

Well, we're in a series on the book of Titus, so grab your Bible. Let's stand in honor of God's word. We're going to look at verse 3 today, something we started to look at last week, and I'm coming back to finish our exposition of Paul's admonition through Titus to the older women in the churches on the island of Crete. But to get our bearings, let's read verses 1 through 5. Paul writes to Titus, who speaks to the churches 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 patients. 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.

You can be seated. We're looking, this morning, a second time, at Titus 2:3, a subject we have entitled Pass It Forward. One generation discipling the next generation, older women discipling younger women. Walt Disney reportedly said that there are three types of people in the world. There are, number one, the well poisoners. They're the people who dump in the aspiration of others. Where there's a will, they're the won't. They crush creativity. They tell you what you can't do, what you can't accomplish, what you'll never be. They're the well poisoners. Walt Disney said there's a second group of people, they're the lawn mowers. They're well intended, but they're self absorbed. They spend their life mowing their own lawn. They refuse to help others because they're so busy taking care of themselves in that which is nearest and dearest to them.

But then there's the third group, according to Walt Disney, they're the life enhancers. They're the people that define success as helping others succeed. They love to encourage, they love to enrich others, they love to offer a leg up on life. The well poisoners, the lawn mowers, the life enhancers. As we come back to Titus 2:3, I think you'd agree with me that Paul through Titus is encouraging the older women in the churches on Crete to be life enhancers, to offer a leg up to the younger women of the congregation. These older women define success as making others successful, especially in Christ. They love to come alongside to inspire and to instruct, They're catalysts for spiritual change and spiritual growth.

If you were with us the last time, you'll see that we believe that Paul is encouraging, through Titus, the older women in these churches to become spiritual mothers and spiritual matrons within the life of the church. There's a good book called Spiritual Mothering by Susan Hunt. She's a Presbyterian, she is a woman's teacher, she wrote a wonderful book on Women's Ministry with Ligon Duncan. In her book, Spiritual Mothering, she says this about spiritual mothering, "Spiritual mothering takes place when a woman possessing faith and spiritual maturity enters into a relationship with a younger woman in order to encourage and equip her to live for God's glory."

That's a wonderful definition, and it's really what Paul's about here in Titus 2:3, and I hope that every older woman in our congregation, and we saw last week, that's women around about 60 and beyond, understand that their calling in life are part of the pie, so to speak, is to be a spiritual mother. They may have raised their own family, but now in Christ they try to raise other people's children. They try to disciple other women in the congregation. Because everybody needs encouragement. You know the story of the salesman who had been on the road. He was tired, he was jaded, he wanted to go home, but it'd be a while before he would get home. So he pulled over into a diner, sat down, and he looked at the menu. The waitress comes along and she says, "Sir, what do you want?" He says, "You know what? I've been on the road a while, I'd like some home cooking. I see you've got some meatloaf. I'd like to

order some meatloaf. And you know what? Tonight, I'm missing my family. So can I ask you, I'd like meatloaf and a kind word."

She goes off. Several minutes later, comes back, puts the meatloaf in front him, about to turn and go away, and he says, "What about the kind word?" To which she says, "Don't eat the meatloaf." Now we all need encouragement, and we all need someone to come alongside us to help us through our problems, to help us become obedient when it's costly and we don't want to be obedient, to help us to reach our God given potential. Everybody needs a best friend that helps us become better friends with God. I think Paul once said he wants the older men to disciple the younger men, and he wants the older women to disciple the younger women. Now, we're going to get into the specifics of that. We looked at this text in it's context last time when we drew five implications. I'm not going to repeat those, but there is something afresh I noticed before we come and look at the older women and their testimony, their talk, their temperance, their training.

I want you to notice that character is accented here. Now, they're going to teach, they're going to disciple, they're going to train. We're not going to miss that. We read in verse four that they're to admonish the younger women to love their husbands, their children, so on and so forth. But I want you to notice that this teaching of the next generation, this teaching of good things is grounded in a good life. Now, at the end of this verse, verse three, they are to be teachers of good things, but you can't be a good teacher of good things without living a good life. I just want you to notice the accent is on, "Hey, here's the kind of woman we want to be a teacher of good things. We want her to be reverent in behavior, we want her to watch her tongue, not be a slanderer, and we want her to watch her control her appetites and not be given to much wine."

That's character stuff. That's lifestyle. That's commitment to being something. I think it's a good reminder, not just to spiritual mothers but to pastors, teachers, coaches, leaders. If you have any mentoring relationship at all in life, always remember this, that it is an admirable life that is the blackboard upon which you will write your instruction. Let me say that again. It is an admirable life that gives you a blackboard upon which you can write your instruction. You'll notice won't you, we'll get to it soon enough down in verse six, "Likewise, exhort the young men, Titus, to be sober minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works." I want you to disciple the young men and your life is the blackboard upon which you will write that instruction. Just put it down, instruction in life demands integrity of life.

