

Well, take your Bible and turn to Titus. If you're visiting this morning, we're in a series on the book of Titus, entitled, "Doing Good." One of the great themes of the book of Titus is indeed good works, living a life that commends the Gospel. And we're working our way, we covered chapter one, and now we're in chapter two. We looked last time together at verses one and two, where older men are to be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, and in patience. And now Paul goes on to address older women. And he tells them to teach good things, and he tells them to teach younger women to love their husbands, love their children, be homemakers, so on and so forth. So, I want to speak on the subject, "Pass it forward." Because I believe one of the callings that God has on every godly woman, especially those who are up in years. God has called you to be a spiritual mother, a spiritual matron.

And we're going to take two weeks to look at verse three, and a little bit of verse four, and then we'll move on and get into verse four, and five, speaking to younger women, but let's stand in honor of God's word. I'll read verses one through five, Titus two, but we're really only looking at verse three, and to be honest about it, much of this morning is much as an introduction or a big Look again at this chapter. Paul says this, "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, and 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 younger 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. So reads God's word, you may be seated.

The late Ray Stedman used to like to tell the story of the little boy who came home from Sunday School, and reported that Jesus' grandmother had taught the class that day. Well, his mother was rather shocked. And trying to get to the bottom of this, she said, "What makes you think the teacher was Jesus' grandmother?" To which the little fellow replied, "Well, all she did was show us pictures of Jesus, and talk about Him." It's a great story, and it's got a good sentiment behind it. And the sentiment is this, that every church needs an army of spiritual mothers, spiritual matrons who will teach the next generation about Jesus. I want to remind the women of our congregation especially cause Paul will address them particularly in Titus two verse four, that godly women, and especially older godly women, need to see their role within the church as a spiritual matron. One whose job it is to teach good things, and Gospel truths to young Christians, especially young women who are disciples of Jesus Christ.

You see, early in life, every married woman will disciple her own children. But once she's accompanies that job, or alongside that job, Paul wants her to see herself as a discipler of other women's children. He wants the women to see themselves as spiritual mothers to the whole body of Christ. The older godly woman is to be a living overpass between the generations, allowing the work of God to go forward for years to come. That kind of woman will prize Deuteronomy 7:6-9, where God says that he will keep covenant, and show mercy to a thousand generations who love Him, and keep His commandments. She buys into that vision, she loves God, she wants God to be loved, and she wants God to keep His covenant with thousands of generations. She wants to make an impact for Jesus Christ across the years. That woman will not only prize Deuteronomy 7:6-9, she will pray Psalm 71 verse nine and verse 18. In Psalm 71 the Psalmist says, "Lord, do not forsake me in my old age. I don't want to be useless. I don't want to overlooked. Lord. Don't let that happen until I have shown your power to the next generation.

The godly woman, especially those who are senior saints in Jesus Christ. They will prize Deuteronomy seven, they will pray Psalm 71, and they will practice Titus two verse three, which is where we're coming this morning, because there Paul says through Titus that, "The older women, likewise, that they ought to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, that's not, gossipers, not given to much wine, teachers of good

things." They ought to admonish the young women to love their husbands, and their children, and be keepers at home. So, here we come to Titus chapter two again, verse three. The message I've entitled, "Pass it Forward." You remember back to our study in verses one and two, we're entering upon a section where Paul is calling the believers in Crete to action. There are 14 imperatives in the letter from Titus to the believers in Crete.

There's only one in commandment or one imperative in chapter one, there are 13 in chapter two and chapter three. And we're in that section. We're in a section in this letter where there's a call to action. There's a call to do gospel stuff. This is a marriage of doctrine and duty. Look at verse one, Paul says, "Titus, I want you to speak the things which are proper, or fitting, or appropriate for sound doctrine. I want you to preach doctrine, I want you to preach the gospel, I want you to explain the great doctrines of God and His work in the world. And alongside that, I want you to apply that doctrine, and call people to commands and to imperatives." He wants them to live in a manner that accords, and fits with the Gospel. So, he says, "Okay, you want that? Older men, this is what it looks like."

