

Well, let's take our Bibles and turn to Titus 2. As you know, we're in a study in the book of Titus. It's our custom here at Kindred to work our way through books in the Bible expositively, and we have been kind of slow marching through chapter two. We have done two messages already on verses six through eight, a passage addressed to young men, and we're coming back to finish it this morning. Then, next Sunday morning, God willing, we'll get into Titus 2:9-10.

But if you want to take your Bible, we'll take some time and read the first 10 verses of Titus 2. Why don't you stand in honor of God's word. If you're following along, I'm reading from the New King James translation of holy scripture. Paul is writing to Titus, who is ministering on the Island of Crete in the middle of the Mediterranean.

"But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things. That they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

"Likewise, exhort the young men 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. Exhort bond servants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things."

So reads God's word, and you may be seated.

Look, nature has its seasons and life has its stages. In nature, we have spring, summer, fall, winter. And in life, we have the spring of youth, we have the summer of adulthood, we have the fall of those middle years, and we have the winter of old age. As with nature, each season has its purpose, and it should be embraced for its purpose and its pleasure, and then one ought to know that you need to transition from one season to another in life.

We're about to come back into Titus 2, where Paul has encouraged those who are different seasons in life to act their age. You've heard that statement, "Act your age, not your shoe size," and it's a good word. We need to embrace our age, we need to enjoy our age, we need to understand the beauty of the season we're in, the uniqueness of that time in our lives, but also realize that we can't stay there. We ought to either it to look forward if we're on the front end, or look back to those who are coming up behind us if we're on the back end.

What Paul teaches in Titus 2 is that the old are not to wish they were young again, and the young are not to stay young. The old men are to think about young men, and the older women are to think about young women. Older men are not to try to be young men. They're to help young men become wiser, more mature, more responsible. Older women are not to hanker for those days when they were younger and more beautiful, and you know what, had more energy. No, they're to embrace the season of seniority, and look back and help those young women that are coming up behind them to be better wives and better mothers and better Christians.

Calvin said this. "Nothing is more shameful than for an old man to indulge in youthful wantonness, and by his countenance to strengthen the impudence of the young." Act your age. Enjoy the season you're in. If you're young, don't stay young. If you're old, don't hanker to be young. No, the old are to embrace growing old and to help the young become wise, and the young are to embrace growing up and looking to the older saints for guidance. That's where we're at in Titus 2, and I want to come back and look at verses six, seven and eight where Paul's speaking to the younger men, encourages them to be mature, to become more responsible, more restrained.

If they haven't already done this, they need to do it. They need to put away childish things and become men. I Corinthians 13:11, they're to act like men. They're to show themselves as men. They're to shun perpetual adolescence. Implicitly, they are at a stage in life where probably addressing 20 to 30-year-olds, they're implicitly at a stage in life where Paul wants them to leave the home of their parents, get married, have children, work hard, provide for a family, serve their church effectively, and fill a space in society. That's why he says, "Hey, Titus, exhort the young men to be self-controlled, sober minded, serious. Encourage them to get their act together, to put life in gear, to be on target regarding God's will and purposes for them."

They can't stay young. They have got to grow up. They have got to mature. What was true then is true today. I've recommended this book many times. I recommend it again this morning. Kevin D. Young wrote a book a few years ago called, Just Do It. It's about the will of God, how to determine your determinations, how to decide your decisions. He says this of his generation. He was in his 30s when he wrote this book. He says, "Our grandparents built. Our parents boomed. My generation tinkers."

He says, "We tinker with doctrine. We tinker with churches. We tinker with girlfriends and boyfriends. We tinker with college majors. We tinker with living in and out of our parent's homes. We tinker with spiritual practices. We tinker." Now, he goes on to kind of qualify that in a sense that there's an element of the season of youth where you do tinker, you do experiment, you do explore, you're all carefree. You don't want that to go past too quickly, but his problem is, but it's lingering too long. You know, you can tinker when you're a teenager, but you can't tinker when you're a young man in your 20s heading towards 30.

In fact, he says this, consider this one statistic. In 1960, 77% of women and 65% of men completed all the major transitions into adulthood by age 30. That means they'd left home, they'd finished school, they'd become financially independent, they were getting married and having children. Just listen to that. That's about 50 years ago. 77% of women and 65% of men by the time they were 30, they were well into life, independent, financially stable, they'd got a career, they were having children.

