, is corresponding to the influence of the Word of God in our lives where we follow it and obey it.

So the point is this. If you want to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lust of the flesh, you want to act and self control. You need to live in accordance with God's word. He who controlled men to write scripture wants to use scripture to control you and me for God's glory. Walking in the Spirit and not fulfilling the deceitful desires of our lives requires us taking to the path where the Word of God is a lamp unto our feet and a light on our path. I was reading just this week the story of Dr. Robert Gering. A practicing gynecologist at Baylor Hospital in Dallas. For a time in his life, he was a drug addict. He was an alcoholic. He got to such a point of despair in his life where he decided to take his own life. So he went into a delivery room at the hospital to overdose on Sodium Pentothal. But even as a physician, he didn't know that you can't give yourself enough of the drug to kill yourself before you pass out.

So there he was found collapsed on the floor of the delivery room by a fellow physician. This man rescued him, became a friend. This man was a Christian himself. And so he introduced Robert to Christ and got him a Bible. And they started doing a Bible study together. And Dr. Gering was wonderfully saved and delivered from his enslaving sins. One night standing at a church in Texas, he gave this testimony. "In my alcoholism and drug addiction, I spent \$30,000 on psychiatrists and find my greatest help in a \$10 Bible." You know why? Because you usually find someone with a Bible, that's falling apart,

is a person who themselves is not falling apart. Because the Word of God used by the Spirit of God brings a life of self control. Here's another word not only dependence, but discipline, discipline.

Now, having said that, self control can't be produced by self effort. I want to strike a balance here. As my old pastor back in Northern Ireland, Freddie McLaughlin used to say, blessed are the balanced, blessed are the balanced. And there is a balance in Scripture between faith and works. And there is a balance in Scripture between grace and effort. In fact, if you go to Titus chapter two, verses 11 and 12, notice this, for the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly. There's our word, we should live a life of self control, righteously, and godly in this present age. It's the balance of Philippians two, verses 12 to 13. We have got to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in us. So while we put the antecedent and the accent on the work of God by grace through the spirit and submission to the Word of God in our lives, we've still got to cooperate. We've still got to act, we've still got to do.

Because self control is both a gift and a duty. It's a gift that we receive, but we don't receive it passively. We're to open it, develop it and live it. Ed Walsh said this about self control, "As the Hebrews were promised the land, but had to take it by force one time at a time. So we are promised the gift of self control, but we must take it by force." I like that, there's the balance. It's a gift and a duty. The land of Canaan was a gift promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But Joshua and the armies of Israel had to take it by force. They had to claim what God was giving by grace. And so must we. And we must exercise ourselves on the godliness. First Timothy four verse seven. There is God's grace but there are the means to grace. Disciplines like prayer, denial of self, fasting, study of the word, sanctifying friendship, these are all means by which God Grace's us.

If you want a passage to look at, what about First Corinthians nine, verse 24. Let me go there and read it for you. Paul is describing his ministry in the Christian life to some degree, in the metaphor of athleticism. And he says this, do you not know that those who run in a race all run but one receives the prize run in such a way that you may obtain it? And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things, did you get that? The athlete is self controlled, disciplined. They're always mentoring and managing and mastering themselves. They put a certain curfew on when they ought to be in bed, they watch their diet. They watch their social interaction. They go and push themselves beyond the limit at the gym or on the track. There's some sweat that must be spilled. They must discipline themselves so that their body can be free to run the hundred yards in less than 10 seconds. That's our metaphor. The athlete is temperate in all things.

Nay, they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we do it for an imperishable crown. Therefore, I run, that's not with uncertainty. That's I fight not as one who beats the air, but I discipline my body and bring it into subjectionless, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. Are you disciplining yourself? Am I disciplining myself? I will not be godly, without discipline, without regiment, without taking heed to myself, without denying my body, without developing my intellect, without pursuing Christ aggressively in the company of God's people. Young people, you need to develop self discipline. If you want to do that, I'll recommend an article by John MacArthur, God of grace to you. He's got a little article there called Developing Self Discipline. It's excellent.