And then he says, "Older women, this is what it looks like." And you know one of the themes of chapter two here is that they would make goodness fashionable. That they would beautify the gospel by their behavior. That the word of God would not simply be in their creed, but in their conduct. We saw that, didn't we? As Paul addresses the young women in verse five to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that for the purpose of, to the extent that the word of God may not be blasphemed. You want to live within the will of God? Here's what it looks like. Then when Paul through Titus addresses the young men and Titus' own behavior, he talks about sound speech verse eight, that can not be condemned. That one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say to you. And then in verse 10 speaking to slaves, you ought not to steal, but show all good fidelity, that you may adorn, that's a word beautify, the doctrine of God.

There's a great story that comes out of the time of Alexander the Great, when one of his soldiers was brought before him, accused of [inaudible 00:07:45], and turning back in the battle, and when the great emperor asks him his name, the young man looks up and says, "Alexander." To which the great leader famously replied, "Either change your ways, or change your name." And I think Jesus sometimes would want to say that to his church who claim to be Christians. And when your behavior doesn't mirror the gospel, when your behavior doesn't sync with the word of God, either change your conduct, or change your name. And that's what's going on here. "Titus, I want you to preach doctrine that fits with life, and life that fits with doctrine." So, here we are, and we saw that life properly lived according to sound doctrine, is kind of divided up in this chapter into five groups. There's the older men, there's the older women, there's the younger women, there's the younger men, and there's the slaves.

And we're going to come next week really to look at verse three. Because there's four things that will mark the life of an older woman in Christ. Her testimony, that she's reverent in behavior. There's a weightiness, and dignity about her. There's a love of all things holy, she's dignified in her dress. She's modest in the way she dresses, she's dignified in her speech, she's dignified in her behavior. That's her testimony. Then her talk, she's not a slanderer. That's the Greek word from which we get devil. She's not devilish in her speech. To slander is to accuse, to speak ill of someone behind their back, or to their face. It's the gossip, and Paul wants the older women to watch their tongue, to put a guard over their mouth. Their testimony is that they ought to be discreet, are reverent in behavior. Their talk is they ought not to be slanderers. Their temperance is, they're not given to much wine. They're not addicted to alcohol, they don't abuse it, they're not captured by it. It probably spills over into the whole idea of just appetite.

They're not driven by their appetites. They don't spend their life satisfying their body. They spend their life, indeed satisfying their soul in God.

And then finally they're training. They're training. They are teachers of good things. They disciple young women, they pass the faith onto the next generation. They prize Deuteronomy, they pray the Psalms, and they practice Titus. So, here's what I want to do. And I did this in first service. I really didn't get to any one of those four things, because as I studied this text, I kind of connected it to last weeks study and I'm thinking ahead of the next few weeks studies with young women and young men. And again, I was struck by the uniqueness of this passage. That it's addressing the generations. There's very few passages in the new testament quite like Titus two. So, I want the men of our congregation to be Titus two men, I want the women of our congregation to be Titus two women, and so on. So, as I step back, several things jumped out, and they're all practical, and they're all helpful. And then we'll get to looking at those four marks next Sunday morning.

But here's the first thing. If you're taking notes, number one, the importance of women's ministry in the church. As I come to verse three, that's the first thing that strikes me. Look at the word, "Likewise." "The older women likewise." What's that about? well, as Robert Yarbrough says in his commentary on Titus, "Likewise signals that Titus owes this group the same pastoral attention that the older men receive." I think that's interesting. He's basically saying, "Hey, older women likewise, Titus having addressed the guys, having spoken particularly to their call, and their character in Jesus Christ, We're now going to address the women. We're not going to leave them out. The church isn't a men's only club. The women are vital to the life of the church on Crete. And I want to address them, and I want you to address them for me. Titus was to teach, and train women, no less than men, and Titus was to teach the older women, so that they might teach the younger women. Titus is not told to teach younger women. He's told to train the older women, and then the older women will train the younger women.

But what's interesting to me is that Paul perceives, and Paul embraces this idea that women greatly enrich, and greatly bless the Ministry of the Gospel. Paul prays for, and writes to this end that the churches in Crete might know the Ministry of mature Godly women who act as spiritual mothers in the church. Churches grow when that happens, churches fulfill God's will when they see that that happens. But I just want you to get something pretty rudimentary, but also revolutionary, that Paul advocates women's ministry in the local church. And what we see here is again a window into the early church that women were vital to that ministry. We established a week or two ago, that we do not believe here at Kindred, as we believe the word of God teaches that women ought to be elders, or pastors in a church. Paul says, "I suffer not a woman to teach, or have authority over men." But we do not want to deduce from not that women somehow are second class citizens in the kingdom. That they make little contribution to the work of God. That the opposite is true. In fact, I want to diverse for a few moments.