What about our day? Here's what he says. "By 2000, only 46% of women had completed these transitions by age 30, and only 31% of men. It's stunning," he says, "for me to think that less than 1/3 of men my age are done with school, out of the home, married with kids, and have a job that pays the bills." Only 30% of men have done that. That's scary. If ever there was a text that needed to be preached in the contemporary church, it's Titus 2:8, encourage the young men, the 20s to 30, to grow up. Man up, step up. Determine your determinations, decide your decisions. Move into life, embrace responsibility spiritually, financially, in life itself.

So, let's go back then to our text. You know that we covered two points, what we call the encouragement. That's, "Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded. Likewise, exhort..." "

Paráklētos, come alongside, urge, appeal. I want you to stir them up and push them forward in this. We saw that men need men. They need encouragers. They need Barnabas's.

I like a poem written by Lawrence Tribble. It says this. "One man awake awakens another. The second awakens his next door brother. The third awake can rise a time by turning the whole place upside down. The many awake can cause such a fuss. It finally awakens the rest of us. One man up with dawn in his eyes surely then multiplies." It's a good word.

We need men with dawn in their eyes, with purpose and passion, who get up in the morning, know who they are, know what they're doing, and go after it. You know? Get their thumb out of their mouth and drop the security blanket and get going.

That's the encouragement. Number two, the emphasis. The emphasis. The emphasis is what? Self-control. We've kind of beat that to death by now into our third message. So I'm not going to reheat that dinner. But the point is this, these young men were to be sober minded, self-controlled. The time for kind of freedom and carefree exploration, which is part of life when you're young, I get that. But at some point, you know, those days are done when you're 20. You know? Not in our generation, but a generation ago. If you want to sober yourself, go to France, as I have, walk the grave sites of Normandy. 19, 18, 20, 19, 21, 19, a whole generation gone in the flower of youth. Given to a greater cause than themselves.

Now it's time to grow up, it's time to do what's right and righteous. And we started looking at how we can do that. We understood why. Young men can sometimes be given to irresponsibility and they need to step up, own the season they're in, and become much more mature. And we started asking ourselves, "But how did they do that?" And we worked our way through several thoughts. All starting with D, dependence, discipline, dissatisfaction, delay, dialogue, direction.

So now I want to give a seventh, distance. Here's another element of cultivating self-control, what I call distance. That is distance from sin. Distance from circumstances that can corrupt and contaminate. Listen, self-control involves not only managing your inner life, control your thoughts, your emotions, your will. Self-control not only involves managing the inner world, but the outer world. Managing your environments, your relationships, your pleasures, your pursuits. Because if they're not handled right, if you don't set boundaries, they can become contaminating. Which doesn't allow you, as a young man, to grow up.

Now, let me make something clear, you cannot avoid sin. I'm not arguing that, you cannot avoid sin. Why? Because you carry it within your self. You know what? I could lock you in a room, separate you from the world around you, and at some point, you'll find a way to sin. Because you've got a principle of sin that still abides with you even though you're redeemed. It's your unredeemed flesh. Paul talks about that in Romans 7, there's a principle at work in me that brings me down.

So, I'm not arguing the fact that you can avoid sin in its totality, but I want to say this, listen to me clearly, young people, you can avoid a lot of sin by wise choices as to where you go, what you do, and with whom you do it. If my flesh is like a fire, you and I don't need to feed the fire with inflammables like bad company, immoral pictures, you get the point. What does Paul say in 1 Corinthians 15:33? Bad company, what? Spoils good morals.

Here you are, you want to be a self-controlled young man, young woman, or Christian, you want to have your life in order, you want to set boundaries and live a holy life, it will involve distance. You can't separate yourself from the world fully, and you've got the principle of sin within, but if you want to help yourself, watch who you hang out with, watch where you go, watch your entertainment habits.

Listen to this verse, Proverbs 13:20, "He who walks with the wise will be wise." How helpful is that? "But the company of fools will be destroyed." The companion of fools will be destroyed. What did Jesus say to his own disciples? In Mark 14:38, "Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation." Guard your life, watch your thoughts, watch your connections, watch your environment, set some boundaries, because you could enter into temptation.

And I think that's worth thinking through, because here's my point, it's one thing for temptation to find you and me, and it will. It will, the world and the devil will find us and tempt us. It's one thing for temptation to find you, but it's another thing for you and your flesh to go looking for temptation.

Isn't this the mistake of the young man in Proverbs 7, who falls prey to the prostitute and the seductress? What do we read about him? Proverbs 7:6-8, "For out the window of my house, I looked through my lattice and I saw among the simple, I perceived among the youths." Now let me pause, simple here doesn't mean he had mental deficiency, he had moral deficiency. He was a spiritual numbskull, nincompoop. He didn't think. He didn't set boundaries. He didn't watch his way.