People won't listen to you or me, they won't take us seriously, and they certainly won't download what we're sharing with them unless they take us seriously by looking at our life, and going, "He's the real deal. She's the real deal." Just something I noticed. It's hard to learn from someone who does not heed their own instruction. That aside, let's get into the text. First thing, what you'll notice about these older women, their testimony, reverent in behavior. Reverent in behavior. Now, the Greek here is interesting. The word reverent is a Greek word that means set apart, means to set one's life apart for service in God's glory, but it's a specialized Greek word. It's only found here in the New Testament, just once in Titus 2:3. It's a Greek word, ladies this is interesting, that carries the idea of acting like a priestess. It was a word that come out of the temples and the temple.

So you can read it like that. The older women are to act like a priestess in their behavior, in their demeanor, in their deportment. It's a rare word and it's a rare challenge to the older women in Crete to act like a priestess in all that they do, to live a life that's fit to be rendered a service in the temple. In fact, when you think about that, you can't help but think of Anna. Go back to Luke chapter two, or I'll

take you there. You can follow along. But in Luke 2:37, we have the description of a prophetess, come priestess so to speak. In Luke chapter two, and as Jesus is brought there and presented in his early life, we read about Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She was of great age. Here's a good example, ladies, of an older woman acting like a priestess, because she actually was acting as a priestess, so to speak.

She was of great age, she had lived with her husband seven years after her virginity, and this woman was a widow of about 84 four years. When you add that together, she's well over a 100. Now notice about this dear lady, it seems at least for the 84 years she was a widow and an older woman, she did not depart from the temple but served God with fastings and prayers, night and day, and coming in, that instance she gave thanks to the Lord, that is coming in and finding Jesus being presented and spoke of him to all those who look for redemption in Israel. Let me make this practical. In a practical sense, what we're talking about here, acting as a priestess is practicing the presence of God, of living *Coram Deo* before the face of God, right?

Psalm 16:8, where David says, "I have always set the Lord before me." Between you and your next act, between you and your next thought is the thought, "What would the Lord have me to do? What would the Lord have me to say?" You know what? When you are like Anna, who served in the temple night and day, the thought of serving God, the thought of the holiness of God, the thought of practicing the presence of God was never far away because the very furniture, the very pillars of that temple, the very halls along which she walked, would have reminded her to act like a priestess. Now we're to take that, or the ladies are to take that, and carry that into their lives, and they'd go, "You know what? Wherever I am, whatever I'm doing, whether I'm at a kitchen or an altar, I'm going to act like a priestess. I'm going to act reverently in my behavior, I'm going to practice the presence of God." Isn't that what we're all called to?

Do you need to be reminded of the Great Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers? As our Protestant forefathers broke free of Roman Catholicism, they reminded us that we don't need a clergy over the church, the church is a priesthood of believers, priests and priestesses, who every day of their lives offer their bodies as a sacrifice. Like old Bishop Taylor of England, who woke up every morning and as he lay on the bed, he said, "Lord, this bed is the altar, and my body is the sacrifice." That's New Testament Christianity. We don't need to go to a sacred place or a sacred space. All of life is sacred, and we act like priestesses and priests wherever we go. All of life is sacred. Whatever we do, whether we eat or drink, we do it all to the glory of God.

That's revolutionary, and it will change your life. There's no God free zones in your life or God free moments in your day. Act like a priestess, ladies, is what Paul says through Titus. Maybe someone that exemplified that would've been Ruth Bell Graham. I'm fascinated by this lady. The more I read, the more I admire her. She really has the story behind Billy Graham. In many ways, she excelled him, in ability. But if you read her life, you'll know that she submitted her life to his life. To make him all that he could be for God. Just recently for another sermon, I was reading something of her life, and if you were ever to visit her home, and Billy, in North Carolina. As you came through their front door, there was one sign on the hallway, and it read, "God loves you and I'm trying." That's a good one. We've all got to get that sign for our houses. "God loves you and I'm trying."

But if you went into her kitchen, that was another sign over her sink, and it said this, "Divine service is rendered here three times a day." Now, that's acting like a priestess, that's bringing that sense of God, practicing the presence of God and the reality of His superintendence of all of life into life. That's their

testimony. I like what Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth says in her book *Adorne*, which is a book, ladies, I recommend to you. It's on Titus chapter two. She says this, I know these are good words, "Being a reverent woman doesn't mean always talking in hushed and somber tones, walking through life as if one's tip toeing through a European cathedral. That doesn't mean being dour, downcast, always deathly serious, unable to crack a joke with a clear conscience. It certainly doesn't imply being legalistic and fault finding. That's not at all what true reverence is about. To be reverent means living with the constant conscious awareness that we are in the presence of an awesome and Holy God."

