

God Blueprint for a Healthy Church
Discipleship: Sound Doctrine Produces Sound Living
Titus 2:1-10
July 16, 2017

We are continuing our summer series, “God’s Blueprint for a Healthy Church” based on the New Testament book of Titus. This book is a letter written by the apostle Paul to Titus, one of his disciples who helped Paul in his ministry. We have seen so far that the first chapter is about leadership. Today we start chapter two which is about discipleship with today’s message, “Sound Doctrine Produces Sound Living.

BI – Sound doctrine applied to the lives of disciples produces godliness and exalts the gospel.

Before we read, I want to show you the structure of the passage. The first verse starts out with “but you” drawing a contrast between the false teachers and Titus. Titus is to teach what accords with sound doctrine. Then he applies sound doctrine to different groups of people, older men, older women, then younger women, younger men, and then slaves which translates to modern day employees. These are not just a list of behaviors but are appropriate responses to the gospel as he tells us that the grace of God has appeared training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and live Christ like lives. These verses are examples lives shaped by the gospel considering particular temptations and struggles with life in Crete.

As I said, Paul transitions from talking about false teachers to addressing Titus, “but as for you, teach what accords or is consistent with sound doctrine (1).” Then he lists the ways the gospel shapes lives based on the gospel saving us and shaping us (11-15). He does not give an exhaustive list but identifies particular issues in the churches in Crete. Teaching what is consistent with sound doctrine is teaching what is faithful to the whole bible and is useful for life. Paul is concerned with discipleship, becoming Christ like by faith. Sound doctrine produce sound living, or discipleship, the process of becoming godly or like Christ. But teaching sound doctrine is in the context of the church, a community of God’s people who are committed to your growth. This requires being involved in the lives of other people. Life groups are for this very reason, where we can share our struggles, find support and accountability in our growth in godliness. Sunday services are for bible exposition and shaping the mind theologically. Sunday School is for comprehensive bible education in a classroom setting. Life Groups are the place to discuss the bible together and cultivate community, honest and open relationships to help each other fight sin in our lives. The issue for all of us is fighting sin and that is a community project. So, our life groups need to be focused sound doctrine that leads to sound living, fighting sin and living obedient lives. Accountability is necessary for effective discipleship. Some of us are uncomfortable with accountability but Scripture talks about accountability as necessary part of the Christian life and discipleship (Heb 10:24-25). So, let’s see what he says in our text, starting with the older men.

“Older men (probably those over sixty years of age) are to be sober minded, that means thinking clearly in contrast to someone has been drinking. They are to be dignified, their godliness makes them respectable men to look up to. Self-controlled, means their lives are characterized by self-control and then they are to be sound in faith, love and steadfastness (2). Sound in faith means that they are trusting God, he is their source of joy and satisfaction. Sound in love means that their joy in God overflows in serving others. Sound in steadfastness means that they have spiritual endurance in the midst of the difficulties of life because of their joy in Christ (1 Thes 1:3). Our culture prizes youth but the Bible exalts gray hair for wisdom because bible knowledge tempered by life experiences, makes one godly and wise. Godly character and wisdom comes with age, minds saturated with the word of God and a history of faithfully walking with God. Some of you would do well to look to older godly individuals to speak into your lives. Some of you gray hairs need to break away from the old boys club and reach out to some of these younger men and disciple and mentor them. An empty nest and retirement is not for coasting and living for yourself but giving your life away.

Next, older women are to “be reverent in behavior,” that word is used of a temple priestess, so older women are to live lives dedicated to God and godliness (1 Tim 2:10). Then he describes this godliness negatively and

then positively. Negatively, they are not to be slanderers, gossips who attack or say negative things about others behind their backs (3). Nor are they to be slaves to much wine, that is they don't have a drinking problem. Positively, they are to teach what is good, sound doctrine. It does not say that they have the gift of teaching. You can teach others from Scripture and life experience effectively even though you don't have the gift of teaching. Older women, are to be teaching the younger women. The purpose of teaching is to train the younger women (4). Women in ancient Greece did not have a great deal of freedom. As a matter of fact, they had a room all to themselves that not even their children entered very often, only their husbands could. They could not walk on the streets alone but always had to have somebody with them. Further, there was almost no possibility of ever earning a living in an honest way. They became prostitutes if they were to earn their way. In Greek culture, wives often married out of a sense of duty and obligation. So, the older women in the church are to teach the younger women that family is more than an obligation and duty, it is about loving their husband and children. Wives have the potential for great influence as wives and mothers. Older women are to teach the younger women how to live. I am going to organize these by theme as three relate to the home. First, they are to teach the younger women to be self-controlled and to be pure morally and sexually. And then teach them to be kind, which means, to be kind. Then teach the wives about the home life. First, to be working at home, that is, make the family and the home a priority. Evidently, they were not making the home a priority. Working in the home is valuable in God's eyes, significant for the wellbeing of the family. Does this mean that wives cannot work? Well, there are many positive examples of women working in the bible (Deborah, Judg 4:4; Miriam, Mic 6:4; Tabitha, Acts 9:36; Phoebe, Rom 16:1-2; Priscilla, Rom 16:3-4; etc). So, the question is can you effectively love and serve your family and work at the same time? Why do you want to work? What drives you to work? Then they are to train them to be submissive to their own husbands. Let me say some things here. The Bible makes it clear that all human beings are equal in value even though God gives them different roles. Different roles do not make one more or less valuable than another person. Submitting to or serving another person does not make you are less valuable than the person you are submitting to or serving. Jesus became a servant to all yet that did not make him less valuable. Roles describe function not value. Older women are to train the younger wives to live this way so that the word of God may not be reviled (7) or dishonored. The motive for living according to the gospel is so that the gospel shines and is not tarnished. Faith in Christ means in part that you value the reputation of the gospel (Mat 5:14-16; Phil 2:15).

Then he moves on to young men with description, "be self-controlled (6)." Why this one? Self-control is probably the main issue with most young men because they are often driven by short term thinking, pleasure, and recognition. A young guy must control his sex drive, his tongue, his sleeping habits, his eating habits, and his recreation. Then as long as he is talking to younger men, he gives Titus some specific advice. Show yourself in all respects to be an example of good works and have integrity in your teaching (7). As a leader, seeking to influence others, how you live is as important as what you say. Those who you are seeking to influence will follow your example (1 The 1:7; 2 Thes 3:1; 1 T 4:12; 1 P 5:3; 2 Thes 3:7-9; Heb 3:17). Then he gives the reason/motive, "so that an opponent may be put to shame because has nothing to say evil about the church (8). Again, he is concerned about the gospel, the way we live reflects what we believe about the power of the gospel to transform us.

Lastly, he addresses slaves; the modern day counterpart is employees. Positively, employees are to be submissive to their own employers in everything. That is, they are to be productive, doing what their employer wants. They are to be well pleasing, that is, have a good attitude. Negatively, they are not to be argumentative nor steal, that is, have integrity. By this they will show that their faith is genuine (10). Then again, the purpose or motive is so that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior Again, sound doctrine produces sound living.

Our lives are a witness to the power of the gospel. And the gospel's greatest impact on most of us is in the mundane, the ordinary issue of life— in our day to day life, decision, our character, our work as employers and employees.

