

STUDY GUIDE

Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church
TITUS: LIVING IN THE FAMILY OF GRACE
INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL AGES
TITUS 2:1-10
08/06/2017



MAIN POINT

The call to follow Jesus is a call for people from all ages and all walks of life.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What are some of the stereotypes or generalizations people often connect with your generation?

What are some things you like best about your generation? Why?

People in our culture often think of Christians as a single block or unit, as in, “All Christians believe this way,” or, “Christians always vote that way.” In truth, the church is a diverse collection of all kinds of people—people who look different from one another, people who think differently than one another, and people who have a wide range of life experiences.

As we look at Titus 2:1-10, we’ll gain a better understanding of what it means to follow Jesus for different people in different walks of life.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ TITUS 2:1-5.

The first chapter of Titus ended with a warning about false teachers and false doctrines. Continuing on that theme, Paul began chapter 2 by encouraging his readers to focus on sound teaching. As part of that focus, he listed several practical truths and directives for his audience as examples of sound teaching.

What’s your initial reaction to these verses? Why?

Where do you receive “sound teaching” today?

How do Paul’s instructions compare and contrast with the prevailing wisdom of our culture?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ TITUS 2:6-8.

Paul’s first directives were written for older men and women, including instructions for ensuring that younger

generations received sound teaching. In verses 6-8, Paul turned his attention specifically to young people.

What are some areas of life in which Christians need to demonstrate an extra level of self-control? Why?

How would you define “integrity”?

What are some ways people in our culture attack or seek to slander disciples of Jesus?

What can we do as disciples of Jesus to keep ourselves above reproach?

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ TITUS 2:9-10.

The Book of Titus was written during a time when slavery was an accepted and commonplace practice within the ancient world. Indeed, many Christians were slaves. For those reasons, it made sense for Paul to include specific instructions on how slaves should live as followers of Christ. Thankfully, the principles behind these instructions have application for the ways we work as modern disciples of Jesus.

How should we understand the many mentions of slavery in God’s Word?

What are some principles, or truths, present in verses 9-10?

How do these principles apply to modern-day work and workplace relationships?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Where do you see yourself represented in Titus 2:1-10?

When have you benefitted from contact with people in other generations?

Where do you see opportunities for glorifying Jesus through your everyday work and workplace relationships?

PRAY

Conclude by affirming that God’s Word applies to people from all ages and walks of life. Praise God for the wisdom contained in these verses, and ask that His Spirit would guide each person in your group as you seek to follow Him in every situation this week.

COMMENTARY

TITUS 2:1-10

2:1. The phrase “but you” shows the contrast between Titus and the false teachers (see 1:15-16). Instead of teaching based on empty talk and deception, Titus was to ensure that his instructions were consistent with sound teaching. The

theme of sound teaching is a constant refrain throughout Paul's letters to Titus and Timothy (see 1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9). Such teaching will not only build up the faith of believers, it will protect them from the destructive influences of false teaching.

2:2. Because the older men were those most likely to be looked up to as mature and influential leaders in the body of believers, Paul began with them. His list is similar to the qualifications for overseers from Titus 1. Level headed literally means "sober." Maturity implies a consistent use of good sense and judgment. To be worthy of respect suggests being dignified, as opposed to being silly or juvenile. Sensible implies being self-controlled or disciplined (see Titus 1:8). Sound in faith, love, and endurance means demonstrating a healthy expression of these great Christian virtues. Instead of the more familiar, "faith, hope, and love," Paul referred to endurance, a quality especially appropriate for older men who might be tempted to "coast" morally in their senior years or to have a sense of uselessness because of their age.

Older men, by virtue of their age, were called on to model certain qualities of godliness. Note that these characteristics were not for them alone, leaving the young free to ignore the instruction. However, the older men were recognized as examples for younger men. These men were to live carefully, manifesting a respectable lifestyle. **

2:3. The apostle directed older women to be reverent in behavior, a unique phrase that is found only here in the New Testament. It focuses on the sacred responsibility Christian women have as representatives of a holy God. Not slanderers is a form of the word also translated "devil," for the Devil is the chief slanderer. The implication is that older women are to have mastery over their tongues. Not addicted to much wine implies having mastery over the appetites. The exhortation to teach what is good is specifically applicable to older women's responsibility to younger women.

2:4-5. In thinking of what the older women were to teach, Paul described the qualities desirable in the young women. His focus was on married women with children at home. Single adult women were much rarer in Paul's day than in ours. Older women could teach these young married women to love their husbands and to love their children. While this might seem obvious, we need to remember that one of the ways Christianity is judged is by the kind of families it produces. The wife plays a critical role in the success of every family.

Self-controlled is the same word translated "sensible" in 2:2. The term "pure" especially focuses on having sexual integrity, being faithful in marriage. The word rendered "homemakers" literally means "busy at home,"—that is, being good managers of domestic responsibilities. "Kind" translates a word often rendered "good." The phrase "submissive to their husbands" echoes a commonly found New Testament theme about the relationship of wives to their own husbands (see Eph. 5:24; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1,5). Submission does not imply that wives are inferior but that they have a distinct, God-given role in the home.