Those are good words. Now, I'm going to meddle a little bit here, I'm going to go sideways because as I studied one of the commentators, George Knight, linked Titus 2:3 to 1 Timothy 2:9 and 10. If you go to that passage, here's what you'll read. Paul says to Timothy, "In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair of gold or pearls or costly clothing, but what is proper or fit for women," listen, "professing godliness, with good works." That's the language, isn't it? Of Titus 2:3. Be reverent in behavior, act Godly, remember you're a priestess and here we are reminded that doesn't just extend to your attitudes and your actions, it extends to your appearance. For a few moments, I want to talk about that. I'm going to meddle.

I know I'm treading on thin ice to some degree, but I'm not afraid, I'm preaching God's word. We need to remind ourselves that part of a woman's godliness is her modesty of dress. C. J. Mahaney defines modesty as humility in dress. I've always liked that. Humility in dress. In fact, if you want to follow that up, I did a message, and we've added his message to it. You can get it from our media. It's called *Dressed to Kill and The Need to Think this Issue Through*. But that said, we see here that a spirit of reverence will inform the way you live, and it will reform the way you dress and appear in public. Now, let me say this, less I be misunderstood and less, Paul be misunderstood, and I think this type of verse is being manipulated by some and taken into a direction that's not biblical.

Paul is not calling for a ban on make up, on a woman braiding her hair, wearing gold or wearing nice clothes that accentuate her beauty. Paul's not calling for a ban, he's calling for a balance. You'll notice the word's moderation. Not prohibition, moderation. We need to bear that in mind. There's nothing wrong with looking nice, there's nothing wrong with dressing up and making yourself attractive, but it can be overdone. It can be that which defines you. It can be an expression of self promotion rather than godliness. Don't you get the same idea over in first Peter, chapter 3, verse 2, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear, speaking to women. Do not let your adornment be merely outward, arranging the hair, wearing gold, putting on fine apparel, rather let it be the hidden person of the heart with an incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit that is very precious in the sight of God.

The question is ladies when it comes to the way you dress is, who are you trying to attract? Well, the person you want to attract is God, and He wants to look on you and be pleased with what He sees. He sees someone and something that's precious in His sight. That's what Paul and Peter are after. They're not encouraging dullness, and you're not encouraging a Christian woman to go to church looking like an unkept bed, that's not the point of the text. Okay? This kind of text is being taken to that degree. I grew up in a very strict church context, and these verses would be used by preachers to rail on make up and fashionable dress at church. I remember hearing a preacher in Belfast scold the women, and he said, "You know what? I've seen some women in this church who have enough paint on their faces to paint a ship and enough powder to blow it up."

I mean, it's a great line. It's a great line, but it's an awful thought. It's silly. It's silly. We can strike a balance, can't we? Can't we find the medium in the middle? Of course we can, and we should. Why? Because, ladies, I think you'd agree with I mean you've got daughters, and you know this. Don't take from me I'm encouraging you not to look pretty or look nice. That's part of femininity. But you know that modesty has gone the way of the dodo bird. You know that perversity and provocation in dress, or the lack of it, is everywhere, especially in Southern California, with the culture and the climate. We're going to have to navigate that as Christians. We don't need to get up and pack and run to the hills, we just got to think it through. What's a biblical position? Where is moderation? What does that look like? How do I help my daughter look pretty but also be godly, in that way that pleases God?

We need modesty, humility in dress. I would say this, I think in some circles, it's a matter of measurement; necklines and hemlines. When you've grown up in some church cultures, man, they get close to just pulling out a 12 inch rule and measuring the whole thing. I would say this to you, I think I'm right, modesty is an attitude before it's a latitude or a longitude. I think if the heart is right, the hemline will be right. If your conscious is informed by the word of God and you're living for the glory of God, and you're aware that men are visually stimulated, you're going to think this issue through, for the benefit of the church and the assembly of God's saints. You may want to ask yourself some questions. Who am I trying to please by the way I dress? Does the way I dress put the focus on me? Is that where the focus is? Do I distract from Christ, the preaching of His word, His demonstrable presence and the body of Christ? Do I tempt my brothers to think lustfully?

Well you might say that's on them, and some of that's on them, but some of that's on you. Unless you're naïve, or you're drinking the Kool-Aid of the Me Too movement. Come on, let's work together. Men need to watch their minds, but women need to watch their dress. In fact, I'll let a woman speak. I'm probably better shutting up at this point. I'll let a woman speak. I think you can hear her heart. It's Mary Mohler. It's the wife of Dr. Al Mohler, who's the President of Southern Baptist Seminary. She's got a wonderful little book on modesty. If you can get your hands on it, do. Here's what she says, "What about the way we dress for church? Let me be clear, if I arrive at church, and your perfume arrives five minutes before you, there is a problem."

