

Gospel Living for Younger Men

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Date: 04 August 2019

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[0 : 00] We'll turn to Titus chapter 2 as we're getting to know this little book. I trust it's becoming precious to you as it is to me.

Chapter 2 of Titus. 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.

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.

[1 : 24] 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 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.

Let's hear God's Word preached, Jason. Titus 2, verse 8 says that those who oppose us want to say bad things about us.

And right now those who oppose the gospel are having their chance to say those kinds of bad things of, like, I knew it, and I told you so, and there's nothing to this.

[2 : 57] They're laughing and they're pointing, and instead of being ashamed for what they're saying, we are ashamed. And right now it's because of a young man, a young man who became a teacher.

I don't know how aware you are of this, but all of this came to my mind as I was thinking about Titus chapter 2. This young man, Joshua Harris.

He wrote I Kissed Dating Goodbye some 20 years ago. A book that, I guess it came out the year I graduated high school. And it was a book I really appreciated when I was younger.

Still do. It had a lot of truth. And it's been a book that has been on my bookshelf since that day, waiting for my kids. And in it he wrote about sexual purity.

He wrote about faithfulness before marriage. He wrote about keeping your heart pure and your mind pure, your body. The last sentence in the whole book says, I encourage you and continue to remind myself to write a love story with your life that you'll feel proud to tell.

[4 : 13] Three weeks ago or so, he, along with his wife, announced that they were getting a divorce. And, of course, the laughter began.

And the finger-pointing began. Shame to Christ began. And as soon as I saw that sometime that day or the next day or something, my wife and I were out walking.

And I said, I think we're going to find pretty soon that he's just given up all of Christianity. That's what I thought. And last week, the shoe dropped.

He wrote, I've undergone a massive shift in regard to my faith in Jesus. The popular phrase for this is deconstruction. The biblical phrase is falling away. By all measurements that I have for defining a Christian, I am not a Christian.

And he's not a Christian, but he's repenting. That's what he says. I've been doing a lot of repenting. Repenting of my self-righteousness.

[5 : 17] That's good. My fear-based approach to life. The teaching of my books. My views of women in the church. My approach to parenting, to name a few. But I specifically want to add to this list now to the LGBTQ plus community.

I want to say that I am sorry for the views that I taught in my books. And as a pastor regarding sexuality, I regret standing against marriage equality for not affirming you and your place in the church for any ways that my writing and speaking contributed to a culture of exclusion and bigotry.

I hope you can forgive me. I really, I don't know how to explain his journey from where he was to where he is now.

I have some clues. I have some ideas. I have some thoughts. But I'm not sure. I don't know what kind of influences he had. What kind of misconceptions he had.

What kind of lies were filling his mind. What kind of false beliefs he has been long holding. I have some ideas, but I don't have anything definitive. But however he got here, and in some ways that's for him to know.

[6 : 30] And however he got here, here he is. And those who oppose us are not ashamed. They're gleeful. The truth is undermined.

The gospel is undermined. Purity is diminished. And sin is exalted. And it was a young man. A young teacher.

Which is the cause. And so they're having a heyday now. Well, and so I just want to go from there and say men, and especially young men, and yes, us as preachers or teachers, our lives matter.

Our lives matter. The gospel, Christ's honor, or his shame is at stake. So the way we act, our integrity, our seriousness, our self-control, they all matter.

We are to live in such a way, Paul says to Titus, that those who oppose us are ashamed when they speak poorly of us.

[7 : 38] That they have nothing bad to say about us. And this has been one of the consistent reasons for living a godly life that we see in Titus. So, young women, why are you to live this godly life that we spent three weeks talking about?

Well, it's because, so that no one will malign the word of God. The world is watching young ladies. They are comparing their lives to what the gospel says and what the gospel says that it produces.

And they're saying, let's see the truth. So no one will malign the word of God. Young men. So they have nothing bad to say about us. And then we haven't got there, but we've read it now two or three times that he talks to slaves.

They are to live in such a way that they make the teaching of God, our Savior, attractive. Godliness helps the gospel along.

And ungodliness trips it up, so to speak. And so the world is watching. We are cities on the hill. Jesus tells us that our light cannot be hidden.

[8 : 45] So wherever you go, Christian, you are that light. You are that city on the hill. But what happens when we cover that light with sin?