Listen, "For I looked out my window and I saw a simpleton, a spiritual simpleton, I perceived him among the young. A young man devoid of understanding," listen, "passing along the street near her corner." He took the path to her house! "And in the twilight, and in the evening, and in the black and dark of night, and there a woman met him." Well, you usually meet with sin if you go looking for it. And this is the point I'm trying to make, when it comes to self-control, when it comes to guarding our hearts, when it comes to maturing, you know what? Don't go looking for sin.

As one person has said, "Well, he that would not enter temptation should not sit by its door." In his book, *The Road to Character*, it's not a Christian book, but there's a certain amount of morality to it that's helpful. David Brook, New York Times writer, says this, "Since self-control is a muscle that tires easily, it is much better to avoid temptation in the first place than to try and resist it once it arises." It's true. That's the point I'm trying to make.

Or, to quote Rick Warren when he was a youth pastor many, many years ago, here's what he used to tell his kids, "At this stage in your life, your sexual drive is so powerful that you must be prepared in advance to control it. When you go on a date, you'll either be guided by your plans or your glands. So plan what you will do and what you won't do on the date. The time to begin to think about exercising self-control is not in the backseat of the car." It's true.

When I was in the police in Northern Ireland, when we come in to get briefed on our patrol, sometimes they had certain intelligence on the activities of the IRA, and we would be told that there was a heightened sense of danger in a particular area and to be careful. Or, they might even tell us that area or that street is out of bounds. And they may be dealing out that issue with special forces and the rank and file of the police were to stay away. And you know, that was just part and parcel of being a police officer, both on duty and off duty.

I remember having to cancel a vacation I was to take in Donegal because the week before, unbeknownst to me, I'm sitting in a briefing at the police station in North Belfast and they were telling us about an area in Donegal that they have information that the IRA were working to set up a kill. So I decided not to go to Donegal. Out of bounds. You've got to have some out of bounds if you're going to have some self-control.

Here's another thought and we'll move on, destination. Destination is the last thought. But here we're going back to 1 Peter 1:13, remember we looked at that the last time? "Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober," there's our thought. Be sober, be self-controlled, you know? Be serious. And here's what he says, "Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." That is a reference to the second coming of Christ.

And it's interesting to me that the whole idea of sober mindedness and self-control is set beside the thought of resting your hope on the return of Jesus Christ and the eternal joy that lies beyond that. Why would those two things be married? Simply this, that self-control's not easy, and it comes at a price, and it comes at a cost. And if you're going to sustain self-control, you're going to deny yourself, take up your cross. If you're going to face the mockery of the world, if you're going to push back on the world that wants to tempt you to be outside the will of God, you're going to have to be highly motivated. What's going to drive you? What's the risk and reward?

Well, here it is, the reward is heaven. Jesus' return. Eternal joy. "Hey, I want you to be sober minded," says Peter, "and to help you in that, rest your hope fully on the grace that's yet to come."

Mental toughness, moral decisiveness will find fuel in the thought that when Jesus returns, we will say to ourselves, looking back on the tough days where we made the tough decisions, it's worth it, now that we see Jesus. That's the point of the text. The buffeting of our bodies, the fight to stay true to God's will, delayed gratification, the focus of life is pursued and must be pursued against the backdrop of eternity.

Remember we looked at 1 Corinthians 9 the last time? Again, the whole issue there is discipline. Where Paul takes the analogy of the athlete and says, "I'm like an athlete spiritually. I'm running to win. There's a finish line, it's called the day after the rapture. And on the other side of that finish line, I want a reward, I want the well done. So I discipline myself. I watch what I do, where I go, how I behave."

And then he says this, listen, "They do it for a corruptible crown, but we do it for incorruptible crown." He had heaven in mind that motivated him to be disciplined. The runner looks beyond the agony. The runner looks beyond the discipline. The runner looks beyond that which he gives up for the joy that awaits him on the other side of the running of the race and the winning of the competition.

The goal of heaven, our final destination, the immediate presence of God, justifies the self-controlled life. I just finished a book by my friend, Mark Hitchcock, which I'm sure we'll have here for you to purchase or we may give it away on the radio. It's called, Heavenly Rewards, he gets into the whole thought of the judgment seat of Christ and the rewards that lie ahead for Christians. There are rewards to receive, there are crowns to win, there are positions to be achieved within the kingdom.

And in the preface of the book, he has this statement, "The life you live today will determine your life in eternity." Now, let that rattle around your head for a little while. Let that drop down into your heart.

