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The Charge of Discipleship
Titus 2:3b-5
Series: *Adorning the Doctrine of God*

Introduction: Well, welcome back for our last session! You have all been wonderful troopers. I am grateful to the Lord for the stamina and desire He has given to each one of you. I know you are getting a lot of information today, and I don't expect you to be able to recall it all on command. But hopefully, prayerfully, there has been one or two thoughts from the Scriptures that have penetrated your heart and will re-shape you as you walk forward in grace.

Let me remind you of some key ideas we have covered so far as we cross the finish line this afternoon. And let me remind you that we will have a Q&A right after this session, so jot down your questions or get them ready for that time together. We started this morning by considering the cornerstone of discipleship in the church. The whole point of discipleship is to adorn the doctrine of God by being established in faith, knowledge of the truth, and hope of eternal life. This will lead us to a counter-cultural life which accords itself to the sound doctrine we have received, and we are transformed as grace teaches us to walk in godliness. So, we learned from this that sound doctrine transforms steady duty. We don't need less doctrine in the Church, but rather, we need more sound doctrine which calls us to live in godliness which accords with that sound doctrine.

In the second session we looked at the great design by God to fend off the darkness of unbelief and ungodliness taking over in the church. It is to have the older generation walking in true godliness which accords with sound doctrine which is then passed on to the next generation through modeling and training. We learned that the younger generation's lives really are the business of the older generation in the church. We learned that old age is valued and prized in the church because, by God's design, this is how the sound doctrine is best adorned. So, we looked at the character of the discipler, the older woman, last session. And

so, as we close out our time, let's consider the charge of discipleship. Let's start reading at verse 3, and we will read down through verse 5.

As Paul moves from the older women to the younger women, the pivot point is from the end of verse 3 moving into verse 4. Older women are to teach what is good, and so to train. Then he lists out 7 things that older women are to be teaching to the younger women. This is the charge of discipleship. To teach and to train. We saw last time that the teaching what is good is an adjective describing these older women. So, whether they are intending to or not, they are teaching, and Paul says, they are to be teaching what is good. And now he adds onto that teaching with this idea of training. This word for training is a verbal form of self-control, which is what all training entails. So, if you are training someone how to sew you teach them the principles, but then through practice they are trained how to control the sewing machine and the fabric. Or, if you are potty training a child, you are teaching them self-control, which also causes you to exercise a lot of self-control in the process! So, older women are to be self-control experts. They are to be the trainers who are calling the younger ladies to walk in the self-control they know so well. And this self-controlled training is to be carried out in these 7 areas: love of husband, love of children, self-control, purity, working at home, kindness, and submission to their own husbands. These are all so very practical and pedestrian – so normal and common and every day. So, remember that at the foundation of this charge to train in these areas is the grace of the Gospel which is training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age. The two comings of Christ and all the glory and majesty of a God who saves and all of the eternally significant doctrine that flows from the Mount of Calvary and from the Mount of Olives – all of it has significance for what you do when you get home this afternoon! Beloved, I love the Scriptures! They are so glorious in their scope and yet so pedestrian in their concerns.

Well, let's look at each of these practical matters of life in the everyday world for a minute. Older women are to be teachers of what is good as they train the younger women to first of all be lovers of their husbands.

1. Husband love

- a. So, the apostle starts his practical concerns with the most important relationship in a young married woman's life – that with her husband.

She is to love him as evidence of the grace of God teaching her and transforming her. She is called to both the command of love and to the object of that love – her own husband.

- b. This means that the younger woman will need to work out the how's and the what's of love in the context of her marriage. This means that the love of the Scriptures is not the love of the romance novel or the Hallmark movie. True love, Biblical love, is filled with self-sacrificial choice to serve another. It is a command that is repeated throughout the Scriptures as God teaches us the importance and the reality of love. So, we have been loved by God in that He took drastic action for us and sent His Son to live and to die for us. God calls us to love Him by keeping His commandments and by taking up our cross and following our Lord. God calls us to love one another within the body of Christ by keeping all of the one another's – to forgive one another and to be kind to one another and to bear one another's burdens and to exhort one another and to stir one another up and to not bite and devour one another and to pray for one another and to serve one another – and all of this is loving one another. In other words – love is commanded because love is essentially a choice of the will – not absent of emotion or affection – but it is essentially a choice of the will whereby we display what is most important to us. And so, we can all grow and be taught how to work out what is most important in everyday life, and therefore what ought to be loved, and how we ought to show that love.
- c. And these young wives need the example and the intentional training of the older women to help them know how to love their husbands. The assumption here is that these older women have had years of experience to walk through the highs and the lows of life and of marriage. They have had to respond to their husbands in hundreds of situations which required love. And so, the desperate phone call from the younger woman about a difficult moment in her marriage will not be as alarming or upsetting to the older woman because she has been in a similar spot herself. She can teach and train her in that moment what love looks like in street clothes.

