

## Godliness in the home Titus 2

*[Please note: sections in blue type are not broadcast on every radio station.  
English Standard Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]*

In ch.1, Paul instructed Titus to set right those church-planting issues, which remained outstanding from their joint visit to Crete. That included appointing elders in each local church on the island. Titus' job was especially difficult because there were many false teachers in Crete. These included native prophets who claimed that the Cretan believers didn't need to change from their natural, somewhat uncouth, lifestyle. Such false teaching had to be sternly denounced and replaced with sound doctrine. But it was to be sound teaching of a practical sort, that is, truth which accords with godliness. Godliness means that our lifestyle must reflect the holy God, whom we have come to know through the Gospel. It's only pious living that pleases God. But it's holy living in every aspect of our lives. [Therefore, this series of talks on the Epistle to Titus considers the theme of godliness throughout the letter:](#)

- [Godliness in the church, chapter 1.](#)
- [Godliness in the home, chapter 2.](#)
- [Godliness in the world, chapter 3.](#)

For this talk on Titus 2, I'll divide the chapter into two parts:

vv.1-10: the things which become sound doctrine.

vv.11-15: the grace of God teaches us.

### Part 1

I'll read vv.1-10 from the English Standard Version:

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

These verses readily subdivide into five sections of exhortations, each directed to a certain type of believers:

1. older men.
2. older women.
3. young women.
4. young men.
5. bondservants.

## You Titus

But first, in v.1, Paul was emphatic with Titus:

“But speak [you] the things which befit the sound doctrine” (RV).

Titus was to publicly rebuke all false teachers and Jewish myth peddlers and replace their teachings with the sound doctrine of the true Christian faith. “Sound” means ‘that which is wholesome or healthy.’ We hear much these days about the need for healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. Both will contribute to our overall wellbeing and help to maintain us in good health. Sound doctrine stands in contradistinction to the unsound, or disease-ridden, false teaching, which Paul identified in ch.1. Wrong teaching leads believers astray. It causes some Christians to believe false ideas, which lead them to live in ways that do not please God. The danger to us of false teachings is that they’re an ever-present feature of Christendom. Like the Cretan prophets, they basically promote the idea that Christians must ‘absorb’ and ‘fit in with’ the culture of the day. [For example, you’ll have gathered from my accent that I’m from Newcastle. But it would be wrong for me, a Christian believer, to live a stereotypical Geordie lifestyle!](#)

As we study ch.2 in some detail, remember this basic fact, the truth always corresponds to godliness. Christian living is about us being serious in our desire to live in ways which are pleasing to a holy God. So we’ll notice the recurrence of sound and sober in the exhortations.

### Older men

In v.2, Titus was to teach the older men to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Church elders are included in this group of believers as stated in 1:5-9. Maturity is brought about by life’s many experiences, which for aged believers should manifest itself in sober mindedness - being sound in our thinking. [These days, all things, including church services and activities, are described as “exciting.”](#) But older believers should exhibit a freedom from any fleshly excitability. They’re to be dignified and self-controlled, healthy in faith, love, and patience - all qualities of sanctified living.

### Older women

Paul told Titus in v.3 that he was to teach the older women to be reverent in behaviour and adds two specific instructions. They must not be 1) slanderers; and 2) addicted to much wine. Reverence for God is what is becoming of pious women. They must display that godly character in their behaviour. That means that their deportment must be openly manifest in their conduct and conversation; and in the way they dress:

[“Women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works” \(1Timothy 2:9-10\).](#)

In other words, their deportment reflects the character of their hearts and minds. Negatively, they mustn't be slanderers, that is, those who delight in finding faults with others. Whilst I readily admit there's a tendency for us older men to become grumpy-old-men, there's an equivalent danger that older women become critical and intolerant of others. Both behaviours must be avoided as they spoil our testimonies to the saving grace of God. V.3 ends with a reference to that very valuable ministry of older women for younger women. They should teach them by kind, wise, and godly, counsel.

### **Young women**

In v.4, Paul stated that older women have a very positive influence in their ministry towards younger women. They're to instruct, that is, train younger women to be sound minded and thereby have sound judgement about, and wisdom in, practical Christian life. The younger women were to learn from the older women how to rightly carry out their duties in life, which are mainly concerned with the domestic scene, the home life (hence the title of this talk is 'Godliness in the home'). The younger women's role within the home is specified: they must be lovers of their husbands and lovers of their children. These two features describe how godly young women bear testimony to the Gospel's power. V.5 stipulates other necessary features: self-control, purity, industrious in their homes, kind, and submissive to their husbands, so that the Christian teaching isn't subject to any form of reproach. That is, so that the word of God is neither reviled nor criticised as being ineffective.