My daughter Angela sent me a link this week to a wonderful sermon by a guy called Michael Kroger, who's the President of Reform Theological Seminary in Charlotte, North Carolina. He's an historian in terms of his theological discipline. And he's written a book, and he deals with the second century of church history. And it's the first century where there were no living apostles. So, we're entering into a kind of uncharted territory when it comes to the early church. Its found its feet, it's growing throughout the Roman empire. And so Michael has done a study, and what he brings out is what he calls the Dynamic Ministry of Women in the early church. Or you could have retitled it, "When women grew the church." Because when you go into the second century, he says that there were two thirds men, and one third women in the Roman Empire. But in the church it was the inverse. The early church in the second century was two thirds women, one third men. And there's no record as we would agree with

God's word of women being bishops, or pastors in the church. But they were all over the empire, within the church, making an impact for Jesus Christ. And I want to celebrate that this morning. I want my daughters to understand that, in fact my daughters wanted me to understand that, because they send me the link.

Okay, I'm listening girls, I'm listening. And the point was, we need to celebrate what women do in the church. It's not just about motherhood, although that's glorious. It's about spiritual motherhood. It's about discipling one another, It's being about servants of Jesus Christ. And if you go and listen to that sermon, I'll give you a little pressy of it, a little condensed version of it. He just gives an example that if you go back to the first century, you'll see that the second century builds on the first century. Go to your New Testament, go to somewhere like Romans chapter 16, the credits at the end when Paul is listing all the people that helped him. Nine women are specifically named in Romans 16. Paul wants to make sure that women get the credit, that it's known, that he would not be who he is, doing what he does, trampling across the Roman Empire, making an impact for Jesus Christ without the help of these women, servants of Jesus Christ.

And when you get into the second century, Michael Kruger brings out that the early church fathers who were writing in second century, they can echo what Paul talks about, that you'll find women involved in Deacon Ministry, in Mercy Ministry, you'll find them hosting churches in their homes. You'll find some of them as missionaries, traveling from city to city, doing a work for the Gospel, training young people, discipling children, and discipling women within the church. It's very dynamic. In fact, he brings out an interesting little insight. There was a Roman governor called Pliny. P-L-I-N-Y. You can look him up. And he writes a letter to a guy called Trajan, T-R-A-J-A-N. He's popping mad, he's fuming. Because Christianity is growing all across the Roman empire. It's like a wildfire. He doesn't see it that way. He calls it a contagion, a plague. He sees Christians like a plague, or parasites in the Roman Empire.

And so, he's going to do something about it. So, he says to Trajan, that he sent out a couple of his guys to find two Christians that he was going to torture, and find out more about this religion that's breaking all the boundaries. Men and women are becoming Christians. Young and old are becoming Christians. Poor and Rich are becoming Christians. In fact, when you read Justin Martyr, who's an Christian apologist about the middle of the second century, he makes note, especially of rich Roman women who are coming to Christ. Their husbands are not, but they are. And they're bringing some of their wealth with them. And they are becoming not only matrons, they're becoming patrons to the gospel. And it's bothering the Roman empire. In fact Commodus, he's the guy you kind of find in the movie Gladiator. Well, he actually was a real character. Commodus, one of his mistresses becomes a Christian and tries to win him to Christ. Doesn't work. But it's just another insight of the fact that women were coming to Christ all over the empire, and this is bothering Pliny. And so he says, "Hey, go and get me two Christians."

Now here's the interesting thing. They come back with two women, and they get tortured. It's all in the letter to Trajan from Pliny. Here's the point that Michael Kroger just wants you to grasp. "Go and get me two Christians." He didn't say, "Go and get me two Women Christians." "Go and get me two Christians." And they come back with two women. Why? The implication would be, man If you're going to just put your hand on a group of Christians, the likelihood is you're going to grab two women, because they're all over the church, and they're doing gospel ministry, and they're impacting the empire for Christ. So, that's the second century. But the beginnings of it are here, and I think some of that's going on behind our text here in Titus two verse three, because Paul directly calls out, "Women in the church." And he says, "I've got something to say to you. I'm not asking you to be spiritual wall flowers." Oh yeah, men are

in authority. Men are over the church. But that doesn't mean you sit on the sidelines. That doesn't mean you have nothing to do.