Paul also wanted the younger women to be busy at home. To modern readers this statement may conjure visions of a young woman chained to the kitchen sink with six crying children at her feet. Paul has been accused by some interpreters of male chauvinistic tendencies. The context, however, does not support such notions. In first-century cultures, the home was the domain of the woman. This instruction by Paul would not have sounded foreign or oppressive to anyone in the Greco-Roman culture. He was not defining or limiting a woman's place; he was addressing women where they were. This is not a picture of enslavement but of useful enterprise.**

Whether a woman works outside the home or not, she is to bring special grace and beauty to her home. More than any other member of the family, the woman tends to set the tone for the household. Paul is commending women who understand the importance and high priority which God has designed into the roles of mother, wife, and homemaker. Society rests not only on politics and commerce, but more critically upon the home where each member of society learns respect for authority, values, relational skills, and duty to neighbor and nation.**

2:6. The young men in that society for the most part were married with children at home. Yet the word of counsel Paul offered was appropriate whether or not they were married. They were to be self-controlled. This is a form of the word translated "sensible" in 2:2 and "self-controlled" in 2:4. Lack of self-control, especially in physical appetites, has long been recognized as a challenge for young men. The phrase "in everything" at the beginning of 2:7 probably should be included with 2:6. That is, the younger men were to keep themselves under control in every way and in all areas of life.

2:7. Titus—probably a young man himself—was to be an example or model to the other young men, and indeed to all the believers. Paul first addressed Titus's behavior. He was to be known for good works (see also 1 Tim. 4:12). Others were to see the pattern and follow it, just as Titus and Timothy had followed Paul's example.

Paul turned directly to Titus and wrote, In everything set them an example by doing what is good. Just as Paul's instructions to older and younger women blended together, so his instructions to younger men mingled with this charge to Titus. While Titus must lead the way in his behavior, the clear implication is that all the younger men should be characterized by acts of goodness. Once again Paul had in mind outward, observable actions. Followers of Christ are to demonstrate a changed lifestyle marked by goodness in everything they do. This stands in contrast to the false teachers, who were "disobedient and unfit for doing anything good" (Titus 1:16). Paul emphasized two fundamental structures of true Christianity—behavior and belief. In contrast to the false teachers, the proclaimer of the gospel must live a life typified by goodness. Such a proclaimer must deliver the message with integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech

that cannot be condemned.**

Paul next spoke about Timothy's ministry of teaching the Christian message. He was not just to mouth the words; rather, his listeners were to recognize that the teaching proceeded from a person with integrity and dignity. Titus was always to teach truthfully in a way that inspired respect.

2:8. Paul moved from the manner of Titus's teaching to the content: it was to be sound beyond reproach. He was to stick to the plain, simple, life-giving gospel message, as we have seen Paul emphasize repeatedly in these letters. Furthermore, a result of Titus's teaching truthfully and well would be that any opponent would be ashamed and have nothing bad to say. The apostle affirmed that it is the combination of outstanding behavior and outstanding teaching that best silences opposition to the good news of Jesus.

2:9. The verb translated "be submissive" is from the same root word as the term rendered "submissive" in 2:5 regarding the relationship of wives to their husbands. As was true of wives, so it was true of slaves: submission did not mean inferiority as a person. Instead, it was an acknowledgment of the difference in role that slave and master played, just as employees and employers today have different roles. The term "well-pleasing" in other New Testament passages refers to believers striving to be well pleasing to God (see Rom. 12:1,2; 14:18). Just as all believers desire for their behavior to be acceptable to God, so slaves were to desire for their masters to find their service acceptable. The opposite behavior would be talking back, which was perhaps a common trait among slaves. Christian slaves were to act better than their pagan counterparts.

Paul's charge to slaves underscored his intention to work with in the social structures and expectations of the day. Slaves were foundational to Roman economic stability. They comprised the lowest rung of the social ladder, but they could be anything from ship oarsmen to craftsmen to teachers. Many slaves served within the Roman households in various duties, some rising to managerial positions over other slaves. It is possible that the false teachings which stirred the women into defiant attitudes may have produced the same effect upon the slaves.**

Paul addressed the slaves of Crete with the same instructions he had delivered to slaves everywhere: they were to be subject to their masters in everything. Paul's concern was not to address civil arrangements or conventions, with which he may have disagreed, but to assure that the Christian behaved in a decent and orderly manner.**

The gospel does not advocate revolt but submission to the sovereign of God. Outside of insurrection or escape, the slave was rarely in the position to overturn civil injustices (see Philemon for Paul's view on this). As difficult as it is to submit to such a position, the Christian must be convinced of God's lordship in all human affairs.**

The slave must not only submit to his masters (even Roman culture would have applauded this), but the slave must also work to please them. The Christian ethic always transcends human reason and practice. Christianity penetrates to the inner spirit. The hope may be freedom, but the impetus is pleasing God.**

2:10. Another negative behavior common to slaves was stealing—pilfering little things they could get away with. Instead of this, Christian slaves were to show utter faithfulness in the way they handled their master's possessions. When they did so, they would adorn the teaching of God, making it attractive to outsiders. Notice the similarity to the result Paul mentioned for Christian wives' doing right ("so that God's message will not be slandered") as well as for Titus's teaching right ("so that the opponent will be ashamed"). Paul was repeatedly emphasizing that the way Christians behave has a major impact on the way others respond to the truth of the gospel message.

** Knute Larson, I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, vol. 9, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 364.