### **Young men**

In v.6, self-control is also urged upon young men. By being sober minded, they, too, can exhibit godliness. More than that, self-restraint is especially required of Christian young men for them to avoid any unseemly and inappropriate behaviour, which they are naturally susceptible to. The apostle John warns the young men of that ever-present pull of the world and those sinful lusts of the flesh:

"I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one. Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever" (1John 2:14-17).

### **Titus again**

In vv.7-8, Paul applied the exhortations of v.6 to Titus himself a young man. He was to be exemplary in every aspect of his ministry to, and his living amongst, the Cretans. Titus was to live out what he preached, taught, and admonished others to do. His teaching had to show his integrity. That it was absolutely pure, free from any contamination of the teachings and thoughts of men and of any hint of self-promotion that drew his hearers' attention away from Christ. It was to be dignified and demonstrate his reverence for God; and his recognition of the privilege, as well as the responsibility, of presenting it to his hearers. The content of his teaching also had to be sound and void of any fanciful interpretations of Scripture. It had to be so firmly based and reasoned from Scripture that it was impossible for the false teachers either to censure it or accuse either Paul or himself of any error. It also must have the effect of shaming them concerning their own erroneous doctrines.

## Bondservants

In vv.9-10, Paul urged Titus to persuade Christian slaves to adopt godly lifestyles. That was no easy matter for they had masters who had full ownership of, and control over, them. Consequently, there was much friction between the two and Cretan slaves made their masters' lives somewhat difficult by their indisciplined behaviour. Believing slaves were therefore urged to show how the Gospel had changed their behaviour for the better.

- First, they were exhorted to show respect and be subject to their masters in everything without any grumbling.
- Second, they weren't to challenge, or contradict, their masters' commands. Rather they were to carry out their work patiently and cheerfully to please their masters in every way.
- Third, to show their utmost trustworthiness, they weren't to pilfer their masters' possessions. When they heeded these exhortations, they gave an amazing testimony to the transforming power of the Gospel!

Nowadays, there are no such slaves, at least in the western world. But, apart from the self-employed, every Christian has at least one manager or boss. In my professional career, I worked by these godly principles of submission to a higher authority and integrity in all aspects of my job, no matter where I found myself to be on the career ladder. It's not easy in our aggressive 21<sup>st</sup> century society, but it's still attainable by God's grace.

In v.10, Paul highlighted the reason for these exhortations to slaves:

“So that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.”

A most remarkable statement of truth! The very essence of the Gospel concerns the Saviour God, who wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. Paul said that Gospel truth is beautified by those whose lives have been changed by its power. Rough, coarse slaves from a Cretan culture, which encouraged such malice and hatred became godly slaves, who exhibited the grace of God in such difficult and trying circumstances of life. It's by godly living, that the Gospel becomes irresistibly attractive to unbelievers. How then is it possible for believers to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour? The second part of ch.2 gives the answer.

### **Part 2: The grace of God teaches us, vv.11-15**

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”

These verses explain how believers can, and why they must, adorn the teaching about our Saviour God. The Gospel not only brings knowledge of salvation but also brings to light God's grace that teaches us how to live. In fact, the words “bringing salvation” are an adjectival phrase describing God's grace, that it's saving grace. By adding the phrase “for all people”, Paul shows that the Gospel has the inherent potential to save every human being who has ever lived. To paraphrase v.11:

“The grace of God, which brings salvation within the reach for all people, has appeared.”

It's the reason the Lord Jesus came into the world. He came to save sinners. But it's those, and only those, who by faith accept Him as their Saviour and Lord who are actually saved. There's been a full manifestation of God's grace in, and to, this world in, and through, the Person of the Son of God. The words "has appeared" mean the Epiphany, the coming of Jesus Christ into the world at Bethlehem. [John the Baptist's father, Zechariah, said that Isaiah's Messianic prophecy](#)

["To give light \[literally, "to appear"\] to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." was fulfilled at Jesus' birth \(see Luke 1:79\):](#)

[Paul expanded upon this truth in Titus 3:4-5:](#)

["When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us...according to his own mercy."](#)

To sum up, the saving grace of God was fully seen in Christ's birth and in every aspect of His life, but supremely in His death, His resurrection, and His ascension to God's right hand in heaven.

Our Saviour God not only desires our salvation, but that we come to know the truth, which accords with godliness (see 1:1). That is, our daily lives are to prove that the Gospel not only saves us but that it also changes us. It informs us how to live and 2:12 states that, we're taught by the saving grace of God. The idea is that we're children who need instruction and discipline. So in vv.12-14, Paul presented a remarkable summary of what Christianity is as a practical reality in the changed lives of believers.