If you arrive at church dressed in such a way that you have spent more time and effort preparing your clothing, your hair, and your makeup, than you have preparing your heart for corporate worship, there's a problem. If you arrive at church dressed in such a way that by the end of the service the people around you, by no fault of their own, know the color of your underwear and they have watched you do a shimmy dance as you try to get your too short, too tight skirt under you, there's a problem. And we could go on, but it's well said. That stuff's a problem, and it is a problem, and Paul addresses it. He says to the older women who will then teach the younger women the same thing, by not only word but by example, "Hey, cut that out. That's not good for the glory of Christ, it's not good for the body of Christ, it's not good for the men of Christ."

Let's move on. You want me to. Their testimony. Number two, their talk. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this, but their talk. Back to Titus 2:3, they are to be reverent in behavior, they are to act like priestesses in attitude, appearance, action, not slanderers. These women are communicators, don't we agree with that? Because they're told, at the end of this verse, to teach good things and then they're told, in the next verse, to admonish young women. These women are teachers and talkers. It would only be right that Paul addresses the tongue, communication, speech. Plus, you know this and if not I'll remind you, Proverbs 31:26. The Proverbs 31 woman who's the poster child, so to speak, for godliness

and womanhood and motherhood. You read of her that her speech is a fountain of wisdom, and she's governed by a law of kindness.

I'm not surprised, are you? We're here we are in the New Testament, but an echo of that Proverbs 31 virtuous woman is coming through Paul, "Hey ladies, watch your tongue. Guard your mouth." I love that verse in Psalm 141: 3, "Put a guard over my mouth, Lord." The issue here is gossip. Paul is saying, "Hey, ladies, use your tongues for the gospel not for gossip." The word is slander. It's in the family of gossiping, not exactly the same I suppose. It means false report, it means spreading harmful information about someone to make them look bad, make yourself look good. It's telling the truth even in a negative way with a certain tone or twist. Paul says no, through Titus. The godly woman, the older women will build the body up with her tongue, with her speech, with her communication.

She'll train the next generation. She won't tear the body down through whispering, through gossip, through lying, through slander. Ladies, challenging. The Greek here is made up of words that carry the idea of don't be a she-devil, because the word slander is a title given to the devil, Diablos. He's a slanderer, and the Greek here is don't be a she-devil, don't be a feminine Diablos. In Genesis 3:4 where he causes Eve to deny and doubt the word of God. He slanders the character of God. Is God good? He's holding out on you, He won't do what He threatens to do, He won't keep His word, on and on it goes. The devil likes to slander God before humans. Secondly, the devil likes to slander believers before God.

What about Job. Perfect man, good man. The devil presents himself to God, in Job 1:11, and says, "You know what? Job's good living for a living. You put a hedge around him, I can't touch him. But if I touch him. I'm telling You, he'll sing like a bird and he'll curse You to Your face." Think about that. The devil likes to slander God before us and he loves to slander us before God. Then he loves to get us slandering each other. James warns us, doesn't he in that seminal section on speech in James 3? That our tongues can be set on fire of hell. We can become he and she devils. We can slander the body. So we're being reminded here, no. I'll leave it there, other than to just give you something to think through. I think I did this in a truth matters for our radio listeners a while back, but you need to think before you speak. So do I.

If you're going to think before you speak, let me give you a little acrostic of the word think. T, is it true? H, is it helpful? I, is it inspiring? N, is it necessary? K, is it kind? This is hard to do, I'll admit, but this is what God calls us to do, and by His grace we can really work at doing it. When we speak, is it truthful, helpful, inspiring, necessary, and kind? If it's not that, in the balance of things, don't say it. Don't say it. You'll never have to be embarrassed for something you never said. Let's move on. Their temperance. Their testimony, their talk, their temperance. Not given to much wine. How interesting is that? Literally not ensnared on enslaved to alcohol or wine. Very vivid. Wine and strong drink can control a man or a woman like a merciless cruel master. We've seen it. We've had people in our families that have become alcoholics. I've had an uncle that was an alcoholic, and I've seen what it does to a marriage, to a family, to a man. It's horrible.

When someone gets enslaved to that stuff, it's devilish and it's deadly, and no one would wish it on anybody. Paul's warning the ladies in that congregation not to become enslaved to drink, to wine, to alcohol. By the way, I don't think it's a world away to connect loose tongues with intoxicating drink. Because those two things go together. We shouldn't be surprised. Hey don't be slanderers and don't be given to much wine because if you give yourself to much wine, you'll end up slandering. Once the drinks starts flowing, the talk starts flowing, and bad stuff starts happening. What we've got here, I want to make clear, is a prohibition against drunkenness. Paul doesn't say, "You are not to take wine." I can't

draw from this text a call to not drink wine. But there is a call not to drink much wine. One of the commentators would remind us, this may have been a temptation to women, especially. Now that wouldn't be our first thought, but we know in the culture, right?

