

INTRODUCTION

Paul does not waste words. Having exposed the rebellious empty talkers and mind-deceivers in Titus 1:10-16, especially those “of the circumcision” who were upsetting whole households for sordid gain, he now turns sharply to the positive charge. Right after the devastating diagnosis of false teachers who “profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him,” the apostle pivots with a single, commanding “But you...”. Titus must speak the things that are fitting for sound doctrine. This is not a gentle suggestion. It is the direct antidote to the chaos the false teachers produce.

The section divides naturally into two parts. Verses 2:1-10 give concrete instructions for every group in the assembly (older men, older women, young women, young men, and bond-servants) so that their lives visibly adorn the doctrine of God our Savior. Then verses 2:11-14 supply the theological engine—the saving grace of God that has already appeared trains us to deny ungodliness and live in line with our identity in Christ while we wait for the blessed hope. Verse 15 ties it all together with the same authoritative command we saw in 1:15. Sound doctrine and sound living are coupled so that God and the Gospel are highlighted.

EXPOSITION

Titus 2:1 “But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.”

The contrast is immediate and personal: but you. While the false teachers tear down, Titus must build up. The verb λαλέω *laleō* (present active imperative – speak / utter) carries the full weight of Apostolic authority from Paul to Titus. Titus is not to offer opinions. He is to proclaim what fits (πρέπω *prepō* – is fitting / is suitable) for sound / healthy teaching. The present tense indicates that this instruction is an ongoing activity of declaring truth.

Titus 2:2-10 – Lives That Adorn Sound Doctrine

Paul now spells out what that healthy teaching looks like in everyday relationships. Notice the careful grouping: older men (2:2), older women (2:3-5), young men (2:6-8), and bond-servants (2:9-10). Each group receives observable character traits that flow directly from the doctrine of grace.

- **Older men**

πρεσβύτης *presbutēs* – is indicative of a mature men / elders in age or spiritual maturity are thought of to be the de-facto leaders in a church environment they are to be:

νηφάλιος *nēphalios* – sober / temperate,
σεμνός *semnos* – dignified / honorable),

σώφρωνων sōphrōn – self-controlled / sound-minded),

These qualities are not about appearing religious. They are the visible evidence that a man is holding fast to the faithful word and living according to his identity in Christ. Their steady example gives stability to the whole body and counters the disorder sown by the false teachers.

The means for this (present active participle)

ὑγιαίνω hugiainō – being sound / healthy in faith, love, and perseverance.

Remember faith is “that which is believed,” the doctrines that are fundamental for the people in the assembly.

Love is the desired result of instruction and is the desire and activity of what is best for the one being loved.

Perseverance is a quality of remaining under a difficulty or affliction using the doctrines of God as the basis for getting through the challenge. They are to know this, they are to live this, and they are to teach this.

- **Older women**

Like the elders, older women are to live in a manner befitting those set apart for God. They are not to be διαβόλος diabolos – slanderers / false accusers (akin to devilish or demonic activity) or enslaved to much wine, but teachers of what is good).

The purpose clause is clear; the verb, σωφρονίζω (sōphronizō) – train / bring to sound mind, shows that older women are not merely advising, they are actively shaping the next generation to think and live rightly.

The older women model and teach the younger (to love their husbands and love their children), the root word for *love* in verse 4 is “philos.” This is reciprocated “agape” and points to the right loving relationship between family members.

They are to be self-controlled, pure, good managers of the home, and let their husbands lead (in their responsibilities). The reason is so that the word of God would not be spoken against or blasphemed by outsiders.

- **Young men**

Young men likewise are to be self-controlled in everything. Titus himself must lead the way by setting an example of good works in his teaching and conduct. His message must be pure, dignified, and sound, leaving no room for legitimate criticism.

The goal is that those who oppose the truth would be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about the believers. A young man who lives this way does not merely avoid trouble; he makes the gospel attractive even to those who hate it.

- **Bond-servants**

δούλους, *doulous* – slaves / bond-servants are to be subject to their own masters in everything, well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith.