In fact, it's their job to train the older women to train you, and then having been trained, women can impact the culture and the church for Jesus Christ. I love it. I want that for the women of our church. That's why we've got a full time women's worker here at Kindred, she's not a pastor, she's not on pastoral staff, but she can sit among our leaders sometimes to discuss things, think things out, share with us what's going on among the women of the congregation so we can better serve them, so that they can better serve Jesus Christ. It's all biblical. It's all good. That's my first thought. The importance of women, and women's ministry in the local church. It's there, Titus two verse three. Likewise, just as you need to address men, you need to address women. The church is not a men's only club.

Number two, kind of piggybacking off this. Discipleship ought to be, can be, and in many cases should be tailored to the two genders. Don't care what Facebook says. There's only two genders, female and male. Created in God's image. That's how God created his world. And while there's an essential humanity shared by a man and a woman. Both are made in the image of God. Both are equal. There is a difference. Well, of course there's a difference. He made them male and female. There's an essential compatibility, but there are differences. Women face different sins and temptations. No man can understand giving birth, menopause, no, seriously. There's all kinds of experiences in life that men and women go through that are distinct, and sometimes require distinct attention. And isn't that true in discipleship? If women have different functions, God calls them to do different things apart from men, and along side men. They've got a different function, different temptations, different situations in life.

It would seem, and Paul seems to recognize it. Well then amidst the body life where men and women worship together and feed off each other, there can be, within that church, women on women Ministry, what we call designed discipleship. Where older women will help younger women to think through women's issues as mothers, as women, as wives. Because there's some things peculiar to that, challenging to that, that an older woman is better placed to address than a man or a pastor. And I think Paul's recognized that, I find that fascinating. But by implication, there is a time and a place within the life of the church for women exclusively to minister to women. And distinction within the sexes allows for, and even argues for design discipleship for women. Now, having said that, I want to just make a bigger point. Bring the camera lens out a little bit. It is a reminder that discipleship takes place within the context of relationship.

Okay. Earlier on we have, hey, I want to say to the elders in every city that here's the kind of men they ought to be, and here's the things they ought to do. They ought to hold fast, the faithful word is being taught, that they might be able to by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convince those who contradict. So, there are times within the church you've got, the church together. There are men called of God, elders, bishops, pastors, all the same term who gather the church, and preach the word of God to them. And that's a didactic kind of environment. It's a monologue where there's sit down, and listen, and learn. And that's part of the church's life. But that can't be part of it all. Just like in family, if I'm raising my kids, there are times I've sat them down, laid down the law. There's times I've sat them them down, and instruct them about life, I've give them a kind of lesson on wisdom, about how you deal with this person, that person, when you go there, whatever.

But there's been plenty of times with June and I and the girls in the car walking along the beach, sitting at a restaurant, where it's just life on life stuff. And then there's times where June will sit the girls down by themselves and address issues that she can better address with them. And it's the same in the

church. It's relational. Of course, there are formal times, there are times of teaching, there are formal times of gathering, but here it seems to go into another realm where it's life on life. Where you could have women ministering to women, both in a formal setting where teaching is taking place or just, "Hey, come over to my house and watch how I do it." "Oh, you want to meet for coffee? And we'll talk about that stage of the terrible twos." You get the point. And it's just a good thought, that while you and I can disciple ourselves in private, didn't David encouraged himself in the Lord? Didn't Paul say to the Ephesian elders, "Take heed to yourself." So, you and I are an ought to disciple each other, and husbands and wives can disciple each other, and they can disciple their children.

But when you get the angle a little wider, we also need to be involved in the life of the church, and those kind of just relational experiences where we live life on life and share with each other. Older women to younger women, older men to younger men. I think that's vital. Nothing accelerates the life of God within better than life on life discipleship. By the way, I'd just pause, and lay out a challenge. That means right now, and before we're done in a week or two, you're going to be challenged, if you're an older woman, are you discipling any younger women? If you're a younger woman, or a younger man, are you in a relationship with a senior saint, someone that's much more mature than you, on a life on life context? We have that with our Paul and Timothy deal in our men's ministry and we've got other avenues for that. Are you in a small group beyond this environment where we teach and learn God's word together? Those are the challenges of this passage.