Titus 1:12, that the Cretans, that culture was one given to gluttonous, wild living. But here's the temptation for the woman. In that culture and maybe in our culture, you'll notice, when we look at this next week, verse five, that a woman is called to be a homemaker. That's not all she is, but that's something she will fundamentally be. Think about this, and one commentator says it. If a woman spends the balance of her day and the balance of her life at home, then she's got constant access to food and drink, and that can become a temptation, and she can give herself to much wine. Maybe she gets depressed or discouraged, she tries to gladden her heart with a glass of wine, and then it's a second glass, and it's a third glass. You get the picture. There's something there that could be dangerous. What we have here is a prohibition, not against drinking but against drunkenness.

Now, we could apply it, metaphorically, to all manner of sobriety in matters of food and entertainment and shopping and recreation and work and sex. You could stretch it to this idea, "Hey, control your appetite. Don't give yourself to much wine." But wine and drinking and food's not our only appetite. But it's clear that really it's not metaphorical. That may have been the case in chapter two in verse two regarding men, where they're told to be sober. That's probably metaphorical to be clear headed and sober thinking, but here it's clearly don't give yourself to much wine. Now, I want to delve down to this for a moment. I want to meddle again. Well, I've been at it already with modesty. I may as well go for the whole drinking issue. Just one of those Sundays.

Now, let me think about this. Because my experience is, I don't know if you'd agree with me, I think you would, especially the older generation, we tended to grow up in a generation where maybe it was cultural. Some of the overhang of the kind of prohibition era that spilled over into the church. It's not necessarily biblical. But certainly, I grew up in an era, and certainly around Christians where a Christian that drank was an exception to the rule. We've kind of shed some of that, and some of that's good, because I think some of our Christianity was cultural. It's clear. As I study the Bible, there's no prohibition in the Bible to drinking wine. The Bible doesn't call me to be a teetotaler. The Bible doesn't call these women to be teetotalers. Paul says to Timothy, "Drink some wine for your stomach's sake."

Total abstinence isn't a benchmark of spirituality. I get that. I think that was overplayed a generation ago, and it was more cultural than biblical. But here's what bothers me. Maybe bothers not the right word. Here's what concerns me. The pendulum has swung, and I'm not sure it has swung in a good direction. Pendulums tend to swing too far. They tend to go to the extremes rather than the middle. I hear a lot of Christians that they've ... talking about their liberty to drink, and I get it. We're not told not to take wine, we're told not to take much wine. We're not prohibited from drinking, were prohibited from getting drunk in our drinking. But with this liberty, I think there's a growing license. I think we're beginning to throw caution to the wind. I think we're beginning to fail to see the dangers inherent in wine and alcohol and strong drink.

What I just want to do for a moment is strike a balance. Now, June and I have decided we're not going to drink alcohol. Are we saying that's what you've got to do? Absolutely not. Are we saying that's biblical? No. Not as a precept. It could be biblical as a principal, or as a wisdom choice. We have thought things through. We see the warnings in God's word. We see today, we've got so many choices that have no danger attached to them. We see, in our families and in our cultures back in Scotland and Ireland, the danger of a drinking culture and the damage it does. We've also reminded ourselves while you have

liberty to do certain things. As Sinclair Ferguson said at the Master's Seminary, "You are at liberty not to enjoy your liberty," and that's what we have chosen to do. I agree you have liberty, but we have chosen not to exercise our liberty for several reasons I don't need to get into today.

In fact, I dealt with this a bit more in a message in our Proverbs series, Dying For a Drink, if you want to listen to a more extended study on it. But here's what I want to say. As I thought about it this week, meditated on it, I think this is balanced. I think you'll score me some decent points. I just want you to think this through. I've Three things to say about drinking wine or alcohol or strong drink. Number one, the Bible speaks of its delight. I want to acknowledge that. The Bible speaks of its delight. There's no prohibition, there's no cold condemnation for having a glass of wine or drinking some spirits. In fact, Psalm 104 verse 15 says, that wine gladdens the heart. If you go to Proverbs, chapter three and verses nine and 10, it's interesting that wine is associated with festivity and God's blessing. I want to acknowledge that. Proverbs 3, verses nine and 10, "Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine."

