

TITUS

The Fruit of the Gospel in the Life of the Church

A People Zealous for Good Works, Part One: Redeemed Men

Titus 2:1-15

June 16, 2019

We've all been there. Maybe it was at Walmart, maybe it was in the mall. It might have even happened at church. But at some point, we've all walked past someone in public who was wearing something that clearly **didn't fit**. Maybe it was a "Fat guy in a little coat!" Maybe it was that lady who is in denial about the clothes she's still trying to squeeze into. Or maybe it was a kid like me, who as a teenager, was half of everyone else's size and in order to stay trendy, had to wear stuff that was way too big because you couldn't find the trendy stuff in the **kid's section** where I still had to shop (at least you couldn't back then)!

As **troubling** as it can be for someone to wear clothes that don't fit, **it is even more troubling when someone lives in a way that *doesn't fit their beliefs***. Like when someone claims to be a Christian, but their life doesn't fit that description. This is one of the issues that Paul addresses in Titus, people who "*profess to know God but deny Him by their works*" (1:16). Paul wants Titus to make clear to the people in Crete that *what we believe affects how we behave*.

This is why, **in Titus 2:1-15**, God is going to call the different **kinds of people that make up the church to live lives that are worthy of the gospel** (lives that "fit" the gospel well). What this will mean is that we are to *be certain kinds of people* (whose way of life is consistent

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with the truth of the gospel) and that we are to *reproduce certain kinds of people* (to make these kinds of disciples). What we will find in this passage is that **the grace of God that saves us also enables us to live transformed lives that are worthy of the gospel, and such lives, in turn, commend the gospel that we preach.** Let's read it together.

[1] *But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.* [2] *Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness.* [3] *Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good,* [4] *and so train the young women to love their husbands and children,* [5] *to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.* [6] *Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled.* [7] *Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity,* [8] *and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.* [9] *Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative,* [10] *not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.*

[11] *For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,* [12] *training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,* [13] *waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,* [14] *who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself*

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a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. [15] Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

(Titus 2:1-15 ESV) Let's pray together...

Getting a Bird's Eye View

Paul begins in verse 1 by telling Titus to “*teach what accords with sound doctrine.*” What does he mean by that? What he means is that Titus should teach people to *live the kind of life* that “*accords with sound doctrine.*” Notice that immediately after Paul tells Titus to do this, he begins unpacking what that is by telling Titus *how* the different types of people in the church are to *live*. So, another way of stating verse one would be to “*teach people to live in a way that is consistent with sound doctrine,*” and not in a way that *contradicts* it like the false teachers and converts from **1:16** (the profess to know God but deny Him by their works).

As for what the “*sound doctrine*” is that Paul is referring to, he eloquently unpacks it in verses 11-14. *It is the sound doctrine of the gospel*, that God's grace has *appeared* (in the coming and finished work of Jesus Christ) and *is doing two things*: (1) it is bringing salvation to all people and (2) it is training those people to *live differently* as they wait for Christ's return. To use Paul's words, that grace of God that saves us is also *training us “to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age”* while we await

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Christ's return. This is also stated as **the purpose of Christ's work** in verse 14: He gave Himself for us *"to redeem us from all lawlessness"* and to *"purify"* His people so that they would be a people *"who are zealous for good works"* (**Exodus 19:5; Psalm 130:8**). In other words, **the salvation that Jesus died to secure includes transforming us from the inside out so that we can become who we were created to be during this present age** (on this side of heaven).

This gospel truth has its roots in **the new covenant promises** of the Old Testament: [31] *"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, [32] not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. [33] For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. [34] And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."* (**Jeremiah 31:31-34 ESV**)

[22] *"Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. [23] And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned*

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among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. [24] I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. [25] I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. [26] And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. [27] And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. (Ezekiel 36:22–27 ESV)

Another reason this Ezekiel passage is so important is because it not only describes the new birth, but it also helps us to see *why* God is going to do this. He is going to make this new covenant people and change them from the inside out in order to *“vindicate the holiness” of His great name*. In other words, He is going to do it for His glory, for the fame of His great name. This is why *how we live* is so important to Paul, *because the truth of the gospel and the fame of God’s name* is at stake when we don’t live in a way that is consistent with this truth. We make a *mockery* of God and the gospel when our *spiritual clothes* don’t fit.

Notice that this is Paul’s *purpose* for calling these groups to live this way in **Titus 2** as well. *Older and younger men* (2:2,6-8; including Titus) are to be these kinds of men and reproduce these kinds of men *so that opponents will have “nothing evil to say about us”* (8). *Older and*

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younger women (2:3-5) are to be these kinds of women and reproduce these kinds of women *so that “the word of God may not be reviled”* (5). Bondservants (2:9-10) are to be these kinds of bondservants *in order to “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior”* (10).

Paul gives us *five different groups of people* here, which I’m grouping into *three*, to show us *what a life that is worthy of, or consistent with, the gospel looks like*. This is what it looks like when people wear spiritual clothes that fit. By addressing people of various ages, genders, and social statuses, Paul reminds us that *the power of the gospel transforms anyone in any season or social status in life*.

The true gospel of Jesus Christ radically *changes people from the inside out*. It doesn’t just give them a ticket to heaven, it also *progressively changes them during this present age* (12). God, then uses that change to shine the light of the gospel to others who are in darkness. Let’s take the remainder of our time to consider the first category that Paul applies this big idea to. We’ll call this section, “*Redeemed Men*” and consider three items: what kinds of people we are to *be*, what kinds of people we are to *reproduce*, and the *power* that enables us to do so.