The life you live today will determine the life you live in eternity. Because when Jesus comes, it says, "I come to give my reward to every man according to his works." Some day Jesus will make a decision on all the decisions you made, and then he'll determine your reward. No, you won't lose your salvation, but you may lose the capacity to reflect the glory of God in your body. You may not hear the well done, you may not be given a significant position in the millennial kingdom, you may not have a crown to throw at Jesus' feet in an act of worship.

The life you live today will determine the life you live in eternity. That brings about some determination and self-control. Isn't that what motivated Jim Elliot? I mean, how do explain that man's life and death? As a martyr in Ecuador, well, before he went to Ecuador, he wrote in his journal in Wheaton College, October 28, 1949, he wrote this, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep for that which he cannot lose." I want to discipline myself now, I want to lose out now, I'm going to say no now, because all that stuff won't count in a future day.

All right, let's move on. The example, this is our third thought, let's back to Titus 2:6, "Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober minded. In all things, showing yourself to be a pattern of good works." You see, the older women were to be an example to the younger women, right? We saw that. The older men, by implication, are to be an example to the younger men. So, as Paul tells Titus to exhort the young men, they've already got examples in the older men. But Titus, in his pastoral leadership, is to prop that up with his own example. He's to complement the good examples of the older men.

And also, he's to show himself a pattern of good works. Not only in complementing the other examples that are there, but in contradicting the bad examples that surround these young men. Because, go back to chapter one, verses 10 through 16, we're dealing with false teachers who are insubordinate, idle talkers and deceivers. They're not showing much restraint or self-control, they're insubordinate. Scroll down to verse 16, they profess to know God, but in works they deny him. Being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

And Titus to compensate. By contrast, he's to a pattern of good works. So, here we have the example. And you know, you know this, humans are imitative by nature. I mean, if you need me to argue that, you mustn't have a child in your home. Because your child will do everything you do. Watch a little girl model her mother. Watch a little boy model the father. So everything we say and everything we do is so important, because by nature, human beings are imitative. And we need examples, and we follow examples.

And so, here we have Titus called to be an example to young men. Let me unpack that a bit and make an application. There's an argument among the commentators, if this interests you, it should. "In all things," you'll see that in our English versions, that's put at the beginning of verse seven. Now you know that the verses are not inspired, they were added later. You know, when the Bible was written, it didn't have verses in it. So this was a judgment call, it could be right, it could be wrong. I tend to lean towards it being wrong. I think "in all things" belongs at the end of verse six. "Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober minded," that's the one thing they are to be and, "in all things," makes sense to put it there.

And the implication of that is, in the beginning of verse seven, if you want, starts with this, "Showing yourself to be a pattern of good works." That would put "showing yourself" in the emphatic position in the Greek. Which would mean, "Hey, Titus, I'm singling you out. I want you to show yourself to these young men in a compelling way." I'm going to run with that. That's kind of where I'm at in the text, not a hill to die on.

He's to be a pattern of good works, that's the example he's to set. Interesting Greek word, it means to make an impression. It could mean the impression a pen makes on a piece of paper. It could mean the impression a stamp makes on wax. It could mean an impression a sword makes on the skin, or a hammer on metal. You get the point. Be a pattern, make an impression regarding good works in the life of these young men.

I think too that Titus was probably a fairly young man himself. The text doesn't tell us that, but his compatriot, Timothy, was called a young man in the pastoral epistles. And I think there's an interesting comparison, I think would hint at the fact that both men were fairly young. Probably a little bit more than the 20 to 30, but not far away. So Timothy and Titus could be wonderful examples to young men, because they themselves were mature, self-controlled, and a good example.

Because if you go to 1 Timothy 4:12, what does Paul say to Timothy? "Let no man despise your youth, but be an example to all the believers." And you've got similar language here, not all in one verse, but here Titus is told to be a pattern of good works. Scroll down to verse 15, "Speak these things, exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you." I think the implication is, Titus was up against what Timothy was up against, that older saints in the congregation struggled with their relative youthfulness as pastors. And, you know, you can face that, I mean, I faced that. My first church was pretty kind to me regarding that, I was like 25 or 26 when I pastored my first church. That's a reality.

I remember when Tony Merida was here at our men's retreat, he talked about his first church in Louisiana, where an older lady in the church really didn't give him the respect that he was due. And one day he talked to her kindly about it and she said, "Sonny, I've got socks in my house older than you." So this is an issue you can deal with. And eventually he won her around with his good example. And so I believe with Timothy and Titus.