Now, that new wine might not be fermented, but I'll tell you that new wine will become old wine pretty soon and it will be fermented. We don't need to go there. But it's clear in the Bible, wine gladdens the heart, and in that culture, when the vats were filled with wine, the people celebrated God's goodness. I'm well aware that the Puritans, that we tend to peg as the stiff shirts, they came with their own beer from Britain to America. I'm well aware that Katey Luther, Martin Luther's wife, made him her own special brew of beer. I get it, and I'm willing to acknowledge that across history there's been a delight and an enjoyment of liberty in this area, but I want to move on because there's a balance. The Bible speaks of its delight, but the Bible, and I would say more often, speaks of its danger. Speaks of its danger.

You get this in Proverbs, don't you? Let me give you a few verses you probably haven't read in a while, but I want them to challenge your thinking on this. Proverbs 20, verse one, "Wine is a mocker." How interesting. One minute it can gladden your heart, but if you don't control it and it starts controlling you, if you don't think the issue through, if you throw caution to the wind and all you think about is your liberty, you're in danger because wine's a mocker. It will mock you, it will grieve you, it will hurt you, it will destroy. Just be careful when you hold it in your hand, understand the danger. Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler. Spirit's strong drink. If you drink that long enough and you spend time in the company of those who do, I'll guarantee you at some point in the night, I'm talking as a policeman as much as the pastor, fights will break out. Because it's a brawler, and cause people to lose control of their emotions and their senses.

People who are respectable become irrepectable, people who are moral become immoral. It's terrible. Listen to Proverbs 23, verse 20 to 21, this is the balance, folks. I want you to think it out. Be good Bereans, go home and see if these things are so. "Do not mix with winebibbers, or gluttonous eaters of meat; For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and drowsiness will clothe a man with rags. That's not saying you can't be in the company of people or are at a cocktail party at work or some environment. It's just saying, "Man, when it starts flowing and the night gets long, get out of there. Don't hang out with winebibbers, to any length of degree, or any length of time because no good comes of it." Listen to what this text says in chapter 23 verse 29, "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?" I don't think you'd want to be any of those things.

But here's what verse 30 says, "Those who linger long at the wine." Titus 2, verse three, "Don't be given to much wine," because that's what it does. Those who go in search of mixed wine, do not look on the wine when it's red, when it's sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly, but at last it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper. Budweiser will never show you beyond the sparkle of the glass and the sound of liquid filling it on a warm day. They never show you the car wrecks, the divorces, the abused children. They won't do that. But that's a reality. I'm not concluding, "Well, pastor, trying to scare me in not to enjoy my liberty." I'm not trying to do that. I'm just reminding you that is a risk. If you can handle that, that's fine, and God can help you be marked by self control. I get that.

But also given our fallen nature, I just want to be realistic. I want to be mindful of what Adrian Rogers said that one out of 10 people who take a drink for the first time will ultimately become an alcoholic. Then he made this analogy: Imagine going on a flight with Southwest, and there's no typical assigned seats on a Southwest flight, so you get there down at LAX, you're taking a flight to Phoenix, and you know what? You get in there, they say, "Hey, take your seats," and you just pick whatever seat you want. But they tell you, "You know as you pick your seat, we want you to be aware, in flight, one out of 10 seats in this aircraft will drop out the bottom of the plane." I think you'd be frightened about what seat you're about to choose, not knowing where it could all lead.

This is a sobering thought, plays into the way I think. I kind of know myself. You know yourself. You want to play with fire? Because drinking wine isn't a necessity in life. Eating food is a necessity, drinking somethings is a necessity. But drinking wine isn't. While it's a delight on the one hand, it is a danger on the other. Finally, the Bible speaks of its deferment. It's deferment. What am I talking about? Well, interestingly, I'm talking about deferring not to drink, choosing not to drink, even though you know you could, even though you're aware that it's a providence and a kindness of God within His creation, should you choose it. On the side of leadership, it's interesting that Lemuel's mother speaking to a future king of Israel, says this in Proverbs 31, verse 4, "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor princes intoxicating drink." Why?

Because you've got to be sober in your thinking, you've got to make good judgments for the people, you've got to be prudent in your reign, why play with stuff that dulls your mind? I want you to defer from drinking wine, my son. It's better for you, better for the kingdom. That has played into my thinking as a leader with the responsibilities that come with that. I'm not saying that's a law, I'm just saying it's a principle I've added to my thinking and conversation. Then the other one, that's definitely a command that must play into all our thinking, is Romans chapter 14 verse 20. This is the issue of eating and drinking in a way that causes others to stumble. We're not sure exactly what the background is, but something like this that someone's come out of a background or a culture and they have associated the drinking of wine or alcohol with a certain lifestyle that they know it is abhorrent to God, and it bothers them, they have repented of it.