He talks about start with small things. Get yourself organized. Don't constantly seek to be entertained. Keep your word, do the most difficult task first. Finish what you start. Accept correction. Practice self denial. Welcome responsibility. That's just the list he'll unpack that for you. Get that article printed, pray over it, begin to develop it in your life. Begin to develop discipline and self control, strike a balance. Yes,

seek God for His grace. Understand that you cannot do this apart from him, but God won't do it apart from you. Athletes are temperate, in all things. You need to discipline yourself, the best of intentions and plans are not enough. You must resolve and you must act. There's a balance. I like the balance of, I heard about an old preacher was approached by a young man who had a problem getting up in the morning. Wasn't very disciplined, used to sleep in a lot. Couldn't force himself up.

He went to the pastor and said, "Pastor, would you pray that God would help me get up in the morning?" The old pastor said, "You know what, let's strike a deal. Here's the deal. If you get the first leg out of the bed, I'll pray that God gets the second leg out of the bed." That's the balance. That's the balance. Don't pray that God will get you out of bed, get one leg out of the bed, maybe God will help get the other leg out, act, discipline, self effort. Here's another word dissatisfaction. We're developing self control, which is the vital virtue. It's the domino virtue that sets us up for success. It's the one virtue that Paul wants from the young man in Crete. And if it's going to come about dependence upon the Holy Spirit, discipline in our part. Dissatisfaction is the third word, dissatisfaction with where you're at.

You'll never be better. You'll never be more in Christ and for Christ until you're dissatisfied with where you're at. It was this satisfaction that drove Paul to concentrate all his efforts on pursuing Christ, disciplining himself. Listen to Philippians three, verses 12 to 14, again, you've got the athletic metaphor going on, not that I have already attained, or I'm already perfected, but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ has already laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended but one thing I do, does not sound like control and constraint. He's kind of gathering his life and focusing it here. This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead. I press towards the goal for the price of upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Is an interesting contrast. Did you ever notice in Philippians, in chapter four, he asked for holy contentment to be content, whatever circumstance you're in, because God put you there and God will give you grace to live there until God moves you somewhere else. And then in chapter three, you've got a call to holy discontentment. Not to be happy with who you are. See, God wants us to be happy with where we are but never happy with who we are and what we haven't yet become. We've got to exercise more constraints than control and pursue Christ with greater focus. Dissatisfaction drove Paul to pursue Christ as a singular priority. All his energy and emotion were captured and controlled at that one end. His was not a fragmented life. His was a focused life and dissatisfaction was the catalyst.

David Jeremiah, in a book entitled, Life Beyond Amazing says this, I truly believe the first step to take toward a life beyond amazing is realizing we're not satisfied with our present life. More than one motivational speaker that I've listened to over the years has expressed some version of this maxim until the pain of staying the same becomes more acute than the pain of change, nothing happens. We simply maintain the status quo. And we convince ourselves that playing it safe is safe. Here's another word for delay. If you're going to develop self control, you're going to have to develop patience, endurance, a willingness to wait on God's timing for something. Self control always involves delayed gratification, right? It's just implicit.

See, you and I are always going to be tempted to jump ahead of God. To smash and grab something within the will of God ahead of the time. That's why David says, doesn't he? In Psalm 32 verses eight and nine, Don't be like the mule and don't be like the horse. Don't be stubborn holding back when God wants you to move forward, but don't be like the horse jumping forward when God wants you to wait. Self control is the ability to wait for what is best and what is better from God's perspective. It is an awareness and aptitude to lay aside short term gains for long term goals. You've got to develop that

ability. You see, you live in a culture young people that gives you the impression you can have it all, nay. That you should have it all, nay. What your parents took a lifetime to accumulate, you want in the first five years of your marriage.

This is a culture that screams gratification instantly. But biblical self control will say no, let's wait on the Lord. Let's remember he makes all things beautiful in his time. But let's remember that it's better to be given something from God within His will than to grab it prematurely. David's a good example of this. You know the story in First Samuel 26. He's on the run from King Saul. Saul has been rejected by God and Saul knows it. And David's been anointed by Samuel and David knows it. And there's an incident where David and one of his men creeps into the king's camp and they find the king asleep. Saul's asleep in his tent. His guards are snoozing away, and David and Abishai are in the tent and they take Saul's spear and water jug to let them know they were there and left him alone.

