

Gospel Living for Older Women

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 June 2019

Preacher: Jason Webb

[0 : 00] Titus chapter 2. Pastor Jason began opening up chapter 2 last week and we'll continue there this evening.

! We'll read the entire chapter. You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.! Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love, and in endurance.

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good.

Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled in everything. Set them an example by doing what is good.

[1 : 05] In your teaching, show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all wickedness, and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

So you've driven the long miles in your U-Haul. You're ready to set up shop at a new house. You've brought all that stuff in. Are you ready to live?

[2 : 40] You're ready to have a normal life yet. Well, not really. You have to straighten everything that's unfinished. You have to put things back where they go.

That's the only way that you can get up and get going and get living. And straighten out what's finished. Get things organized and going the right direction. That's what the book of Titus is all about.

And that's what Titus' job description is all about. So we are into chapter 2. We've looked at chapter 1. And remember, chapter 2 is telling, succinctly it's saying, that we need to tell everybody, ask pastors, everybody, what they're supposed to be doing and why.

And that's going to be different for different people, as you already have seen. So the big thing in verse 1 was teach them what is in accord with sound doctrine.

Teach what harmonizes with the gospel. So the gospel is the melody. Now, how do we put a life around that, fill it in, and so that our lives beautifully reflect and sing that gospel?

[3 : 51] So we talked to older men last week. We're not going to go over that. If you weren't here, older men, I would encourage you to listen to that online. And this week, though, we are talking to older women.

Older women. Now, it has been several months since the very first sermon on Titus. And you probably don't remember. But I did want to bring this up.

And I wanted to remind you again of what was going on in the Roman world in the century before Christ and the century after Christ. Because it is very important for understanding why Paul is telling Titus what he's telling him.

There was something really new going on. Some laws had changed about inheritance and about women and money and politics.

And so women had begun to experience some new economics, some new social freedoms. And as far as they went, I think they were good. But what happens is some wickedness was getting in through the back door.

[4 : 59] Rome, and really out of that, had arisen what the historians called the new Roman woman. She's new.

They hadn't seen something like her before. Rome is a very traditional, was a very traditional culture. So women were normally in the home. They were quiet.

They weren't seen. They were chased for their husbands. And so now, with all this new freedom or newer freedoms, wickedness had come in.

Evil had come in. Here's how one historian put it. Many of these financially independent women used their freedoms in inappropriate ways. The traits of the new Roman woman were immodesty in general, and sexually provocative dress, and sometimes promiscuous lifestyle in particular.

Many older women with substantial endowments were seeking liaisons with younger men. We're not talking about just the younger women. We're talking about the older women.

[6 : 09] One Roman writer said this about one wealthy older woman. There was nothing that she held so cheap as modesty and chastity. So it wasn't just the younger women.

It was the older women. New freedoms, new money, new wickedness. So there were rich, older women going after younger men, or there were rich women dominating their husbands, holding them sort of ransom because they were wealthy, the men weren't.

And so this had become so common in the Roman world that, you know, just as our media and entertainment reflect what's going on in our society, well, and the same thing in the Roman world, all the comic plays were about these women and what they were doing.

And people laughed about it. So it was something that everybody recognized. Now, again, I hope so much history doesn't bore you, but I do want you to get this background.

One Roman philosopher, Seneca, he was also a senator, he wrote a letter to his mother praising her. And I want you to listen to what he praises her for.

[7 : 29] And through this little note that he sent her, you can hear the background of what the women in Crete, what the women were dealing with, with these new Christian ladies, what was going on in their world.

So Seneca writes, unlike the great majority of women, you never succumb to immorality, the worst evil of our time. Jewels and pearls have not moved you.

Jewels and pearls have not moved you. You've never blushed for the number of children, as if it taunted you with your years. Never have you, in the manner of other women whose only recommendation lies in their beauty, tried to conceal your pregnancy as though it were indecent. This was startling. You've not crushed the hope of children that were being nurtured in your body. You've not defiled your face with paints and cosmetics.

Never have you fancied the kind of dress that exposed no greater nakedness by being removed. In other words, dress on, dress off. It didn't really matter. Your only ornament, the kind of beauty that time does not tarnish, is the great honor of modesty.

[8 : 43] So what was going on in Rome? What were these ladies facing? Immodesty? Immorality? Ashamed to have lots of children? Does that go on in our culture? You have five kids?

Like, what is wrong with you? Embarrassed about your age? Motherhood looked down on? Abortion? Lots of makeup?