But here's the point, let's apply this, because this is written to young men. Although there's only a singular exhortation given them, be sober minded, by implication, everything that Titus is to be, they must be because he's their example. So, one of the things young men need is a good example to follow. I hope, young men, you've got a couple of spiritual benchmarks in your life. Your father, hopefully, in a good situation. A pastor, a friend, an older man. You know, we do here Paul/Timothy relationships through our men's ministry. Maybe you're in a small group and we don't have the age and stage groups, we have small groups that have young and old together, because that's what we want, where you might be able to find a mentor, someone you can just meet on a regular basis and see.

Every young man needs that. Every young woman needs that. We need people in our lives that have a luster to their lives. A shining life. Not perfect, that's impossible, but growing. Something with substance. You know? Something that's got something behind the store window. When you get back there, you go, "Man, this guy's the real deal. He knows his Bible, he's leading his family, he's got his life kind of lined up." You know, that kind of guy who exudes confidence, competency, character, conduct.

By the way, that's what Titus was to provide and older men were to provide. But I want to say this, don't rule this out, you can find an example among the living and among the dead. I've got mentors who are dead, long dead. Protestant reformers, Spurgeon. Politically, I love to read about Winston Churchill, he fascinates me. I have a general interest in biography, because biography just speaks to life. I just have no time to read fiction. What's the point? I want to read stuff that's real. And I love biography. I mean, what about Hebrews 11? Where you've got a whole hall of faith or hall of fame, where we're told to look at that. What about Abraham and what about Moses and all the great saints of old?

I love going on historical adventures to biblical sites or to historical sites. They are inspiring, they're instructive. We all need examples, living or dead, urging us to greater likeness to Christ, urging us to greater exploits for God's kingdom. Examples that tell us what needs to be done. Examples that tell us how to get it done. Examples that show us how it gets done. Examples that remind us we can, as ordinary people just like them, get it done. We need people like that in our lives, I hope you've got some people like that in your life, speaking into your life. That's helpful.

That's why I love, by the way, the balance here, this is for preachers, but for all of us, there's a beautiful balance here. Titus is called exhort, okay? To preach, teach, tell them. So he's told to exhort, but then he's also told to be a pattern of good works. Leadership involves exhortation and example. Leaders must act the sermon they preached. Jesus condemned the leaders of his day, the Pharisees, because they did not do what they said. In fact, to quote Jesus, they say and do not. It's an awful model for parents. It's an awful model for football coaches, business leaders, politicians, pastors, whatever. They say but they do not.

I did an apprenticeship in mechanical engineering. And I loved the balance between my Tuesday night, evening class on mechanical engineering, where you were getting into all kinds of charts and the theory of mechanical construction and all of that. And I was doing it in aerospace. And at times I'm kind of going, "What? I think I'm getting that, I'm not sure." But then it came alive Wednesday morning on the factory floor with my journeyman showing me. And I would bring up, "Hey, what was that all about? What does that mean? How does that work?" At that time, I think I was working hydraulic systems on this particular aircraft.

And it was that beautiful balance between Tuesday night education, Wednesday morning illustration. I saw it modeled. The old guys showed me how it was done. Sometimes they told me, "Don't listen to that guy on the Tuesday night, he's only messing you up. Here's how it's done." You know?

So that's the kind of beautiful balance here and the need for example. In fact, I was just reading a book by Howard Hendricks and said this, this is rather challenging. I want every man to hear this because young men need older men as examples. Listen to this, here's what Howard Hendricks says in a book called, A Man of Integrity, "I met a kid in a barber shop one day and asked him, 'Son, who do you want to be like when you grow up?' He said, 'Mister, I ain't found anybody I want to be like.' You think he's an exception? Then you're totally out of touch with this generation. This is a generation in which the pedestals are empty and young people are screaming for adults who are authentic."

It's a great image. The pedestals are empty and pastors need to get up on to those, and dads need to get up on to those, and older men need to get up on to those and say to young men, "Hey, follow me as I follow Christ." But young men, you need examples, dead and living in your life that you aspire to.

Let's move on, not only do we have the encouragement and the emphasis and the example, fourthly we have the education. See, Titus is to show himself an example, a pattern of good works, and then he is to show himself in doctrine, a man marked by integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, and sound speech.

For a moment, let's go back to the beginning of chapter two, it's been a long while since we started it and so you've probably forgot why we're on this road anyway. So, go back to verse one, "But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine." And then he speaks to older men, older women, younger women, younger men. Why have we been slowing down, in a sense, just working our way

through this because the whole point of this chapter is, here's what Gospel living looks like in the home, in the community, for this type of person. The older man, here's what he does. Older woman, here's what she does. Younger woman, here's what she does. This is how she lives out doctrine. The word there is proper for sound doctrine, fitting for sound doctrine, in accordance with sound doctrine. We're talking about creed and conduct. What you believe and how you behave. Those things are married here and we have that going on throughout the chapter.

