



Raising up Godly Men

Titus 2:1-2

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THE LIVING COMMENTARY

"But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance" (Titus 2:1, 2).

Introduction

I wondered if you ever noticed the obvious. There are only a very few people that actually play baseball while there are thousands upon thousands that rather sit in the bleachers and watch. The same is true with soccer. There are not many that could run a soccer field back and forth, and on top of that with accuracy and endurance kick the ball about. Hundreds of thousands of fans, however, love to cheer their soccer team on.



Christ's kingdom is different. Following Christ is no spectator sport. It enlists everyone that claims the name of Christ. The word 'follow' calls for active participation. Hebrews 11 defines faith as a list of brave and daring acts to live out God's calling upon one's life. It is interesting to note that many who criticize the church for hypocrisy are themselves

not actively expanding the kingdom of God. They are too busy griping. God does not care whether we know what to do. He delights in training us. They Lord is largely concerned with our deliberateness in serving Him. Listen to the comment on King Hezekiah.

“And thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah; and he did what was good, right, and true before the LORD his God. And every work which he began in the service of the house of God in law and in commandment, seeking his God, he did with all his heart and prospered” (2 Chronicles 31:20, 21).



In the Book of Titus, we have observed the need for our lives to be impacted by the Word of God. Jesus' message was the same, of course. Paul just finished telling Titus on how he needs to hold fast to the faithful word, and be able to exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict. We might think that the apostle is speaking on some heady conversation over election, deep discussion on Christ's deity or interesting conversation on the Trinity. Usually, by doctrine we mean essential truths which are to be believed that would enable a person to be a follower of Christ.

Paul, however, is not largely focused on these great theological doctrines of God the Father, Christ and salvation, but on how these truths play themselves out in our day-to-day lives.¹ As he says in verse 16, “They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed” (Titus 1:16). It is evident that what we do becomes clear evidence for each of us to get a picture of our what we believe. What we do reveals who we really are. It is here we get a glimpse into what we really believe.

Millions of people call themselves a Christian. But the question is whether they follow Christ. Paul is concerned with those whose profession and deeds do not match. This is interesting for it is exactly what problem we see with many of those who ‘go to church’ today. They profess Christ. They would say they have a personal relationship with God through Christ. But their lives are anything but consistent with God's standards. It is like Paul says, “By their deeds they deny Him.”

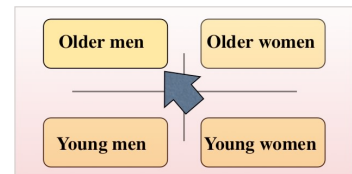
He warns us against false prophets. So what is a false prophet? Is it a pastor who denies Christ's physical resurrection? Or a pastor which, though married, thinks homosexuality is okay? Or a pastor, who though professes Christ, would not pay attention to those in authority around him? We would have to include all of them. Each has not learned to restrain his thoughts, words and behavior to conform to God's holy standards. This is what makes this age so difficult.

¹ A person is saved through faith alone. His life, however, if genuinely saved, will always be impacted by God's truth.

Paul was concerned with building up the church there in Crete. A church can only get strong when the individual believers get strong.

So we must ask ourselves, are we only a spectator? Are we so involved in the sidelines of following Christ that we think we are actual players of the game? Let us look more closely at what the apostle is calling us to examine in our lives.

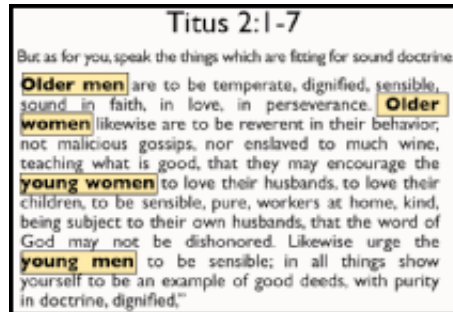
At this point, hopefully you are thinking, “What should we be doing?” Paul, in this second chapter of Titus elaborates on what things God’s people should be involved in. Interestingly, the apostle has things to instruct us on here. We seem to miss the obvious, but they come right to the front of his teaching. Early on in chapter two we will see four categories: Older men, older women, young women and young men. This includes all of the believers. Each has a special description for their stage in life. This confirms again that God wants everyone involved in what He is doing.