Once again, the purpose is that they may adorn the doctrines of God. The verb κοσμέω (*kosmeō*) – adorn / set in order / beautify is an important distinction. Even in the lowest social position, a believer's faithful service makes the doctrine of God our Savior beautiful in every respect. In a culture that looked down on slaves, this kind of conduct turned the stereotype on its head and gave the gospel a hearing.

These instructions are not a new law to earn God's favor. They are the practical outworking of the identity believers already possess in Christ. The repeated emphasis on self-control, dignity, and good works flows from the grace that has already appeared; it is not to gain favor, but because we already have it.

Titus 2:11-14 – The Theological Heart: Grace That Trains Us

Now we reach the theological heart of the chapter, the engine that powers everything Paul has just commanded. We will walk slowly through these verses because they are the heartbeat of grace lived out.

There is one correction that has to be made. The word *salvation* is not positioned correctly. It is an adjective describing grace. This should be translated: “the saving grace of God has appeared to all men.”

The verb is placed first which makes the activity emphatic. The verb ἐπιφαίνω (*epiphainō*) – appear / shine forth (aorist passive) marks a once-for-all historical event. This is about the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Grace broke into human history at a specific point. And this saving grace has appeared to all men without exception, directly countering the false teachers who wanted to restrict the gospel to Jewish superiority myths.

Grace is actively “instructing us.” The participle παιδεύω *paideuō* – instructing / training / disciplining us pictures a father training his children. How does grace train? This is used here as the proper motivation behind the activity of denying ungodliness and worldly desires and living sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age.

These three adverbs describe living in its proper form:

σωφρόνως (sōphronōs) – sensibly / with sound mind. This is the same word root found for older men, older women who are teaching younger women, and young men. Being sober minded indicates a mind that is under control.

δικαίως (dikaiōs) – righteously / justly. This is the quality of living in alignment of your position in Jesus Christ. You are righteous therefore we should live accordingly.

εὐσεβῶς (eusebōs) – this is a word that indicates a good reverent manner for God. Peter says this very well (1 Peter 1:13-19).

This life is to be lived with one anticipation in mind. “While looking for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. The grammar here (one article governing both “God” and “Savior”) identifies Jesus as both God and Savior in one person (Granville Sharp Rule).

Why did Christ give Himself for us? So that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

The verbs λυτρώω (lutroō) – redeem / ransom and καθαρίζω (katharizō) – purify / cleanse are both aorist subjunctives following a “hina.” This demonstrates a reality based upon the finished work of Christ.

Redemption and purification are already finished. We are not working to become His possession; we already are.

The zeal for good works is the natural obligation derived from our reality, our position. Believers are to do good works not to obtain God’s favor, but because by grace we have already obtained it. We live in accordance with who we are in Christ.

Titus 2:15 “These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”

The three imperatives—λάλει (speak), παρακάλει (exhort), ἔλεγχε (reprove)—echo the same authoritative charge Paul gave Titus earlier. Titus is to keep declaring, encouraging, and confronting with full apostolic weight. The false teachers tried to undermine him; Paul says do not let anyone look down on you. His authority rests on the message, not on human approval.

CONCLUSION

What This Meant for Titus and the Believers on Crete

To Titus, these were marching orders. He was to counter the false teachers with the clear, repeated truth of sound doctrine. The Cretan believers were called to display lives that silenced slander. Their households, their marriages, their service, their speech, and their daily conduct were to adorn the gospel so that even the opponents would have nothing evil to say. The saving grace of God has appeared to all; now the church on Crete was to live as the treasured possession Christ had purchased.

What This Means for Us Today

The pattern has not changed. Grace still motives us to deny ungodliness and live sensibly, righteously, and godly. We do not strive for God's favor; we already possess it in Christ. Therefore, we speak what fits sound teaching, we model it in our own lives, and everyone is responsible to live in alignment line with who we already are in Christ.

When we do, the doctrine of God our Savior is adorned. And we, like the Cretan believers, wait with confident expectation (ἐλπίς, elpis – certain hope) for the appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.