2. Child love

- a. This leads Paul to the next most important relationship in the young married woman's life – that with her children. The word "love" is

repeated in the original text here before husband and before children. So, her love for her husband and for her children is not some vanilla response in all situations in the home. She cannot love her husband and her children the same way. She needs to distinguish between the two. She needs to love her husband in submissive self-sacrifice. She needs to love her husband with emotional investment and concern. She needs to love her husband with purity and passion and patience. And her love for her children will look different. It will look similar in so many ways – in its essence – but in its application, it will play out differently. So, her love for her children will look like strength and intentionality in meeting all of their demanding needs, and like patient and gentle correction, and like persistent and consistent discipline, and like faithful instruction and teaching in the everyday stuff of life, and like compassionate caring about the hard things in life, and on down the list.

- b. So, she is to love her husband and her children. This is a helpful parallel to the other texts in the New Testament which address wives. So, Colossians 3, Ephesians 5, and 1 Peter 3 do not command the wife to love her husband or her children, but rather to submit to their own husbands as they display the true beauty of a gentle and quiet and submissive spirit. But here, they are called to love. This lets you know, sisters, that though loving self-sacrifice is a strength for you as wives and mothers, it is not something which needs no attention. So, you are geared and wired by God to be the most sacrificial people on the planet. But this does not mean that you can't improve. And so, God in His infinite wisdom, gives you guides in the Church to help you know how you can improve. Because, let's be honest, when you are in the hurricane of young children and a busy husband and all the stress that comes with that – it can be very difficult to see it all rightly. You need the 30,000 foot view which comes only through life experience and training from other godly women. So, that is what is provided for here.
- c. Let me address quickly why Paul uses 4 of the 7 matters for training to talk about wives and mothers. Certainly Paul was very aware that not every woman in the church would be married or would have children. And we know from the Scriptures that God has great plans and purposes for both singleness and barrenness, which are topics for

another time. So, if either of those are your situation, should you just tune this whole thing out? I mean, obviously the great concern of the church is for married couples and for families right? So, singles and couples without children – they are really kind of like second class citizens right? And this text kind of proves that doesn't it? Well – listen, I grieve the fact that this has been so rampantly communicated that way in the Church for so long. Because the percentages are higher for those who are married and have children, the church generally and naturally has given more attention and effort to training and instructing and equipping those Christians. But we have been slow and inept at helping and equipping and speaking into the lives of singles and couples without children. And that needs to change. But I want you to know that Paul is not minimizing you with this text. This is not yet more proof that your life and your situation as a single or as not yet being a mother doesn't really actually matter.

- d. No, banish that thought from your head and speak truth to yourself. What Paul is doing here is addressing a common misconception in the Early Church which viewed marriage and children as distractions to the most important thing – that of following Christ. Some false teachers might have even used his words from 1 Corinthians 7 to do so, but we know from 1 Timothy 4:3 that some had departed from the faith and were teaching that marriage was forbidden and should be abstained from. So, Paul is carefully and effectively countering that false teaching in Titus 2 by letting us know that grace transforms us – not out of the normal realities of life – but rather in them. We are not saved by grace and then this rescues us from experiencing what is generally normal in this world. No, God designed marriage and child-bearing and grace transforms us for them and through them. But, if you are not yet married or do not yet have children, or will never be married or ever have physical children, you are not a lesser Christian who doesn't need disciples, or who can't be a discipler. You too need an older woman to speak into your life about how to love others and how to walk through this world with all wisdom and godliness. You too can be used by God to teach and train younger women about how grace transforms.