Dress is basically the same? On? Off? And no one cares about inner beauty? Another poet wrote, Can it be that to be free of the flaws of stretch marks, you have to scatter the tragic sands of carnage?

Why will you subject your womb to the weapons of abortion and give dread poisons to the unborn? Now, what does that sound like? I mean, you put some Instagram in there, and you put some YouTube, and you put some Snapchat, and that's where we live.

So the big question is, what does feminine godliness, a godliness that harmonizes with the gospel, what does that look like for women?

[9 : 55] Not only in Crete, but here. Do you see that we're talking about things that are relevant for here? So how can you ladies have a beauty that is deeper than skin deep?

How can you have a beauty that lasts, that makes your husband and children stand up and call you blessed? That in the words of 1 Peter, will win husbands over without words because of the godliness and the beauty of not your outward life, but your inner, your heart.

So remember Samuel, he was impressed with the height of David's brothers. He saw Eliab, I believe it was, and he's so impressed with how tall Eliab was, and the Lord had to chastise Samuel the prophet and say, you know Samuel, I don't look at the things that man looks at.

Man looks on the outward. Man looks on the appearance. I look at the heart. Just think of that. Isn't that what we are attracted to in David hundreds of years later?

We don't have really any idea what he looks like. He was handsome. He was ruddy. His appearance is lost. But in the Psalms, we read his heart, and it became this beautiful heart ready to show what Jesus was like, a man after God's own heart.

[11 : 16] And what Paul is saying is, that's what is important. That's what is important. That's the kind of beauty that lasts.

That's true, lasting beauty. Titus, this is where we'll begin, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live. That's true, lasting beauty.

Reverent. Reverent in the Greek was often used for the priestesses who were dedicated to some god, this or that god. You've heard of the vestal virgins and so on.

That is something of what Paul is talking about. Older ladies, your whole life should be dedicated to the Lord.

as if you were a priest, a priestess. That's sort of this idea. You should be Titus 2 women, and that means you should be Isaiah 6 women.

[12 : 19] Remember Isaiah. What happens in Isaiah 6? Isaiah comes into the temple of the Lord, the year of King Uzziadai. He saw the Lord high and lifted up. He hears the seraphim crying, holy, holy, holy.

And the glory of the Lord is shaking the temple, and it's doing something to Isaiah at the same time. It's undoing him. And so, it overpowers Isaiah, and the question goes out, whom shall we send?

And Isaiah presents himself. He doesn't tell God where he's at. He's saying, Lord, here I am. Here I am. Here am I. Send me. So, Isaiah's whole life as a prophet began at that point.

His dedication, consecration to the Lord, he was set apart for the Lord. Now, ladies, older ladies, here is your high and holy calling.

This is what Titus needs to teach these older women. Be reverent. Be holy. Be dedicated to the Lord.

[13 : 22] Live in the fear of God, under the eye of God. And this is so important. So, so, so, your children are mostly gone.

They're all gone. And, and your housework is so much easier. You get your housework done. Your children aren't at home. Is your highest calling over?

Is it now like vacation time? God doesn't have anything more for you? No. Motherhood is a high calling. Loving your husband and your children. High callings.

We're going to talk about that when we talk about the younger ladies. But, they are not your highest calling. Your highest calling is still in place.

It's still there. It's still for you. And it's to live to God. It's to live under God's eye. To live dedicated to Him. And so, that's why if you're old or young, married or widow or single, if you're a daughter of the king, then you are no less than any other lady.

[14 : 33] You have no less of a higher, of a high calling than they do. This is your high calling, to live for God. And so, your kids, the really, really intense part is mostly done, raising them.

So, are you done? No. It's easier to manage the house now. Does that mean you're done? No. Here's your calling.

Live for God more and more. Live for God more and more. Dedicate yourself again. Throw off the old way of living more and more and put on this new way of living.

Live in a holy way. Make every effort. We read that this morning in Hebrews. Make every effort to be holy. That is your high calling, ladies. And so, what that looks like is, it means that when you're

out and about, the Lord should be making a difference in who you talk to, how you talk to them, what you say.

So, your conversations in the foyer should be different. Your conversation with your daughter or your daughter-in-law. It should be different. Your time in the workplace should be different.

[15:45] Your use of money should be different. Be holy. Because I am holy. Older ladies, be reverent in the way you live. Paul says next, not slanderers.

Not slanderers. The word is actually diabolos. You've heard of that. Satan, an accuser. Older ladies have more time, a lot of times.