I remember back to Steve Farrar coming to our men's retreat couple of years ago. And many things he said that have stayed with me, one of them was this, the most important word in discipleship is, "With." Not just at. Well, I was at the Sunday morning meeting. Love that. Please don't run away from that, at the meeting, but what about with someone in life? Number three, age is not a chronological thing. I hope this is meaningful. Maybe I'm just on a rant, that I've enjoyed this past week, but as I studied this passage, before I could get into the text, these things started jumping out. The importance of women's ministry, designed discipleship that takes gender into account,. And number three, age is not a chronological thing. Well, in one sense it is. Okay. I can't deny. Go back to our verse. Older women, let's clear a chronological issue. This is older women. They're up in years. The best as we can tell, they have reached a certain chronological threshold. We think it's around sixty, Philo, the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher. He used this exact Greek word, "Older women." In his writings to describe women past 60 .

While it's not a direct tie in. If you go to first Timothy five verse three to 10. Dealing with widows who can be helped by the church, those who are under sixty, were not to be helped. Seems to be a threshold, and we're assuming at this point Paul is addressing, at least in the chronological terms, women who are 60 or round about there and above, the assumption would be, they've raised their family. They may be still married or they may be a widow. They've raised their family, they have less responsibilities. So, having raised their own children, they are now going to raise other people's children. They're going to become spiritual matrons, spiritual mothers in the church. That's fascinating. And by the way, we need to embrace the idea of aged saints. In Philemon verse nine, Paul Calls himself the aged. He realized he had reached a certain threshold, and he needed to embrace that. And he wasn't embarrassed by it. And he encourages the women here at Crete not to be embarrassed. To realize this is a glorious distinction. Go and get themselves a t-shirt. I'm an older woman, I'm proud of it, okay.

I mean, that's kind of the implication. I don't think when this was read, and often, these letters were, can you imagine being read, and the older women, and they're all going, "That's not me, That's not me." That's not what went on. They would go, "Yeah, that's me. That's where I'm at in life. I'm okay with that." In fact, there are blessings that come with that. And in fact in this context, there is a calling that

comes with that. To know minister to younger women. I love that. Just to give you a couple of verses that would just underscore the fact that this is to be celebrated by the church, and embraced by the individual. In Proverbs 16 verse 31, here's what we read. The silver haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness.

So, the person that's reached a certain threshold in life marked by their gray hair, if they're mature in Christ, if they're a deep disciple of the master, they're to be celebrated. That's a crown of life. They're at a wonderful place in life. They're not regretting it. They're not wishing for the good old days. They realize that life has stages, and they have prepared themselves for all those stages, and now their at that spiritual matron stage. Where they're going to pour themselves into others. You get the same thought, don't you? In proverbs 20 verses 28 to 29, Mercy and truth preserve the king, and by loving kindness, he upholds his throne. The glory of a young man is his strength and the splendor of an old man his gray head. Now by implication its not just not his gray head, it's the maturity that it represents. Reminding us that age is not simply a chronological thing.

We want gray hairs accompanied with the way of righteousness. And you know what, by implication, lets not decry our old age. Let's not deny our old age, lets not try and defy our old age. It's interesting, John Calvin in his commentary on Titus two talks about how to observe some of the women in the church in his day. Older women trying to look like younger women, and he found that a little off putting. He didn't condemn it. He just said, "Hey, what's with that?" Is that just a sign of a greater problem in the heart, and you can't adjust to where you're at in life. Maybe if I was to put it starkly, I think Paul would reminder us, "We don't need grandma to be looking like a teeny bopper." Okay? Because she's an older woman. And she's okay with being an older woman. That doesn't mean she can't dress fashionably, and attractively. It just means, you know what? She's not trying to be something she's not. She's an older woman. She's reverent in her behavior. She's not a slanderer. She's not given to much wine. She loves teaching good things to young women. I love that.