In this message, we will only focus on the one group: the older men, but each group has their own sphere of life in which they are involved. Each has their own temptations and challenges. Paul’s exhortations will help each group focus on how to do well despite these challenges. Let’s now look at the first of these groups: the older men.

A. An Examination of What we Believe (Titus 2:1)

Paul’s emphasis in 2:1 is the same as before. When he tells Titus to ‘speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine,’ we might think he is talking about those doctrines of ‘what we believe.’ He is but in a different way as has already been explained. Paul is speaking of those things which affect our lives. Believing the truth will build moral character in a person. There is no way to think that the truth will cause one not to believe.



This includes those who profess to know the truth but don’t live by it. They really don’t believe it.

If you wonder how this applies to all those here that are not older men, say over thirty, think like this. If you are married to a man, pray that this man would be like this. If you are a young woman looking forward to marrying, start shaping your expectations after this list. Cross off the rich, handsome and good family name and add on the qualifications mentioned here. They are important.

On the other hand, if you are a younger man, a boy, start dreaming of how you can be a godly man full of good deeds. You do not want to be, as it says in 1:16, worthless for

any good deed. Of course, if you are not a very young man any more, you might get a bit honest and see yourself in this category. God has a personal message for you.

So let us sit back and think a bit, “What kind of men should our church be filled with?”

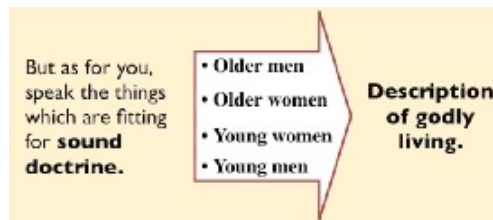
Great men are found few are far. We would think that those who are dressed with ties are those great men, but this is far from the truth. Great men, those that are shaped by the Gospel truths, are those that live for principles beyond themselves. This is the problem of those that were mentioned in the previous section. If what you believe does not shape what you believe, then you should consider yourself as a nonbeliever.

If you have a secret life, consider your soul reserved for hell.

Mattewes-Green summarizes the problem of our generation as, “We’ve forgotten how to act like grownups. Let me read this quote,

We turned blue jeans and T-shirts into the generational uniform. We stopped remembering the names of world political leaders and started remembering the names of movie stars' ex-boyfriends. We stopped participating in fraternal service organizations and started playing video games. We Boomers identified so strongly with being 'the younger generation' that now, paunchy and gray, we're bewildered. We have no idea how to be the older generation. We'll just have to go on being a cranky, creaky appendix to the younger one. (First Things 8-9/2005).

I always find it thoroughly amusing when I see my little children dressed up in adult clothes. That is something to laugh at. But when we say that we are followers of Christ but the clothes, the lives we wear, do not match, is there not something fundamentally wrong with our claim to know Christ?



Without purpose in life, there is no direction. People no longer find fulfillment by being who they should be, for they do not know who they are, but by living for the moment. Instead of asking, “What has God called me to do this day?” They ask themselves, “What do I feel like doing?”

We don’t really know these teachers that we hear. We can’t see their lives. Their broadcast studio is far away. Now we have examined, the standards of an elder in chapter 1. But we noted, that though the elders must live according to this standard, everyone is responsible to live out these lives. We see this expanded here in chapter 2. Paul will discuss instructions for five groups of people: older men, older women, young

women, young men and slaves. Today, we will focus on the first category, the one for elderly men.

Christ preached the kingdom of God. He clearly spoke about how our lives need to be shaped by who God wanted. Otherwise, You might adhere and that doctrine, pact your life. For might call himself a not faithful to his calls him an adulterer.



was and what He your faith is useless. intellectually to this but it does not im- example, a man Christian, but if he is wife, then Christ

And we know adulter- ers will not enter the kingdom of heaven. In the end, if we find the fruit of our lives does not match with the glorious gospel of Christ, then we should repent from our wicked ways.