They have more time to talk. Sometimes they can be less careful. They can get into people's business when they shouldn't. And they can jump to conclusions when they shouldn't.

And, is that a life that harmonizes with the gospel? Where you're slandering. You're accusing. You're looking down at people.

No. What's a life that harmonizes with the gospel? Older ladies, you don't go around acting like little Satans in your family or in your community or in your church. Speaking.

[16:46] Slandering. Accusing. Discouraging. Belittling. Older ladies can slander younger ladies. So see what she's doing.

See her kids. I would never let my kids do that. And so there's this without mercy accusing. You know, the devil acts like that. That's what Paul is saying.

The devil always accuses. He always belittles and condemns and brings up faults. But he never does it in order to help. He never does it in order to make things better. He only does it to push people down.

Some older ladies, what Paul is saying, some older ladies can do the very same thing. And that's not living in accord with the gospel. That is nails on the chalkboard.

That is out of place. That is a cacophony instead of a harmony. And so it is going around accusing without helping. Is that how God treated you?

[17:45] Is that the compassion and the mercy that he shows you every day? At one time, we too were foolish, deceived and enslaved to all kinds of passions and pleasures.

But when the kindness and love of God, our savior appeared, he saved us not because of the righteous things that we had done, but because of his mercy. And if that is true, and it is true, then ladies, what compassion and mercy and helpfulness should mark your lives.

If you've been in the trenches, don't shoot the younger ladies that are in the trenches now. Jesus doesn't shoot people in the trenches. He gets down in the trenches.

He got down in the trenches for us. And with us, he became man and he got into the trenches with you. And so you should be getting in there with them. That's what it looks like to live in harmony with the gospel.

That's how Jesus has treated me. So I'm going to treat them with compassion too. Maybe just some simple things that we all need to remember, but it applies here.

[19:07] And your parents told you this. Your mother's told you this. Older ladies, your mother's told you this. If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all.

You need to ask yourself, is it necessary? Is it true? Is it kind? And if it's not, you need to be quiet.

Reverent. Not slanderers. Next, not given to much wine. We won't spend very much time here. I don't know a lot of older ladies in our culture, in our church, where this would apply directly.

This was a problem very much in Cretan society. Older ladies, they're done. They're done raising their kids. They have a lot of free time. And so they would just go out and about.

And the drinking would start at 11. And then when they got home. But that's not how it is here. But there is this principle here. Because while I don't know a lot of older women, church ladies, that would be addicted to much wine, slaves to it, they can be addicted to too much food.

[20:22] And too much TV. And too much shopping. So what do you do? That's my question, older ladies. What do you do when life gets hard? Or life gets boring?

Or life gets lonely? How do you cope? Where do you turn to? You want some fun? Where do you turn to?

Paul's words are very clear. Don't be enslaved to wine. And, or any created thing. And some of the older ladies in Crete were doing that.

And Paul's, the point for us is, don't waste your life in a comparable way. Whatever that might look like, whatever way you might be tempted to be enslaved to some pleasure, don't waste your life

doing that.

Now last, this is where we're going to spend more time, is verse 3. Instead of those things, instead of slandering, instead of going around drinking and wasting your time, instead, you are to, but to teach what is good.

[21 : 32] Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, and so on. this is the, this is the, this is where I want you to really dig in and think.

What's a life that harmonizes with the gospel? Older ladies, for you, be teachers. Be teachers. You notice it's, it's the expectation for every older lady that they are to teach the younger ladies. Teach them what? Teach them what is good. So the younger ladies in our culture, their culture, any culture, have enough people teaching them what is evil and degrading and wasteful. you teach them what is good. You teach them what godliness looks like. They have enough ears. They have enough teachers. You need to teach the, what is good. And so, what a calling. Older ladies, what a calling. What a mandate. This is from the apostle coming in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ saying, older ladies, you teach. You notice, Titus isn't to teach the younger ladies. [22 : 44] He teaches the older men he teaches the older women. He teaches the younger men. But, older women are to teach the younger women.

You can imagine the reasons why. So, older ladies, well, maybe in some extent it is a pastor's job to teach these things and I'm going to come to this and we're going to address it publicly. But in the private, in maybe the down in the dirt, so to speak, in the trenches where it's one-on-one and a younger lady needs reprov'd or corrected or encouraged, older ladies, that's you. That's not me. That's not Pastor John. It's not my. It's, we teach publicly and in that we can teach everyone.