So, we're back to the issue of doctrine. Titus is to be doctrinally sound, doctrinally exemplary, so that younger men will become doctrinally sound, and doctrinally exemplary. Now, you'll notice three things about his doctrinal commitment, which, remember again, young guys, if this is to be true of Titus, it's to be true of the young men, because he's their example in good works and doctrine.

Let me just run through this quickly, the three things that mark his doctrinal commitment. He's to be sincere, serious, and sound. Sincere, serious, and sound. Look at the first word, in doctrine showing integrity. The basic idea with integrity, and I think this is speaking of his motives. Getting to his heart and its belief in doctrine. Integrity speaks of wholeness, right? The unified action of all parts, inside and out. And he's to exemplify that. This speaks of motive and authenticity.

You know, Titus isn't just mouthing something he really doesn't believe. This is something that's being woven into woof and wharf of his life. He doesn't worship like a saint on a Sunday and live like a devil on a Monday. He's got some authenticity. There's an integrity to it. I really believe what I believe, and you can see it in my life. And I have pure motive in this. Authenticity is a good thing.

Let me see if I can squeeze this story in that Howard Hendricks tells in that same book, Man of Integrity, about a play in a west Texas town. It was a high school play and the main character, the leading actor was kind of miscast, because there was this scene, kind of as the play climaxes, where he gets down on his knees before his sweetheart and he proposes to her. But as this is taking place, a jilted lover is up in the window and as this is taking place, the jilted lover will shoot this leading actor. And at this point in the play, he's to jump up and say, "Good heavens, I'm shot!"

But he wasn't very good at it. He just couldn't get the emotion of it, he couldn't capture the moment. And it bothered the director of this high school play. And so, the night of the actual play itself, he's leaving out through his front door and he notices his son's air rifle and he has an idea. He decides, you know, maybe the best thing is to really shoot this kid. And then he'll experience the emotion of it all.

And so, according to the story that Howard Hendricks tells, they come to that moment, the fellow's down on his knees proposing to the girl and realizing here in a moment, "I've got to jump up and shout, 'Good heavens, I'm shot!'" And as he's about to anticipate that moment, and you could tell he's getting ready for it, the shot rings out, and the air pellet kind of hits him. And he leaps to his feet and he says, "Good heavens! I am shot!"

And you know what? There has to come a moment in all of our lives when we can truly say, "I am a Christian! And I do believe what I say!" Because that's what impacts people. They're not going to take you seriously unless you're serious about your faith. There's an integrity that heart and hand, motive and action, words and deeds are working together.

Secondly, not only sincere, but serious. Serious. Titus has got to convey a certain weariness. And that's appropriate, isn't it? Because he's speaking to young guys that fluff off stuff. Who are not taking life serious, have got to grow up, who have got to mature, who have got to become more self-controlled. And you know what? That kind of young man doesn't need an older man to be a clown in his life, we're not saying there can't be levity, but that young man's got a sense now, hey, life is a sober thing. Heaven and hell is real, the glory of Christ is at stake. The judgment seat of Christ [inaudible 00:42:20], it's just time to get serious. You know, no more horsing around.

And Titus needs to be that. He needs to be serious in his dealing with the text, he needs to be serious in his discipleship. His manner ought to be marked by sobriety and solemnity. Wasn't it Richard Baxter, the Puritan who famously said, "Whatever you do, let the people see that you are in good earnest. You cannot break men's hearts by jesting with them." Again, we're not saying there cannot be levity, there is a time to laugh. But the pulpit must never become a pantomime, and everything must never be a joke. And I've watched older men with younger men, and that's kind of where it's at. It's all levity and you try to be one of the boys. No. Show them what manhood is. Bring a certain weariness to the conversation.

There's that story, I've told you about Charles Simeon who had a disciple who ultimately became a martyr. Henry Martin died in India. After his death, Simeon gets a portrait sent to him. He hangs over the mantelpiece and there was a certain look of that young man that was serious, even in his youth. And when Simeon would bring people to his house and point to the picture and tell the story of the picture, this martyr for Jesus Christ, he would say, "Those eyes speak to me all the time and they say, 'Don't trifle, don't trifle.'"

And at some point, after you've taught sports and had a little bit of jesting, at some point you've got to get down with the young man and say, "Don't trifle, don't trifle. It's time to turn those corners, it's time to work hard, it's time to get married, it's time to have a family, it's time to fill your space in society. It's time to repay your parents. It's time not to keep siphoning off the generation before you."