There's advantages to being old. In fact, George Sweden had a little bit of fun, in a book he wrote called, "Aging successfully." He said this, "Here's the advantages to aging. Most of life's struggles are past. Your secrets are safe with your friends because they can't remember them either." It's good. "There's very little left to learn the hard way, you've been there, done that. Kidnappers are not interested in you. You can get into a heated argument over pension plans." One of the joys of life. "You can eat your dinner at 4:30 in the afternoon. You don't have to hold your stomach in, and your investment in health insurance is finally paying off." There's a whole lot of advantages on the fun side, and the physical side, but here's what Paul is saying. There's a tremendous advantage to the church with older women about sixty, who are still in the way of righteousness, who have raised their family, who are still married to their husband, who know how to order, and keep a good home. And the young women will want to flock to them. "Hey, can you teach me that? Can you show me that? I'm encouraged that you seem to have mastered that right now. I'm falling apart." That's what it's all about. Which again is my point. Aging is not a chronological thing.

Because while the older women by implication as a woman in her sixties, the main point is, that older woman is spiritually mature. There's a spiritual maturity that matches her biological reality. She's older in body, but she's mature in life, and she's older in Jesus Christ, and that's good. That's what the young don't have. They don't have that maturity. They don't have that sense of history. They haven't been matured by an awful lot of suffering. They haven't struggled to get the different chapters in one's life story, but the older woman has, and she's a treasure. And you'll notice that the older woman is mature because she's temperate, she's reverent, she's not given too much wine, and she's able to teach good

things. Older people in the Bible are treasured because they speak to a life with greater experience and greater perspective. And that is a great watering hole for the next generation to go to and draw the wisdom from that.

Listen to Howard Hendricks. There are three easily differentiated ages of the elderly, although individually, these may be widely disparate. Chronological age, the measure of age by time standards. Physiological age reflected in one's physical condition, and psychological age, gaged by how one feels, and acts, and reacts to circumstances. So, it's point is this, look, someone asks you your age, it would be easy for us to kind of just think in chronological terms, but there's more to that. And certainly the Bible wants, hey, okay, you're age is while I'm an older woman, but give me your spiritual age. Well, you know what, I am mature. I am reverent in my behavior. I have mastered my appetite's, I have controlled my tongue, and I love discipling the next generation.

That's a challenge and we need to embrace that. We need to understand that when people speak of experience, I've got 40 years experience. Is that true? Is it 40 years of experience where you have learned, and mastered new things, and you have changed. Or is it two or three years of experience that you've just rerun two or three times across the 40 years and you haven't really matured, you're quite immature in your 50s emotionally. And you're quite lacking in theological understanding in your 50s and 60s because you didn't really study the Bible across a lifetime. See, the Bible wants to get into that, because it wants both those things as you grow physically and chronologically, that should come with maturity spiritually.

It's been well said. Spiritual maturity does not come with age necessarily but it rarely comes without it. I find many mature young people, I love that. And immature older people. So, I realize you can stand that on its head, but generally speaking you have to live quite a while to really become mature, seasoned, mellow, to know what's what, what's essential and what's not. So, be careful about that. Don't become all tired and used up. You don't want to be like the couple who were celebrating their 50 years of marriage. The husband toasted his wife, he said, "After 50 years I have found her, tried and true." And everybody was clapping, and she had kind of got some hearing impairments. She said, "What did you say?" And after the clapping all died down he said, "After 50 years, I've found you tried and true." Again, not getting it. She said, "Well, I want everybody to know that after 50 years I'm tired of you too."

We don't want to be 50, 60 years into life or marriage and get tired of each other, tired of life, tired of Jesus, just rerunning the old stuff. Paul wants to find 60 year old women on the island of Crete who've got their game together. Who are going gangbusters for the Gospel. Who are wanting, give me another disciple. I'm ready to dis... "Is there another young woman in the church who's crying out for help? Send her my way." Let's move on quickly. Number four, older people are not to make way for the young, how counter cultural is that? How antithetical to where the Western world is today to say that. But that's coming out of our text. Paul doesn't skip over the older women, and go to the younger women. He doesn't go. "You know what? The younger women are the future of the church. I got to address them first." Actually he doesn't. He addresses older men before he addresses younger men. He addresses older women before he addresses younger women, because older people are not to make way for the young. Oh they're to encourage them. And in some ways at some point make way for them to use their gifts.

But you get the point. The point is this. Paul wants the young men, and women in Crete to understand that they have a treasure in the older saints. That they are a well of knowledge, they are a stock pile of wisdom. And you should go to them for that, and they should be open, and intentional in coming to you.