That's why you'll typically find even when an alcoholic gets saved and should they be taught they have got liberty to drink alcohol, rarely do they, because they're so frightened of the danger inherent in it and they know it all too well. That's the kind of thinking. People have got a conscience, things have bothered them and they associate drink with a certain lifestyle, or meat. We know from the letter to the Corinthians and others that there's the possibility of scenarios of something like this. Something was offered to an idol, part of that animal, the meat was put into a meat shop or a butcher shop that gets it's meat from the temple and what remains from that, and a Christian goes, "Hey, that meat's from the temple. I used to worship there. That's a place of idolatry. That's the place of demons, and the devil and all that's ungodly. I'm not going to eat that meat because it's associated with that."

Now, Paul would remind them and us, "Hey, idols are nothing, they can't contaminate the meat. Go ahead and eat it." But he also says, "But if a brother can't do that, and it bothers him and he watches you doing it and it bothers him watching you do it." Here's what Paul says in Romans 14, verse 20, strong language, "Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat, nor drink wine, nor do anything by which your brother stumbles." Even if you've got a liberty, be careful how you exercise that liberty. Be careful about the dangers inherent and also remember, even though you've got a liberty, you're at liberty not to enjoy your liberty.

I like the story of the old man who was blind, and every time he went out at night, he carried a lantern. People thought it was crazy. What's a blind man carrying a lantern? He can't see? What does he need a lantern for? When he was asked that, he said, "I don't want people stumbling over me." He couldn't see them coming, they could have bumped into each other. That's a great thought for Christians, young and old. Is the way I'm living, drinking, eating, acting, going, doing, from movies to drink to whatever dress, am I causing others to stumble? That's stuff that God condemns? When it comes to actually taking your liberty, you can't think of yourself and what you like and what is something that brings delight to you alone.

Let's move on. Training, training. I'll try not to meddle at least till next week. Here's the last thought. Their training. Their testimony; be reverend in behavior, their talk; don't be a she-devil, and their temperance; don't be given to much wine. Their training, five or so minutes with this. Their training or their teaching. They're to train the next generation. Notice, fourthly, they're to be teachers of good things. This isn't a violation of first Timothy 2 verse 12, where women are told not to teach or take authority from men in the church. Because this is women teaching women, teaching their children, teaching grandchildren, teaching other women. We certainly see in verse 4, they are to focus on teaching or admonishing young women to love their husbands. They are to model and message the acceptable and respectable life, the good things. That which purports to those things that are sacred and holy and wholesome and good and honest. That kind of Philippians 4 list that you've got there.

If you jump ahead into verse 4, which we'll pick up next week, the word admonish carries the idea of bringing someone to their senses. How interesting is that? One of the roles of an older woman is to help younger women think through life, marriage, love, dress, it all, and to help them make sense of it all, to keep their senses. Because the world around them or the culture, it's girls gone wild, isn't it? Verse 12, the Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons. Then in verse 11, look what the false teacher does, whose mouths must be stopped to subvert whole households teaching things which ought not.

Remember what we made an argument, what you might have there is to kind of Jewish gnostic asceticism going on where these false teachers would say, "Hey, you know what? Singleness is God's will. Abstention from marriage and sex, and fulfilling your appetite, it's God's will." Then you've got women going, "Wow, I'm married. Did I marry outside the will of God? Maybe I should divorce my husband." All of a sudden you've got pressure on the marriage, you've got subverting of the households taking place. If that's anything like what might have gone on, something was going on to subvert the house, and if the woman is the homemaker, likely that the false teachers were making inroads through women in the home. The older women offsets that, and they help the younger women to keep their senses, regarding the culture and false teachers.

Beautiful picture, and it's an important picture, isn't it? They're to help the young women think soberly and straight forwardly about life and especially the home. I like what John Stott says, "Titus is to teach

older men, older women and younger men, but he is not to teach younger women. That's the job of older women," and that was good policy and it makes special sense of the elder is a bachelor. John Stott was a bachelor but also it's wise. Even if he's married, you read the text, teach older men, teach older women, teach younger men, but he doesn't say teach younger women. That's the job of the older women." It's the job of Women's Ministry or however we want to cast it.

But here's the point I want you to get as we wrap up, It's generational discipleship that's being spoken of here, isn't it? Let the older women be teachers of good things, helping the younger women to make sense of their life in the context of life, when they've got the pressure of the culture, telling them to be something else, and you've got the insidious work of false teachers undermining the word of God. Now, here's the thing I find interesting as we set ourselves up for next week, teach them good things. Could stop there. That would include, hey teach them how to pray, teach them how to study their Bible, teach them how to be ready to give a reason for the hope that lies within them through evangelism.