But in the day-to-day, in the private, one-on-one, older ladies, that's you. That's what your job is. And so, if the younger ladies aren't being taught, taught how to love their husbands and love their children, taught how to be modest, taught how to put the household first, taught how to do what is good, how to be kind, how to balance work and life and children and husband and all of that and everything, taught what godliness looks like in the trenches, in the particulars, if they aren't being taught those things, it's certainly Pastor John and I's fault to some degree.

[24 : 23] But it is your responsibility. That's clearly what Paul is teaching. So who is to teach? The older women.

Which ones? All of them. According to their ability? According to their gifts? Yes. But each of them, to whatever degree they can and may, they should.

So it's not just Elizabeth Elliot. Not just Nancy Lee DeMoss. Not just Elise Fitzpatrick or any other one of those teachers. We're glad for ladies like that.

We are. We're glad for their books. We're glad for their podcasts. We're glad for their ministries. We're glad for for their conferences or whatever. But the younger women at Grace Fellowship Church, older ladies, they need you.

They need you. They need you to teach them what is good, what is excellent. That's the word. What is noble? What is lofty? So again, the world is dragging them down in the mud.

[25 : 29] The world is tempting them and impressing them and doing all this and confusing them and lying to them. What is the answer? A great part of the answer is ladies, you.

You are the answer. You are God's appointed help for them. So verse 4 says to train them. It means to admonish them, to put them in the right mind, to clarify their thinking.

So the world is pulling them all out of sorts. You need to pull them into sorts. Make sense? You pull them together. You help them get their wits about them.

The world is saying live for yourself. Who cares about your responsibilities? You do this. The world is saying forget God. Who cares? He's lying. But training them means you bring them into the right mind.

You teach them what they're to do, why they're to do it, where's the help come from, and then you hold them responsible. That's what that word admonish means. is you're holding them to their responsibilities.

[26 : 37] So, you know, if you have a soccer coach, the soccer coach is not only to teach you the theory of play this way, he's not only telling you, okay, guys, you need to pass more, do whatever, but if you don't do it, what does a good coach do?

He holds you responsible. He holds you accountable. That's what training means. So, the drill sergeant teaches you this is what you do and how to do it and why you do it, and then he expects you to do it and hold you accountable to it.

That's what this word means. This is the older ladies, this is your job in the church, not harshly, it needs to be done with all sorts of graciousness, but it is your responsibility. responsibility. So, older ladies, don't say, well, what do I know? What do I know? I can't do any good. Well, you know enough.

You know enough. And whatever degree you do know, you teach that much. And if you don't know what to do, you probably have a good idea of what not to do, and you can teach that.

[27 : 51] And if you don't have a lot of ears, but you only have a few, that's fine. Don't neglect the little. So, older ladies, we do need to, and I need to talk plainly, are you spending time with the younger ladies?

Are you into their lives? Do they feel comfortable with you? Because if you go out here and just parachute into their lives and start drill sergeant action on them, they're not going to like that, and it's not going to do anyone any good, but are you spending time with the younger ladies?

There's no way to teach and train the younger ladies in the kind of personal, private way that Paul is talking about here if you aren't together, if you don't have a relationship.

So, being together is normally going to be on you, just because of circumstances. You probably have more time and flexibility and money and getting together.

So, getting together is on you, and the responsibility is put on the older ladies. So, the younger ladies need to be responsive and open to this kind of teaching, but the initiative needs to be on the older ladies, so getting together is on you.

[29 : 08] It's on you to be available, to be pursuing, organizing. so how much are you in their lives?

The phone call, the text, how much are you getting into their lives? The church in Crete needed active, teaching, older women.

That was part of getting this church up and going and going the right direction. And so we need the very same thing. we need the very same thing. And so are you together?

And when you are together, ladies, are you thinking, this is what I need to be about. I need to be about teaching. Just maybe a little bit. I'm not talking about being oppressive, but I am saying you always are teaching.

You always are teaching by example, by word. Sadly, sometimes you might just be teaching what not to do. And what not to say, but you're always teaching.

[30 : 13] And I just want you to think, are you thinking that way? Are you thinking that way?

They're watching. They're learning. They're seeing what this Christian life is all about.

They're learning about feminine godliness. And they're watching me. And I'm teaching them. So, I don't want to discourage you in any way, because where God has given you a task, he also gives you the grace for it.

I'm not saying, oh, here it is, and you're all alone. No, where God gives a task, he gives grace. And so be encouraged, be active, get teaching.