Younger, older women teach good things, and they admonished the younger women to love their husbands. There's no generation gap in the Bible. Go back to Psalms 71, "Lord, don't forsake me in my old age until I have taught the next generation of your power." We need to hear that. I want our young people to hear that. I'm not endorsing old people to get in the way of progress, not endorsing that, not endorsing some old curmudgeon who don't like new things. You want to just talk about the way we used to do it. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about older folks who are alive to Jesus Christ, who have got so much they could teach you. That's what we're looking for. And it's so antithetical to our culture, because in our culture, young is good, and old is bad. That's our culture. Listen, that's the waters we swim in. You know what? What's new and trendy. That dominates the culture.

What's old? Well, we have no use for that. It's become useless. We see it, the trend setters in our culture are all young. We keep hearing people decry, "Old White Men." It's interesting. But it's all over the culture. What's that about? The Bible doesn't honor that. The bible says to the church, you need to be different from that. You need to treasure your old people. In fact, I saw some of this age-ism, this kind of thinking a couple of years back when Brexit was taking place, which I took a great interest in, if I'd been there, I would have voted for Brexit. My family all voted for Brexit. And what happened after Brexit was this, the young people got up in arms. And one of the things was, because there was a predominance of the Second World War generation voted for Brexit. And the young people got onto the television and they got onto radio, and they said, "We're against this because the older generation should not determine our future. And they wanted the vote overturned. And they still march in London and places across the UK.

The best answer I got for that was an old Second World War veteran who got on TV at the BBC and he said, "I'd like to remind the young people, it was my generation on the beaches of Normandy, in the fields of France, on the roads leading to Berlin that gave them their future." And he's right. And it's only arrogance on the part of a generation that wants to forget that, and not treasure that, be thankful for that. The arrogance of youth discounting the old and the past. Let's not do that in the church. Let's not do that. This isn't an argument, give people a veto on change or progress. It's just, "Hey, do you understand the treasure that's locked up in those lives?" This is what CS Lewis calls chronological snobbery, not appreciating the past. Thinking that the day you're in, is the only day to be in. Nope. You realize by 2030, 20% of the United States will be over 60, 65. They are a national treasure, and they are a wonderful resource for the church. Older saints who are young at heart, wise in years, who have now matured in their character. They are a wonderful hand rail to the next generation as they seek to find their feet in church, in life, in marriage, and in work.

Let me quote Howard Hendrick's again. He did several articles on this. He said, "Seniors come in three classifications, the movers, the shakers, the Quakers. The movers are vaguely active, the go go's. The shakers are adopters, the slow go's. And the Quakers are the overwhelmed, the no go's. All three will end up in your church. What a challenge from God. Older people, all of them are potential stockpiles of wisdom and productivity. See, we want our older saints to be movers, not shakers and not Quakers. We want them be go go's for Christ. And you know if you study history just in general, you'll see to our surprise, perhaps Gandhi was 72 when he began leading India's independence movement. 72. Kenyatta was 70 when he became the president of Kenya. Agatha Christie was still writing mystery novels when she died in her eighties. William Gladstone wrote his finest works in his sixties and seventies. George Mueller, Hudson Taylor, Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, and a host of others impacted the world in their latter years.

I want you to visualize Michelangelo lying on his back, begetting the masterpiece in the ceiling of St Peter's Basilica at age 76. Here's what Hendrick says, "Possibly the best kept secret in the ministry today is under wraps beneath wrinkled skin and gray hair. I think Paul would agree with that. The older women, likewise, I think it was Agatha Christie by the way, about appreciating the old, she said that her husband was an archeologist, and she married an archeologist because the older she grew, the greater he appreciated her. That's a true story. She was married to an archeologist. And you know what? In the church, the older our saints grow, the more we need to appreciate them. And my final thought, the second and third verses of Titus two combined, remind us to rethink retirement. There's nothing in these verses about putting your feet up, kicking back, leaving it to the next generation, or going on a perpetual vacation. No, in Titus two older men are told to be this, and do that. And older women are told to be this, and do that. And it focuses on developing themselves in terms of their spiritual character, and it means connecting to the next generation and getting involved in discipleship.