But the focus isn't there, and that certainly is included there, but the good things is immediately defined by the call to the domestic life. Because younger women are in the trenches. The kids are small, they're at home, they don't have as much liberty, neither should they exercise that liberty if they have a young family. A woman's more than motherhood and certainly staying at home, but when the family's growing up, that's the base of operations. That's the hub of life. So this discipleship, while it could include prayer, Bible study, evangelism. The focus is on teach them to love their husbands, obey their husbands, love their children, be keepers at home, tell them to watch their sexual purity, to be chaste morally. It's powerful stuff.

What we're being reminded here, that discipleship unites all the parts of our lives. I want you to think when you think discipleship, I don't want you just to think Prayer, Bible study, evangelism. I want you to think, how do I love my husband? How do I raise my children? How do I connect with my neighbors? How do I guard my heart sexually? What does it mean to be submissive to my husband? What does it mean to mother my children? What does it mean to be a homemaker? That's all discipleship. The thing that strikes me is that discipleship here involves the kitchen and the living room as much as it does the baptistry and the altar. The importance of the Christ-centered home as an outpost of God's kingdom. Family first is the first application of good things being taught to younger women. Because the family is first, right?

That's where God begins His teaching. In Genesis 2:18 to 25, we see from the order of creation that the family is the basic building block of society. We realize that the devil attacked Eve at the point of her submission to her husband where she acted without his authority, that sin was predicated on a role reversal. We see from Ephesians 5 and 6 that the family is the primary place of discipleship, and a means of expressing the gospel, because our marriage is a picture of Christ's marriage to his people. There are a few things in life that will give us as much joy as family life. Blessed is the man whose wife is a fruitful vine, and as he sits at his table, his children are like olive branches. I'm telling you I love Christmas dinners. I love Easter dinners. I love it when my wife's hard at work in the kitchen. We're ready for a big meal. She calls us to attention. We sit down, she honors me by making sure I'm at the head of the table.

I'm not kidding, this is serious stuff. Around me are my children, my son-in-law. Now I feel like the king of the castle, because I'm a blessed man. Because few things in life can beat that. The family first discipleship at home, a reality because of the importance of the family. While Titus is told, "Tell the older women to teach good things," immediately he says, "Now, here's what the good thing looks like. Teach the younger women to keep their heads and to give everything to their family in those early

years, those important years, so that some day their children will rise up and call her blessed," like Proverbs 31.

Let me finish with this story. It was told by Peter Marshall, he was the Presbyterian Scotsman who was the Chaplain to the US Senate. He told this story called The Keeper of The Spring. It's a great story. It's a good finish to my sermon. At the foothills of a mountain in Europe, was a little village, but high up in the hills was this old man who kept the spring, the spring that supplied the fresh, pure, cold, refreshing mountain water. He would check that there was no silt building up, he would check there were no leaves and branches contaminating the water, or no dead animals corrupting the source of the village's water. Each day the water would tumble down, fresh and pure. It would supply the businesses, it would water the gardens, it would quench the thirst.

Then one day, the town hits troubled times and they've got to cut back, and there's a council meeting. They looked at the budget and some how there's a footnote there that, for many, many years a stipend is being sent up to this old man, the keeper of the springs. They haven't seen him in years. They really don't know what he's doing. Is this worth the money we send him? And so they decide, "This is an easy cut," and they cut that part of the budget. For a while, it seemed like a good decision until scum starts appearing on top of the water in the village. People drink it and start to get sick, and they realize their mistake and somebody's sent scurrying up the hillside to tell the old guy, "We want you back at what you did. Keep the spring."

I would say yes to you ladies, this morning, that you are keepers of the spring. The older women of our congregation are keepers of the spring. God has charged you to keep the life giving water of the gospel, keep it pure and keep it flowing, ensure that it is unrestricted in its flow, that the teachings of Jesus and his apostles are getting to the next generation of women, and girls especially. That's vital, that's weighty, that's glorious, that's worth your time and effort, and I plead with you on behalf of our elders, for our sake and this church's sake, do it, to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for our time as we have slow-stepped our way through Titus chapter two, we're learning so much about what it means to have a designed discipleship within the body life of our church. Pray for older men that they would be all that Paul encourages them to be, and we pray for our older women. We thank you for them. We thank you we're a church that doesn't believe that the old need to step aside for the young. We thank you they're a hand rail, we thank you they're are a source of wisdom and advice, and we pray that they would make themselves available, they would be the kind of women who act like priestesses, who guard their tongue and their talk, who dress modestly, who act godly, who speak kindly.

We pray that they would watch their appetites and show self control, and even if they delight in wine, they would be very much aware of the danger of wine, and in many situations defer the use of their liberty for the sake of the body. We pray that they would be keepers of the spring, teachers of good things, passing on good traditions and customs but more especially the gospel and theology to our younger women, and we will be the beneficiaries of it, and we will celebrate them before you, for Jesus' sake. Amen.