Although Abishai while they're in the tent says, "Hey, David, God's given you an opportunity you know, slug this guy, cut his head off from his shoulders, and the kingdom is yours." But David doesn't do that. In fact David will be given another opportunity to do that later on in the cave. But he turns around and he rebukes Abishai and says, "This is God's Anointed." [inaudible 00:38:04], "Hey, I know I'm the king in waiting, but I'm going to wait until God makes me king in his time in his way." One writer says this, "Here David discerns the godly goal, even though the opportunity is there before him, he must do right in the sight of God above all else. He lays aside the competing desire for a quick escape from persecution, and an easy ascent to the throne. He can see how important it is to walk in a way that pleases God. What use is it to have a quick end of persecution, if it comes under God's displeasure? He lays aside immediate short term gains, for righteous long term goals. He is God centered rather than self centered. Here is the heart of self control."

Let me give you another word, dialogue, dialogue. What do I mean by that? As we develop self control as we pursue this vital virtue. Well, certainly we need to talk to God. We need to dialogue with God. We need to ask God for grace and the help of His spirit and the intuition, inspiration of his word. [inaudible 00:39:12] was right, Lord ask what you will but give what you ask. So we need to go to God and ask him for what he wants from us and God will give us what he requires. But I'm going to be even a little bit more practical than that. We need to carry on a conversation with ourselves. When it comes to self control, we need to dialogue with ourselves. We need to talk back to our emotions. That are often out of control and are often trying to control our will.

We need to talk to ourselves because often we get up and we go through a day and at some point we go, "I don't feel like working. I don't feel like studying. I don't feel like going there. I don't feel like helping." We're saying to ourself, "I feel like another helping of food. Or I feel like another drink, or I feel like sleeping in. Or I feel like buying with money I don't have the thing I do desire. That's going on all the time. When our feelings are highly manipulative, deceptive and unreliable. We need to master our moods, if we're going to develop self control. God wants us to challenge our emotions. Classic example, David's depression and discouragement and distress in Psalm 42 and 43. Remember what David says in both those Psalms. He begins to talk to himself. He begins a dialogue with his own soul and his own self. "Hey, Why Are You Cast Down, O My Soul? Why are you disquieted within me? Don't you have hope in God? Won't you yet praise Him within His sovereignty?"

The great Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones picked that up, didn't he? Here's what he said, "Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you're listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself?" Keep those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have

not originated them, but they're talking to you. They bring back the problems of yesterday, somebody is talking, who is talking? You are talking to you. This man's treatment in Psalm 42 was this instead of allowing his self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself. "Why are you cast down, O My Soul?", he asks. His soul had been depressing him, crushing him. He stands up and says, "Listen for a moment I will speak to you." One of the best things you can do for yourself in the morning, just go around the house muttering to yourself. Your husband might think you're nuts. Your kids think you're off your rocker, but have a good conversation with yourself. Talk God's talk.

Bring back the promises of God. Speak about hope and not despair. Think about promise and not betrayal. I've been reading a wonderful book by New York Times writer David Brooks called, *The Road to Character*. And then he talks about Dwight Eisenhower and just interesting little story that, when he was a student at West Point, he was a four pack of cigarettes a day kind of guy. Four packs a day. Then one day he stopped cold turkey. And when someone asked him how he did it, here's what he said, "I simply gave myself an order." I know the shortfall of willpower, but I think you get the point. There is a place for just to give yourself an executive order. Get up, open the Bible, get on your knees and pray. Get out the door to work. Go to that soccer game with the kids. You get the point. We need to immediately issue our out of control self a summon to appear before the bar of human reason and divine revelation. To give an account for bad behavior poor performance and a lazy life. And give ourselves some orders and ask ourselves some questions. Why?

Here's another word, direction, direction. By direction I mean purpose, vision, a set of priorities, focus. Being sober minded means mental composure, being undistracted, being sound in judgment, not being impulsive. In fact, this word sober minded in Titus two verse six is found in Mark 5:15 of the demoniac who was fine after the healing and exorcism of Jesus Christ in his life. And it says, and he was clothed and in his right mind. To be sober minded is to be in your right mind, is to have your mind fixed on the right things and thinking rightly. It's to direct one's thoughts biblically. In fact, I'm going to give you a verse very interesting. Go with me to First Peter one, verse 13. First Peter one verse 13. I want you to notice that our idea of sobriety or self control is embedded in this verse. Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, that's our word or it's in that family. Be sober minded, be self control, be restrained, and rest your hope fully upon grace. That is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