Not only sincere, not only serious, sound. Go back to the text, go back to the text. Incorruptibility, in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, and I want to join that with the idea of sound speech that cannot be condemned. Now, there's a debate among the commentators as to whether sound speech is a change of subject and is Paul going on to say to Titus, "I need you to be an example in daily conversation." I don't see that. I think the sound speech means sound speech in doctrine. Seems fitting with what we're talking about.

In doctrine, marked by sound speech. Healthy speech. Incorruptible speech. We're talking about orthodoxy, being sound in doctrine. The word sound here means healthy. He has talked about unhealthy doctrine in chapter one with false teachers. Now he's asking Titus, for the sake of these young men and the next generation, you need to speak healthy doctrine.

You see, there needs to be a pure vessel, marked by integrity, and reverence, that speaks a pure word, sound doctrine, sound speech, to the next generation. Because if you go back to chapter one and verse ten, speaking of the false teachers, they are insubordinate and there are many, listen, idle talkers and deceivers. There's enough pollution in the air, doctrinally speaking. "No, Titus, you have got to be healthy in your speech regarding doctrine. You have got to declare the faith once delivered to the saints, you've got to be faithful in holding fast." The faithful word, chapter one, verse nine, teaching it and exhorting and convincing people about it.

There's a vitality in victory and sound doctrine. Not a lot of emphasis within the [inaudible 00:46:38] Church on sound doctrine and young people. In fact, young people sadly tend to go to churches not marked by sound doctrine. Marked by loud music, marked by a contemporary feel. I'm not saying that's all evil, I'm just saying to the young men and young women of our church, thank you for being here. And as you talk to your friends, your generation needs to sit under men who are holy and serious, and men who are sound in their doctrine, and who call you to be doctrinally sound. Because I think young men back then, unlike older men, were more likely to be carried away by novelty.

So what's the application here? Quickly, to young men, to the 20 to 30 year olds, you need to be men marked by sound doctrine. That's Titus' example to the young men in Crete, and by extension, that's what he's calling you to. To be men who value the Bible, who love the Bible, who carry their Bibles, live their Bibles, study their Bibles, honor the text. What about Psalm 119:16, "I will delight myself in your statutes, I will not forget your word." Verses 28 to 29, "My soul melts from heaviness. Strengthen me according to your word. Remove from me the way of lying and grant me your law graciously. I have chosen the way of truth, your judgments I have led before me. I cling to your testimonies."

What about 97 to 100, "Oh, how I love your law." Young man, is that true of you? Do you love God's law? You read it every day? You study it, you cling to it, you follow it at a cost? "It is my meditation all the day. I have more understanding than my teachers, I understand more than the ancients because I keep your precepts," listen to this word, self-control, "I have restrained my feet from every evil way." How did he restrain his feet from every evil way? How did he exercise self-control? By taking heed to the word of God.

Young men, you need to value the Bible. You need to become a student of the Bible who can diligently study it and understand it, so that you need not be ashamed, 2 Timothy 2:15. You may have a Bible in your hand this morning, but I got a question. Can you handle it? I'm not asking you if you've got it in your hand, can you handle it? Can you open it and make sense of it? Can you take me from Genesis to Revelation and give me some kind of sense of what the Bible is about? The different sections, historical books, poetic books, prophetic books, gospels, the epistles. Can you show me Jesus is the theme, beginning in Genesis 3:15 right through the book of Revelation? Can you defend its inspiration against the secular attack?

Jesus is counting on you to defend his Gospel and to preach his word. I hope you value the Bible, I hope you diligently study the Bible. I hope you read books about the Bible so you can better read the Bible having read those books. I hope you're a bookworm. I hope you've a little bit of a library going. I hope you've got a couple of study Bibles, I hope you've got a couple of concordances, I hope you've got a couple of one or two volume commentaries on the Bible. I hope you're self-educating yourself with regards to the Bible.

I'm reading a book right now on man called the, Manly Man's Manual, by Steven Mansford. It's a good read. He's got a chapter in there called self-educated. Self-educated. He talks about how Winston Churchill read so many books, he was often seen with a book in his hand, that one of his early biographers said that he was a university unto himself. That's a great little statement.

Harry Truman is mentioned in this chapter. Harry Truman is one of the only modern presidents without a degree. But he was pretty weak physically when he was a little boy and spent most of his summers in the library. And he devoured books on philosophy, religion, and history. And even when he sat in the company of Harvard and Princeton professors, he surprised them about his knowledge because he was

self-educated. In fact, one reporter asked him one day, "Mr. President, do you read yourself to sleep each night?" To which he replied, "No, I read myself awake."