First, saving grace instructs us that we must reject/renounce ungodly living and worldly passions. Ungodliness describes those whose manner of life is without any reference to God and who blatantly ignore His requirements. Worldly lusts are those things that ungodly men seek satisfaction from. The apostle John defined these as love for the world system of unregenerate mankind and for those things which characterise it: the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life (see 1 John 2:15-16).

Second, saving grace teaches us how to live in a threefold way:

1. self-controlled.
2. upright.
3. godly.

Self-controlled means to have a sound mind and a thoroughly sober view of life, which are based on sound doctrine. Upright means righteous in thought and in deed. Godly means piety. We often hear about a holistic approach to a person's well-being. Saving grace provides for a believer's total spiritual well-being: soberly as to self; righteously with regard to other people; and godly in respect to God. Paul gave more detail as to these three aspects of Christian behaviour in Romans:

- soberly in ch.12.
- righteously in ch.13.
- and godly in ch.14.

Notice that v.12 ends with the words, "in the present age." That is, it's the condition or state of the world now during the Gospel age, including the 21<sup>st</sup> century! We mustn't be deluded or deceived into thinking that Bible precepts are somewhat outdated and don't apply to believers living in our current immoral and amoral society. Let's heed Paul's admonition:

["For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their](#)

own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry” (2Timothy 4:3-5).

Third, saving grace disciplines us to live “in expectation of the fulfilment of our blessed hope --the Appearing in glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13, Weymouth). In my circle of Christian fellowships, we make much of the Rapture, when the Lord Jesus will come again for His Church to snatch us away to heaven to be with himself forever (see 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18). We call this event “the blessed hope”, derived from the AV/KJV translation of Titus 2:13, which states, “that blessed hope and the glorious appearing”; and seems to separate and distinguish the Rapture from the Appearing. But a more accurate exposition of this verse is that Paul said we’re waiting for a single event, for the Lord Jesus to display his glory, when He appears in great power and glory at His second coming. In fact, the surrounding verses in 1 Thessalonians 4 & 5 clearly show that the Rapture is an initial stage in His second coming. Yes, our blessed hope is that one day the Lord will take His rightful place and reign over the whole world. The glory He will manifest at His second Epiphany will be “the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ”! In Paul’s day, the Roman emperor was deified and assigned the title ‘god and saviour of the world’ because it was propagated throughout his empire that his government brought peace and prosperity to all its people. But that empire failed, and it will fail again. Meanwhile, the whole of creation continues to groan for the great God and Saviour, who will release it from the bondage of corruption, restore it, and bring everlasting peace, security, and happiness. He will reign in righteousness:

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9 & Habakkuk 2:14).

Titus 2:14 focuses on what our great God and Saviour has done for us to make us suitable people to adorn the doctrine of the Saviour God. Because of His wonderful love, “[Jesus Christ] gave himself for us”. [Several New Testament verses reiterate the words “gave himself”](#):

1. [Pertinent to worldliness mentioned in v.12, Galatians 1:4 states: “\[He\] gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.”](#)
2. [In 1Timothy 2:5&6: “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.”](#)
3. [In the appealing words of Galatians 2:20: “The Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”](#)
4. [In Ephesians 5:2 & 25: “Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. ...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her”, which embellish the truths of Titus 2:14.](#)

Our Lord Jesus Christ wants believers for himself to be His own special treasure. In order to make us “His own”, He had to redeem us. That is, He paid the full ransom price with His own blood to free us from lawlessness, which is sin. I sin when I ignore God’s will and assert my own selfish will. But v.14 ends with our response to saving grace. Once we’re redeemed from sin and self, we become zealous for good works, which we’ve been encouraged to variously practise by vv.2-10.

## Conclusion

I conclude my talk on Titus 2 with a question: “Do you think that the Bible is in some ways outdated and therefore the things that I have drawn your attention to in this chapter don’t apply to us in the prevailing culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?” Let’s dismiss any such thoughts by taking on board the exhortation made by Paul to Titus in v.15:

“Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.”

If sound doctrine was the necessary antidote for believers living in the Cretan culture, it is even more valid to believers in the post-Christian society we live in. Sound biblical teaching continues to be contradicted by Christendom’s false teachers. But notice that to preach sound doctrine is an apostolic directive, which mustn’t be ignored. In addition, sound doctrine leads to godliness, which witnesses to the power of God’s saving grace.

Thank you for listening to this *Truth for Today* talk, T1238, on Titus 2, entitled ‘Godliness in the home’.

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