3. Self-control

- a. So, Paul addresses that with the next one – he says they should be trained in self-control. This is the prudent and thoughtful use of one’s life in a crazy and out of control world. It is the only word that appears in every category of person addressed in Titus 2. It is what the grace we are given in Christ trains us in – to be self-controlled and upright and godly in this present age.
- b. This is so often the issue at the heart of spiritual growth in grace. We will not be more like Christ if we are not self-disciplined and controlled to say no to sin and yes to God, to be in our Bible and study the truth, to give ourselves to obedience in the mundane and normal, and to apply truth to everyday situations. So much of this issue of maturing faith is grounded in learning to control the desires of the flesh – to say no to them by the power of Christ in us – and to put on faithful and fervent zeal for good works.

4. Purity

- a. Next, they are to be trained in purity. This is the moral purity which is so obviously lacking in our world. This is the purity of thought and purity of action and purity of life which permeates every interaction. This looks like the warning and concern and caution which older women can see long before younger women. This is the wisdom of age and experience and increased godliness which can see through a situation and find danger for sexual and moral purity. This is the older woman’s gentle caution about a pattern of dress, or about a media choice, or about a relationship that is concerning.
- b. But this is more than caution and concern, though it is not less than that. It is also the positive example of a life increasingly purified by the grace of God. Younger women need to see the godly example of ladies who have walked with Christ in purity for years on end to know that in the onslaught of our impure culture the grace of the Gospel is more powerful. And they need to see that in the living color of your life.

5. Household Duties

- a. Next Paul says they need to be trained in working at home. These are the domestic duties which make a house a home and provide for the needs of the family. This is the Proverbs 31 woman who finds every way possible to be industrious and disciplined so that her home runs

so smoothly that her children and her husband rise up and call her blessed.

- b. This is not saying that women should not work outside of the home, if they are married and have children. But rather, Paul is addressing the unique role of the wife to make it her concern to keep the house running smoothly. This does not mean that all of the chores of the household become her responsibility, but it means that she manages them all as she trains her children and partners with her husband to keep the home front neat and orderly as a display of their love for the Lord.

6. Kindness

- a. This is coupled with the next idea of being kind. This means that the household duties and the fulfilling of the role need to be done with a heart of kindness as a display of the grace of God at work in you. And this means that you use your home and your family as an avenue to show kindness to others – meaning that you are hospitable. This means that you as the woman of the house don the mental towel of servanthood and stewardship and you constantly ask, how can we use what we have been given to show the love and kindness of Christ to others? This kindness is the essence of hospitality.
- b. And older ladies, this kindness is something you should have down pat. You should know the finer points of kindness and gentle concern for others. You will each show it a little bit differently, but you must lead the way here. You need to take the initiative in displaying kindness as you model it for the younger women. This is not just the reactive kindness by the way – where you are kind to someone when they are not kind to you. This is also the proactive kindness which seeks out ways to display that care and concern for others. This proactive planning which seeks to capitalize on all that God has given you for the benefit of others growth in Christ.

7. Submission

- a. Lastly then, Paul calls them to train the younger women in submission to their own husbands. This is the falling under rank of God's design. I have taught on this in several places as we have worked through 1 Peter, so I won't rehash that all here. But this is the God-given role of the wife as the help-meet. She is to come under the

loving leadership of her husband as evidence of her submission to God.

- b. And the ins and outs of this can seem pretty complicated. And this is where the loving counsel and listening ear of an older, godlier woman is invaluable for our young wives. They need to be helped and trained in what this submissive heart looks like in the ebbs and flows of life.

Well, Paul ends by telling us that all of these are for the purpose of the Word of God not being reviled! He means that by training and growing in these things we are displaying that which accords with sound doctrine. We are showing by our lives that the Gospel is true and transforming. And you can't help but notice that this is so pedestrian and normal and mundane. We all struggle with longing for the extraordinary and the radical. And particularly in our youth we have this dream of our life being radically different and exciting. And life is exciting, but it is also incredibly normal and routine. And the Gospel sets down a path to follow which is clear in the routine. What you are here in the basics and common stuff of life is what you really are. How you live at home and in your closest relationships is who you really are. And it is here that the Gospel has great power to train you to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives. And this is our faith, knowledge of the truth, and the hope of eternal life worked out into where you live.