Do you remember Christ's purpose of saving? Paul sums it up in 2:11-14,

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” Titus 2:11-14.

There are two purposes as said in verse 14: (1) Redemption from every lawless deed and (2) Purifying for Himself a people for His own possession. Many of talk about getting forgiveness of sins. That is the first point. But we need also to speak of the later, the purifying of our lives. So let us now turn to think about these men.

B. An Examination of how we are to live (Titus 2:2)

We have closely followed Paul's six items by which men are to judge themselves. Their real value becomes apparent when we also observe what it like when a man does not have these qualities. These character qualities should be set before every man and boy. This is where God wants to take us. We will go through each one separately.

1. Temperate (nephaleos)

The temperate man stays alert. He is sober. The associated meaning is that he abstains from drugs, alcohol that brings a dullness of mind. The meaning does not mean to not drink at all, though some take it to mean this. It can mean this. But in the bare minimum it never affects his perception. God has made this world for our good, but once the things are used in such a way that we cannot make wise decisions all the time, then we cannot live out God's standards.



Just think of what of having a colleague who was half drunk all the time. What good would he be? His mind is somewhere other than on the work. Let us put this in kingdom perspective. That is, let us see why this trait is so important to older men who serve the Almighty King.

Men need to be alert and attentive to whatever God calls them to. If they pay attention to pleasures, then they will not pay attention to the King's pursuit. God is not against pleasure. He has built this into our lives. We enjoy food, relationships and many other things. God has made pleasure cells in our body. But all is to be constrained under God's purpose. Obviously, God made grape juice. But it can be addictive and interfere with man's judgment. Many wife beatings are closely linked to drinking and drugs.

My recommendation is to stay away from them completely. Life becomes much easier this way. Satan can't easily tempt you. If you use them, then they should be used in such a way that you never lose any judgment. If you do, then you need to completely abstain from them. There is no sense toying with God's standards. You have kingdom work. Instead of trying to feel like everyone else at a party, think of yourselves as God's agent. You are praying for people, trying to discern if God has a special appointment set up for you that evening. We stay alert so that we can be attentive to God's work.

I recently heard of one personal testimony on how a man associated with men high up in the Chinese government and military. He attended their parties. He even held a little glass with liquor. He did not want to offend. But he didn't drink. He was on God's mission. He prayed and sought out who he could share the gospel with. His life was totally differently oriented than the typical person going to these parties. He was God's ambassador and kept himself fit for the job.

What about you? Are you drug free? For what purpose? What testimony do you have? Who does God want you to share the Gospel with? we do not keep drug free to merely have good research but to serve the Lord.

2. Dignified (semnos)

This word marks off the man from any typical person you might meet. This person is dignified. His very person calls others to respect him. In this context, we can be sure it doesn't mean he impresses people with what position he has or what possessions he has but by his person.

The opposite would be the typical or unimpressive. There is nothing about that man's life that causes one to look up to him. Remember, this is not just for elders. It is for every man. Did you every see a male cardinal? Those are the bright red birds. They stand out. They are noticeable. One's eyes are brought to look at them.



What is it that causes you to look up to different individuals? Think back to when you were growing up. Who did you admire? Why? We are not saying that they do not have riches or high position. The two often go together because he acts wisely. God wants men that stand out from others.

If you are a man, how are you going to be dignified? What steps can you take? I think you need to focus on what God has made you for. Discover that. Excel in those things that you do. Always be honest, a man of integrity. Server the Lord, not others. Only by staying close to the Lord will the Lord's presence in your life make you excel in what you do. Don't fritter your time away with games, toys and entertainment. You have a higher purpose. Keep focused.

3. Sensible (sophronas)

This word is better understood by the English word self-control. God's man exercises self-control in his life. If temperance means we restrain what we bring or introduce to our bodies, sensible speaks more to the restraining of his desires. He curbs what his fleshly heart might want so that he can accomplish God's greater purpose.