I want you to notice that sober mindedness is set against the idea of girding up your mind. What is that phrase mean? Gird up the loins of your mind. That is taken from life at that time. Where man wore long flowing tunics. And if they were to get somewhere quick, what they did was they gathered up their tunic and tucked it in their belt and took off. Because they weren't going to run with this long flowing tunic almost like a bathrobe that trip up and get in their way. So Peter said, here's what I want you to do with your thoughts. Don't let them fly all over the place. Discipline your mind, focus your thoughts, direct your thinking to godly ends. Direct your thinking. We know in chapter two verse one of Titus, that they are to live a life that's in accord with proper doctrine. We're to direct our minds by God's. In some ways, what we're talking about here is we've got to discern what the will of God is. And then we've got to direct our minds to the pursuit of that and the fulfillment of that, right?

Ephesians 5:15 to 17. Know what the will of God is and do it. Put your mind to that task. In fact Robert Yarborough in his commentary on Titus says this, "Everyone in the church should exhibit this quality of self control. But young men are susceptible to particular blandishments, and allurements that distract them from God's word [inaudible 00:46:37]. Even lawful pursuits, and callings may become objects of idolatrous devotion." Titus's challenge is to direct young men's intensity and energy and redemptive

directions, tethering them to God's will and direction in their lives through sound doctrine received. You want to develop self control? Then gather your thoughts and tuck them into the belt of truth and run forward pursuing God's will. I hope your life is focused young men, young people, all of us. I hope you get up every day with a clear sense of direction. What God wants you to be and do in Jesus Christ. Focus is important. Knowing what the goal is, is important.

I think I've told you before that several years ago I used to play in a soccer league up in Santa Clarita up in the Soccer Center in Saugus with some young men in the community and alongside one of the elders in my church at Placerita, Jim Dawg. One particular night I got knocked out. I was playing forward. It's a short field and the ball was coming towards me as I ran towards the other goal. I had my kind of Ronaldo moment. I was hoping the ball would come over my shoulder and I'd volley it up into the left hand corner, the crowd would cheer my wife would blow me a kiss, the kids would think I was wonderful. I was having that [inaudible 00:47:55] all go through my mind in a split second. Next thing I remember I'm at Henry Mayo hospital. Because I run straight into the goalkeeper who was coming out and that's all I remember.

When I come around the, lying line there in the hospital, [inaudible 00:48:10] junior's there, Jim Dawg is one of the elders in my church is there. And Jim tells me, "You've been talking this whole time." And I go, "What? Was I giving away the family secrets, was I preaching a sermon? What was I saying?" Here's what he said, "No, you've said this repeatedly. Did I score and did we win?" That's pretty good, come on, that's pretty good. Had my brains knocked out, did I score and did we win? Because I had a focus. The last thing in my mind was a focus, score the goal. And every time you get up, and every day you live, you got to have in your mind, what's the goal. And you got to gird your mind, you got to bring your thoughts focused on. This is God's will for me, and I'm going to do it. By God's grace we will.

Well, that's as far as we're going to get this morning. And we'll pick it up next Sunday morning. And we'll get one or two more thoughts in this idea of developing self control. We need to be mastered by the master. That's the master key to life. We need to break free young men of this perpetual adolescence. We need to grow up, we need to man up, we need to step up and be mastered by the master. Because that's the master key.

Father, thank you for our time this morning in your word. So rich, so practical, so timely. I pray for the young men of our church. I pray that they would indeed put their lives in the harness of Christian discipleship. I pray that they would be mastered by the master, that they would dream big for you, within your will. That they would redeem the time for the time is short. That young and in early they might understand that God has called them to be husbands and fathers. To be hard workers in the home and outside the home. To be servants of Jesus Christ in the church and in the world. To love their neighbor, to be patriots within their country. To be men whose hearts belong to God and their family and their church. God help us to say no, to ungodliness. By the grace of God say, yes to the path to discipleship.

May your spirit produce that. May we walk with him and through him to achieve that? May we build endurance and perseverance and a willingness to delayed gratification for your glory and our greater good. May we wake up every day talking to ourselves God's talk. May we by your grace and with your help direct our lives towards the goal of glorifying God and enjoying Him forever. And we pray it all in Jesus name. Amen.