As we close, I want to do two things. I want to point you to the purifying effect of eternal hope, and then I want to address some practical implications for discipleship from this text. Look with me at verses 12-13 of chapter 2 again. In verse 13 we are waiting for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. And this blessed hope is a purifying hope. We *can* be pure because of Christ's first coming, and we *should* be pure because of his second coming. Then, look down at chapter 3. The first 11 verses have the theme of calling us to the good works based upon Christ's good work on the Cross for us. But look at verses 7-8 – "so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in god may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people." Do you see the purifying and motivating reality of the eternal hope!

I laid out a case study for you in our first session basically so that I could illustrate this point. So, this young lady who is battling against thoughts of self-harm – what does she need? Well, what she needs is a more accurate understanding of grace – both the grace brought at the First coming of Christ and the future grace which is to come when He returns. This young lady is so focused on the past problems of her own life and on the present pain this is causing. And through loving and patient and gentle counsel she needs to have her gaze lifted from her self to her Lord. She needs to see the sufficiency of grace to save her and to sanctify her. She needs to be overwhelmed with the great hope of a Lord who will complete what He has begun for her and in her. And I use this as an illustration to let you know that this is so much of the content of discipleship – it is helping someone turn their gaze off of the immediate and temporary pressure and stress to re-gain the purifying effect of eternal hope.

I was the recipient of this very thing this week. I was emailing with one of the godly men in our church family. As a younger father I have pursued the counsel and the investment of several of our older men whose families I respect and whose kids I would love to see my kids turn out like when they leave my home. So, I was emailing with this man and telling him a deep concern I have about one of our children. I simply asked him to pray for us, but I was also secretly hoping that he would write back with some sage advice. Well, he did. And he had some things to say about how to handle the situation and they were helpful and I already used some of his advice. But, the most helpful thing he did was to remind me of a God who is faithful to finish what He starts. He took my view off of the immediate pressures of child-raising and he pointed me to the character and nature of our eternal God. He reminded me that God is at work to complete what He started, both in me and in my child. This was encouraging and edifying and challenging and purifying. And he was able to do this because he is looking back on these experiences as a godly man filled with wisdom from above. And this is so much of the content of discipleship. So, older ladies, as you instruct our younger ladies about loving their husbands and loving their children and being self-controlled and pure and working at home and being kind and submissive to their husbands – most of that will look like you applying the glorious hope of the Gospel to their everyday lives so that they can be purified to walk in these ways. Lifting their eyes off of the present stress which seems beyond impossible, to the glorious hope by which we see all things are possible in Christ.

Let me close then with a few practical implications from this text for discipleship.

Practical implications for discipleship:

A. *Engaging Investment*

- a. The first clear implication from this text is that older ladies are to be intentionally invested in the lives of younger ladies. And younger ladies are to be leaning into this investment.
- b. Older ladies – you may think that you have nothing, or very little to offer. But this is a deceptive lie which you must banish from your thinking. God has uniquely worked in your life and prepared you for such a time as this. Our younger ladies need your godly wisdom and care and loving concern.
- c. Older age in our world is all about retirement, ease, and time for you to do all the things you couldn't do when you were younger. This too is a deceptive lie that needs to be killed. You will have plenty of time in the New Heavens and the New Earth to do all the things you didn't get to do in this life. Now is the time for meaningful engagement with the younger ladies of our church family. On the Last Day when you stand before the Bema Seat in front of our glorious Lord, what will you have to show – look Lord, here is my passport and my coffee mug collection and my seashells? Or will you say – Lord, it isn't much, but here is my sister in the Lord that I invested my time and energy into?

B. *Sacrificial Love*

- a. This is going to require sacrificial love. So, engaging investment will demand sacrificial love. Obeying this text will cost you something. The price of discipleship is never as great as the dividend paid back to you, but often the high up-front price keeps people out of this investment. Don't let that be true of you. Invest yourself in this way in sacrificial love and watch the Lord add to you 30, 60, and 100 fold.

C. *Prudent Transparency*

- a. Lastly, these discipleship relationships demand prudent transparency. And this goes both ways – from older to younger and from younger to older. If you are going to disciple, or be discipled, in these private areas, then you are going to need to be prudently transparent. At some point you can no longer talk in generalities. You will need to get specific and this will require transparency. This will mean taking some risks.