You do have wisdom. You have experience. You have insight that they need. You have perspective that they need. The younger ladies need it, and you have it.

Now, I don't have it. Husbands don't have it. The older ladies have it. This really struck me this last week, just from our personal experiences of, well, Steph wrote journals for our kids.

[31 : 20] So when she was pregnant and after they were born, and just what it was like, and what was going on, and what she was thinking. And I was rereading some of these things, and I was rereading Eowyn's journal to Caden, give them some family history and stuff, so forth.

And really what struck me, it was the older women who kept popping into the story that helped my wife when she was a younger lady. So Steph was a young lady, Eowyn was a surprise, Steph found out that she was pregnant and I was at work, and she is an excited mess.

What do you do? What do you do when all of a sudden your whole world gets turned all upside down? Everything that you thought was going to happen is not going to happen anymore? She calls my mom because she knew that my mom would listen to her, help her, give her some encouragement, some advice, and so my mom rushed right over, and she helped Steph process it, she prayed with her, and my mom, an older lady, was a rock in all this uncertainty.

That's what I'm talking about. You're teaching them what is good. So you have a trial. You have a sudden surprise. It's a good surprise, but it's a surprise. What do you do then? How do you handle that? How do you handle it in a godly way? Well, you stand beside, teach what is good, so standing beside them, encouraging, helping when things are falling apart. Then later, Eowyn is born, and like many serious-minded Christians, we had read our books, and we had a plan, and we were going to get Eowyn onto a sleeping schedule, and well, Eowyn didn't really like that sleeping schedule.

[33 : 04] She didn't care for our plans. She hadn't read the same books as I had. So, Steph wasn't sleeping, Eowyn wasn't cooperating, and my wife didn't know what to do.

She called Karen Richards, and Karen Richards, I don't know what she said exactly, but she told her exactly what she needed to hear, and she gave my wife some perspective, some experience, some on-the-ground wisdom.

That's what she needed. That's what I'm talking about. It's not classes and seminars, it's not ladies' retreats, those are great, those are good, but Paul is talking about the everyday simple things. When you've gone home and now you're living a life, so the phone calls, praying with an anxious mother, praying with that mother whose teenage daughter or teenage son is off and rebelling and, oh no, and the fear there, well, praying with that confused mother or that confused wife, talking to that single lady, single young lady, not looking at her as someone that's just waiting for Christianity to happen and her life to begin, but there she is.

She's a single young lady, she loves the Lord, she needs to figure out how to serve the Lord in her situation. Well, you talk to her, you hold her accountable, you simplify the confusing, you say, hey, I'm going to encourage you, I'm going to call you and I'm going to expect you to, I'll be back, we're going to get through this together, we're going to help each other, here's the help I found.

[34 : 58] Text if you need anything. older ladies, what a glorious calling, what wisdom, what grace God has given, what a glorious calling, and I want to say that I think so many of you are doing a fantastic job, and so I'm only saying all of this to just clarify it all again, to bring it up, to remind you, and to say you're on the right track, keep going, keep going.

The world is pulling them one way. It really is. The world is pulling them, our younger ladies, one way, and so here's the place where you need to have those Proverbs 31 arms, where she's strong for the task, you need to be strong.

The world's pulling one way, you take the rope and you pull the other way. Proverbs 31 woman speaks with wisdom and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

When people ran into her, what came out was wisdom. when people needed something, she had faithful instruction. Be Proverbs 31 women.

And in all of this, remember you have a mighty, wise Savior. You're not alone. You have Jesus. He's kind.

[36 : 18] And you have a helper that lives inside of you, the Holy Spirit, and you have a good Father. Father. So ground your feet in him. Ground your identity.

Get a hold of him. Live on him. Ground your feet and get to work. Let's pray. God bless them. Amen. Amen. Oh, our Heavenly Father, we thank you for these kind words that come from you. We accept them as your fatherly instruction.

And I pray for our older ladies that you would give them courage and grace and graciousness that they might do what we have talked about. To the degree that they are, oh, bless them in their work. Let them see the fruit of their labors. Give them encouragement when they are discouraged. Give them courage when they need to say something. Give them grace when they need that.

[37 : 19] Give them kindness upon their heart, on their lips, and wisdom. And I pray that through them you would bless our whole church. you would bless young single ladies and young wives and young mothers.

And through them you would bless husbands and children and all of us together that their ministry would do us good. So bless them in their efforts and prosper their every design.

I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.