Redeemed Men (2:2,6-8)

I. **What Kind Men We Should Be**

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I think one reason Paul addresses both older and younger people in this passage is because he recognizes that **different seasons of life present different challenges**. Young men don't wrestle with all the same issues than older men do. "*Older men*," Paul says, should first be "*sober minded*." This means that there should be a *seriousness* and *focus* about them. He knows what life is really all about, and he's committed to not wasting his.

Second, older men should be "*dignified*." This means that they should be *worthy of respect*. Notice that Paul could have just told young people to respect their elders, but instead he tells older people to *be worthy of that respect*. Thirdly, older men should be "*self-controlled*." We'll come back to that one shortly. Finally, older men should be "*sound in faith, love, and steadfastness*." Older men should have a testimony of trusting God's character and promises, loving God and others, and persevering in that faith and love. Don't miss that last one. I've notice that a major temptation among senior adults is that you can want to **throw in the towel** for various reasons. Maybe it's because you can't do what you once did. Maybe it's because you think you've **put in your time**. Don't do that. Paul calls you here to **do all you can for as long as you can**. Be a **Caleb**. **Be the kinds of men that young men would want to be like, not the kinds of men that they hope they never become**.

For *younger men*, Paul keeps it simple. You too should be "*self-controlled*." Don't miss how often that quality appeared in our passage

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above. This means that one of the most important aspects of your spiritual growth as a young man is learning to *master* your *emotions* and your *appetites*. It doesn't mean that you *deny* all of them, but it does mean that you learn to *control* them instead of being controlled by them. Your emotions and appetites must not let lead you into sin. By doing this, you become men who are a model of good works, integrity, and sound in your speech. When you are mastered by your anger, your fear, your lust, your greed, your gut, your tongue, or your laziness, you are not exercising self-control and are acting more like a Cretan than a Christian. The gospel calls you to be men who have *renounced ungodliness and worldly passions* and to be men who are *pure and zealous for good works*.

II. What Kind of Men We Should Reproduce

This idea is more explicit with Paul's instructions for women. They should "*teach*" and "*train*" young women to be the kinds of women whose lives commend the gospel (3-4). This is another way of saying that older women should be making disciples of younger women. But this idea is also implicit in these instructions to men in the word, "*likewise*," and in the fact that a man, Titus, is being instructed to teach these things to other men. As Paul instructed Timothy in **2 Timothy 2:2**, Titus should also raise up faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

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Don't miss this: Paul paints a picture here in which older men and women in the church are *teaching and training others* to be these kinds of people as a *normal* part of their lives. This is not mainly a charge to teach a men's or a women's class, but for *all men and women* to be doing two things as a normal part of their Christian life and their involvement in their local church. They are to be (1) striving to be these kinds of people and to be (2) striving to reproduce these kinds of people. The normal Christian life is a life lived *in a community of faith in which we are all seeking to disciple and be disciplined by one another*.

Men, you should be teaching and training other, possibly younger, men in the church to be godly men. This should be happening in both *formal* and *informal*, more organic, ways. This certainly applies to your own *sons* or *grandsons*, but it also clearly applies here to other men in the church. What's more is that it should be happening *across generations* in the community of faith.

This leaves us with a logical question: *what other men in the church are you personally and intentionally investing in so that they can make progress in their spiritual growth?* Again, this is not so much a class or a program but *a way of life*. Disciples are made in classes and disciples are made as part of discipleship programs, like the discipleship groups that we encourage people to have in this church, but what's more important is that those should be seen as *mere tools* that facilitate what should be an approach to life as a Christian. Are you making disciples? Will you stop procrastinating and start?

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III. The Power that Enables Us to Do So

Men, I hope you feel **challenged** today. However, one of the worst things that could happen in a sermon like this is that you, as men, would get super convicted and, due to this spiritual gut check, resolve to go out this week and try harder, as hard as you can, to be a more godly person *in your own strength*. I do want you to try harder, but I need you to understand **how that happens** in a Christian's life.

You can't "be better" or "do better" on your own, but you can by "*the grace of God*." Pay close attention to verse 12, because it is "*the grace of God*" that **trains us** and **enables us** to do this. We don't become godly by our own resolve, grit, determination, will power, and strength. We become godly by God's grace. **His grace is *the power* that enables us to be these kinds of men and to reproduce these kinds of men.**

We are transformed in the same way that we are originally saved: *by grace through faith*. Perhaps a practical illustration will be most helpful here. When I wake up in the morning, one of the first things I should do is to **hit my knees in prayer** and to beg God for grace to be full of His Spirit, to walk in His Spirit, and to be this kind of man. I should also get into God's Word in hopes of hearing from God and in hopes of Him changing me and equipping me through it. Then, I **get up** and march into my day with all the resolve of a warrior taking

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the battle field, but I do so *believing* that God is going to answer my prayers and keep His promises to me. I do so *dependent upon His strength, believing that as I attempt be this kind of man*, God will meet me in the moment and supply the necessary strength. That is what I mean by trying harder by grace through faith. While you can't "do better" or "be better" in your own strength, **the good news of the gospel is that God's grace supplies you with the resources that you didn't previously possess!** Because of His grace, you *can* change! Will you look to Him today?