Do you read yourself awake? Are you a university unto yourself? Are you a young man that aspires to know the book? I hope so. Because we need young men to defend it, we need young men like Bunyan. Listen to what Spurgeon says of Bunyan, "When I would quote John Bunyan as an example of those who know their Bible, I would do this because you read anything of his and you will see that it's almost like reading the Bible itself. He had read it until his very soul was saturated with the scripture. And though his writings are charmingly full of poetry, yet he cannot give us in his Pilgrim's Progress, that sweetest of all prose poems, without continually making us feel and say, 'Why, this man is a living Bible. Prick him anywhere, his blood is Bibline. The very essence of the Bible flows from him, he cannot speak without quoting a text, for his very soul is full of the word of God. I commend his example to you, beloved.'"

Have you read Bunyan? My dad was a lover of Bunyan and had us read Pilgrim's Progress in the home pretty early on. I mean, Bunyan's a living Bible. The verses he uses, the analogies he draws. This was the day before Google and he's connecting verses all over the Bible. You cut him and he bleeds the Bible. It's challenging, young guys.

Let's finish, as the team gets ready, just a couple of minutes here. The effect, it's the last thought, but we've kind of touched on it as we have worked through this text. In fact, let me show you that all of this exhortation, to live a life in accordance with the Gospel, is for a particular end. Look at verse five, what is that end? "That the word of God may not be blasphemed." What is that particular end? Verse ten, "That Christians may beautify or adorn the doctrine of God before the world." And here's our text, verse eight, "That one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing else to say." See, criticism and censorship of the Gospel was a constant reality.

We talked about post-Christian culture, this was pre-Christian culture, this was the early church. This was the first wave of Christians going out into the world, and they get hammered. Initially, they were thrown in as just a cult of Judaism. Then all kinds of rumors started about cannibalism and immorality in their love feasts. And so, they were up against some pretty bad press.

And so, Paul says this often, you know what? There are those who are going to oppose us, that's just a given. But hopefully by your life you can shut their criticism down. You can give them another narrative, you can show them that Christ is real and alive in you. Your exemplary conduct, your pure motives, your dignified manner, your sound teaching, it will zip the lip of Jewish opponents and secular antagonists. That's where we're kind of closing this morning.

Young men, you need to be all of this so that you're a good example for the Gospel. Because what is a Christian? A Christian is someone who makes it easier for someone else to believe in the Lord Jesus. You can't get more basic than that. A Christian is someone who makes it easier for someone else to believe in Jesus.

I'll give you a verse or two on this. 1 Peter 2, Peter addresses this, Paul address this, but Peter too. Look what he says in 1 Peter 2:11, "Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the spirit, having your conduct honest among the Gentiles. Then when they speak against you as evildoers, they may be your good works which they observe glorify God in the day of visitation."

Here's where they start, over here, antagonistic. Unbelieving. Fixed in their opposition to the Gospel. You come into their life and they look at your family, they look at your ethics, they look at your words, they look at your kindness, and they begin to move. Because you silence their criticism, you answered their questions, and you challenged their presuppositions. That's the effect of older men being what Titus 2 calls them to be. That's the effect of older women being what Titus 2 calls them to be. That's the effect of what Titus 2 regarding younger women and younger men should be.

Wasn't it D.L. Moody who said that there's the Gospel according to Matthew, there's the Gospel according to Mark, Luke, and John, and there's according to you. And is your Gospel the same as theirs?

Father, we thank you for our study in Titus 2. As we draw to a close, we thank you for this challenge to act our age, to embrace the different stages and seasons of life and to act appropriately regarding our age. We can't always stay young, we've got to mature. And we have become old, we shouldn't regret that, we should embrace it and enter into that kind of spiritual statesmanship era where we become spiritual mothers and fathers to the generation below.

But we especially prefer young men, who in our culture are turning these important corners later and later and later. Pray that the young men of Kindred would grow up, that they would be self-controlled, that they would be a pattern of good works. That they would be doctrinally sound and compelling in their arguments, and attractive in their lives.

We find ourselves increasingly, sadly in North America, in a culture that's turning against us. Where it's being verbalized, you don't belong in the federal government. Where Christians who take a position on a morality are being kicked off school boards. Bible studies are being shut down. Lord, help us to be unashamed and strong in our stance. But at the same time, we pray that we may do a good job at silencing the critics and causing the opponents to have nothing evil to say about us.

Lord, help our lives to be a Gospel like Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. For we ask it in Christ's name, amen.