That's what ought to mark anybody 60 and above. If you're not discipling yourself and discipling others, you're not where you ought to be in life. Because Titus two tells the older women and the older men to do that. And we need to bake that into our thinking. We need to think that out. Because that's kind of over and against where our culture is, and it's view of retirement. I would remind you by the way, I don't have time to give you the history to this. Do you realize that retirement at 65 is just a new thing. Far As my research tells me, it started in 1889 with the German Chancellor Otto Bismarck. And he implemented it in the German culture. That you could retire at 65 and get benefits. Don't think I'm too generous because the life expectancy stopped at about 55 in Germany around that time. But if anybody got to that age, they could cash in and get some returns from the German people.

Here in America, it comes after 1929, and the Black Friday, and the Great Fall when our nation lost about 26 billion in value. And because of all of the implications of that, in August of 1935 President Roosevelt signs the law that we know as the Social Security Act, one of the most comprehensive programs for social welfare in America's history, where you get to retire at 65. Well, maybe not, since we're running out of money, but that's another issue for another day. But here's the point. My point is this. So, all of a sudden, up until like a century ago, literally up until a century ago, no one thought of retiring. The Bible doesn't ever talk about retirement. I mean, the saints of God fall exhausted across the finish line of life. Having served Jesus Christ down to their last breath. Paul says, "I've finished the course. I've kept the faith. I'm going to heaven. See you soon."

Six days shall you labor, on the seventh rest. Bible talks about work across a lifetime. The Bible knows nothing about a chapter at the end of your life where you kind of relax. It's not that you can't, I'm not saying that retirements evil, not saying that at all. I'm just saying it's artificial. I'm just saying the Bible doesn't address it, and I'm saying you've got to rethink it, whatever it is to you. It can't be the American dream. It can't be a time of sloughing off. It can't be a time of putting your feet up, getting your golf score down, polishing your old cars, going on vacations every three or four months. You can enjoy some of that. None of that's evil in and of itself. It's evil if you're not discipling young people, you're not serving your church, you're not taking your financial resources and your extra time and dedicating them to the kingdom. Because older women disciple younger women, and older men disciple younger men, and they give themselves to the church.

Let's leave it at that and finish with the story, about that, it's going to challenge you. John Piper tells of the life of George Mueller. He established orphanages, as you know, in England. When he started in 1834 there were only 3,600 orphans being taken care of, in accommodation in England. And twice that many children under 8 were in prison. One of the great effects of his ministry was to inspire not only the

church, but England itself, to deal with orphans. 50 years after Mueller began his work, at least 100,000 orphans were being cared for throughout England, and he did that while preaching three times a week, from 1830 to 1898. That's at least 10,000 times across a lifetime. Now, listen to this. When he turns 70, now in America, if you're 70 you're thinking retirement, you're thinking kicking back. When he turned 70, he begins to fulfill a lifelong dream of missionary work for the next 17 years until he was 87. He traveled to 42 countries, preached an average of once a day and addressed over 3 million people.

Then at 87, he realizes, you know what, I can't do as much as I used to do. So, he just stays about his church in England, and he leads a Bible study and a prayer meeting for another, I think something like 10 years. And then one morning after he had led the prayer meeting the night before, someone goes to his bedroom with a cup of tea in the morning to wake him and finds him dead on the floor. Just all exhausted and spent for Jesus Christ. Paul would respect that. You need to rethink retirement, retire to something, not from something. Retire to the church, retire to serving God in a greater fashion. Thank the Lord for this extra time. Nothing wrong with sleeping in when you've had to punch the clock your whole life. Nothing wrong with enjoying a little bit of kickback, but that can't be it. It mustn't be it. Older men have got to be something for Jesus Christ, and doing something for Jesus Christ along with older women.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for our time in the word. We haven't exhausted it, but we have exhausted time and more, and we pray that you'd help us to think it through. Help us to celebrate the women of this church, and women's ministry through out church history. Help us to have designed discipleship for the genders. Help us to realize that age is not a chronological thing by itself, but a spiritual reality. Lord, help us to embrace our older generation, not to push them to the side, not to run over them, but to understand their role for the next generation. And help us to rethink retirement. Lord, rest comes in heaven. Work takes place on earth, help us to rethink that. We thank you for the treasure our retirees are. The volunteerism they could do, the missions trips they could take. If they've got disposable income, they can use that for the kingdom. So Lord, help us to allow Titus two to shake us up, and change us, and transform us into a full body of men and women created in the image of God, living together in community for the Gospel within our community. For Jesus sake. Amen.