Peter says, "The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer." 1 Peter 4:7. A man of self-control does not live a life in good Buddhist fashion of curbing his desires. This doesn't work. Instead we are to focus on the good that we are to do. As Peter said, we can pray. Once a man spends his time thinking about sexual pictures, he becomes useless for God's purposes. He has not curbed his thoughts from thinking about pursuing his pleasures.



Pornography is not a small problem. Internet pornography, gambling have corrupted many. The opposite, of course, is to be a man that is tied to his desires. He is enslaved to those entices that arise about him. In the end, he follows his desires. There is no in-between. If you are beginning to think that you can manage these desires, forget it. It is Satan's lie. Unless we bridle our lusts, they will destroy us. Listen to Jesus' own words.

“For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:37-39).

“And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. “But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.” (Matthew 24:12-13).

Do you see, your willingness to follow your desires is a statement whether you love God and man, or like the world chase after pleasures. I know, many a professing Christian will say that he is addicted or lacks self-control. They should wake up to reality. God's kingdom is of power and purity. Without it, they are just bluffing.

Lawlessness is increasing. People are doing things they shouldn't. It tempts us. Unless we have resolved to clearly live for kingdom purposes, we will fall in with the crowd and perish with them.

4. Sound in faith

This becomes the first of a triad. The 'sound' of faith, love and perseverance. This word 'sound' is exactly the same word that he used when describing 'sound doctrine' in verse 1. The word comes from the now common word 'holistic.' By its full, whole and proper sense, it is best for a person. It means that nothing is left from it. Obviously, his use of it should alert us to the fact that some have a less than complete faith, love and perseverance. Let us look at each of them.



Our faith must be whole. This means that some men's faith is partial and therefore incomplete. An incomplete faith is one which is ultimately defective. This might have to do with doctrine. That man goes to church every Sunday, but he never really came to repentance and faith in Christ. He might say he believes. Another might say, "I believe. It means so much to me." But somehow he is not baptized. He knows of Christ's command to believe and be baptized, but he thinks believing is okay for his circumstance.

1. **Temperate**
2. **Dignified**
3. **Sensible**
4. **Sound in faith**
5. **in love**
6. **in perseverance**

Some might think they are going to heaven even though they do not think Jesus came physically alive. His faith is incomplete. It doesn't save. Or as we look in these verses, and probably what is most on Paul's mind, some men have made excuses for part of their less than ideal life. They make excuses for their thoughts. How can a man say that He knows God when he does not forgive his brother. It is so inconsistent with everything Jesus says, that he should see that his so-called faith in God's grace is so shallow that it as not even made him gracious and forgiving.

Many have an incomplete faith. Whenever God's person and purpose does not affect our thoughts, minds and attitudes, we can say that our faith is unsound. It is defective. If it does not make your pure on earth, you can be sure it will not assure you of Christ's righteousness at Christ's return.

Did you every hear of fool's gold? It isn't really gold. It fools people. They are willing to pride themselves in their discovery only to find out later that it is not real gold. It does not have the value of gold. In our context, it is an incomplete faith, a fool's faith.²

5. Sound in love

Our love can also be unsound, that is incomplete. This is the fifth characteristic God has challenged His men to be shaped by. We all know what love is. But do we know the incomplete love? I suppose we do, but we never seem to be able to clearly identify it so. Let me give you a few examples.

There is a council meeting. One man wants his own way. He intimidates some, fools others and behind talks behind the backs of others. I don't care how biblical he thinks this decision is, he is clearly not loving. Love does not seek its own. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness. Love does not act unbecomingly. Such incidents happen again and again in church meetings and just tolerated. "Oh, that is the way he is." That man's love is not sound. Be wary!

<i>Sound in love</i>	
<i>Genuine love, Prioritizes others</i>	Agape love
Disingenuous	Committed to the interests and needs of others.
Deceptive, selfish, disloyal, untrustworthy	 Devoted to caring for others as God does.

² Fool's Gold?: Discerning Truth in an Age of Error -John MacArthur (Editor). God's Word makes it clear that not everything that glitters is gold. In this uncompromising book, John MacArthur and the contributors lay a foundation for biblical discernment and use these principles to assess several current Christian trends. Readers will find honest, biblical analyses of some of today's most popular Christian books, music, and ideas. They will be equipped with a foundation for biblical discernment that will enable them to make careful distinctions in their thinking about truth.

Or what about the man that yells at his wife? When she does one thing that doesn't please him, he rants, raves and shouts her down. This is not love. If you ask him, he will say that he loves his wife. Don't agree with him. He doesn't love his wife. If he did, then he would not do such things. He instead would be tender, compassionate and ever so patient. If you want, you can say that man has an incomplete love. What does that mean? It means that he is not sufficiently touched by Christ's love. Truth has not touched his heart.

The thing to be careful of is that many people will tell others of these spiritual experiences. They will tell how God saved them. But we are here told to be careful. For if that conversion did not expose him to God's love, then what actually happened at his conversion, anyway?

6. Sound in perseverance

There is one more way that these men can be incomplete or unsound. The last one says that men should be sound in perseverance. If a man is complete in perseverance, this means that he goes all the way. He is focused on Christ's return. He doesn't turn back.

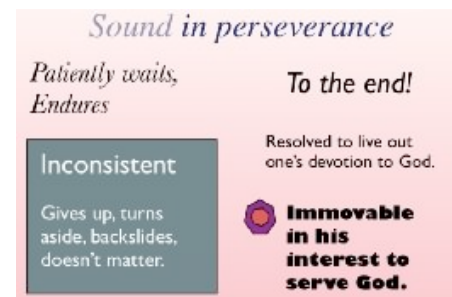
Jesus warned, on the other hand, that many would turn away. Will you? John writes so clearly about this in his first epistle.

"They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us." 1 John 2:19.

Perseverance is not complete when it does not persist. Perseverance by definition means that one endures to the end. "Most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved" (Matthew 24:12-13).

I have recently been reading through the Old Testament historical books. We read of these great people. But some of them don't end well. King Asa, for example, is a poor example of a complete spirit of perseverance. He did many great things as said in 2 Chronicles 15. It even says that "And whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman" (2 Chronicles 15:13). They were radical, but he did not persist in what pleased the Lord.

King Asa did well for 36 years. But something changed. The incompleteness of perseverance was exposed. God warned him that he should not use his wealth to hire soldiers, but he went ahead anyway. God sent a seer, Hanani, to rebuke him. That was gracious of God. He said,



“At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, “Because you have relied on the king of Aram and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Aram has escaped out of your hand. “Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim an immense army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. “For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars.” Then Asa was angry with the seer and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him for this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time” (2 Chronicles 16:7-10).

If he turned from his prideful ways, he could have repented. But he didn't. Oh, May God give us sensitive hearts to obey Him. King Asa would soon die. God sent a disease.

“And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, yet even in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians.” 2 Chronicles 16:12.

What about our own lives? We need to be men that are running for the eternal kingdom. It is no good if we run a race part way, even if we are faster than all the others, feel good about ourselves and quit. What a shame!

My brothers, you will be tempted. You might need to suffer for Christ's Name. But never never turn back. Endure to the end. Be one of those faithful ones. Jesus gives us a very picturesque story highlight both the reward of the faithful, read persistent and the unfaithful, the one with an incomplete persevering spirit.

Conclusion

“Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? “Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. “Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. “But if that evil slave says in his heart, ‘My master is not coming for a long time,’ and shall begin to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and shall cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; weeping shall be there and the gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 24:45-51).



Christ is soon returning. He is watching how we serve Him. Did you notice that the one who began preoccupied with your own pleasures. Don't be one in which you find that you are not carefully governing what you eat and drink. Do not be one in which your faith in Christ's return is minimal and therefore ignore His instructions.

Upon Christ's return, his failure to live consistently with his profession will cause him to be cast with the hypocrites. There will be great weeping there. Will you be

such a man? What will make you different?

Paul calls our attention to live rightly, consistent with God's own person and purpose. This one, Jesus says, Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions." Let us boys and men all run to be these kind of men where doctrine is not only something we talk about but we live. Let us be temperate, dignified, self-control, sound in faith, in love and in perseverance.