What happens when that light goes out? When the salt loses its saltiness? It's not good for anything. Peter himself writes, So men, talking to you, especially this evening, your co-workers are watching.

They're watching. Your children are watching. Your neighbors are watching. Your families are watching. We are all Josh Harris's.

Some sort of global, at least nationwide ministry, pastors and so forth. But the world is still watching. And they already hate the gospel.

Satan has already poisoned their minds against God and the gospel. They don't need much of an excuse. They're already biased. And Paul is saying, live in such a way that they do not have an excuse.

[10 : 08] Don't give them any excuse. And so, here's the context of what we're talking about. Men love darkness and they hate the light.

Satan has poisoned their minds. They're not neutral spectators. They are hostile. Some of them, a lot. Some of them, not so much.

But that's, that's the direction of their hearts. That's the world. But wonder of wonders, the grace of God has appeared. We saw this last week.

Now the Lord is seeking those that are lost to him. There's this good news. God is giving men eternal life through Christ Jesus, where they can be now reconciled to him and, and their lives can be transformed.

This promise shines out through the gospel. The gospel can save them. The gospel that glorifies God, that does good to men. It glorifies God as men receive it and accept it.

[11 : 12] That's what's going on. This, this great Titanic battle between darkness and light, sin and grace, Satan and Christ, and Christ is building his church.

And you're in this war. Christian, you are in it. You're in the battle. We are all in it as Christians. A few, relatively few on the whole are called to preach.

Most aren't, but all of us are called to live in a way that helps the gospel mission along, that helps God's cause, that helps what God is doing in the world.

And this is becoming all the more important as the culture's hostility ramps up. The darkness and the light are further dividing, becoming stark contrasts to each other.

And you need to see that. And so, is your life helping the cause? Young men, and by young men, I mean 50 or so or younger.

[12 : 23] The younger are your lives helping the cause. Do they say, I don't agree with what they say.

I don't like that gospel, but it's actually kind of embarrassing because I find their lives so attractive. I don't have anything bad to say about how they live. Brothers, that's what we want.

That's what we want. We want to be in this battle. We want to be on Christ's side. We want to be helping his cause, not hurting it. We want to be in this battle. And so, how do we do that?

Well, Titus chapter 2, 6 through 8, is really your battle call. What do you need to live like to help this gospel go forth in a pagan culture?

And so, we just want to look at Titus 2, 6 through 8 tonight. It's interesting. All that he says directly to the young men is be self-controlled. Encourage them to be self-controlled.

[13 : 32] Everything else he addresses to Titus and says, now you be an example for those young men. So, the same dynamic that was going on with the younger women and the older women is happening here with the older men and the younger men.

They're supposed to be in the church a discipler, disciple-ly relationship going on all of the time between the older and between the younger.

And so, older ladies teach the younger ladies, the younger women. And older men, Titus, set the example for the younger men. So, none of us live in these groups that are separated from each other.

Our lives are to be all intermingled where the older are teaching the younger and the older are setting the example for the younger. I just heard of a church in Plymouth and basically, from what I've been told, they've removed all the older people out of leadership, teachers, whatever, places of leadership, places of ministry, and they have replaced them with younger people.

And the reason is they are going after the younger demographic in Plymouth. You know, they want a young church, they want young families, they want young people there. And so, do you see what's wrong with that?

[14 : 57] That is, that is short-circuiting Christ's design for the church. That's hijacking their own people's holiness and growth and godliness.

Older women, younger women, older men, set the example for the younger men. So men, older men, younger men, listen to how one man put it.

I don't think he was a Christian, but I think there's a lot of truth to what he wrote. What a real man needs is another man to talk to and reinforce his maleness and help him to be a better husband.

Without such a friend, men risk reverting to a mother-child relationship with a spouse. Men become helpless and insecure and increasingly revert to the classic overgrown kid who expects to be mothered.

Older men, the younger men, need you to set them an example of what it means to be a godly husband, a godly man, one who's not insecure and living like a child in his own home.

[16 : 15] They need role models to lead, to grow up in godliness. But let me reverse that. Younger men, younger men, you need those older examples.

You need those older examples. It is youthful pride. It is youthful folly to think you know better than they do or that they have nothing to teach you.

Young men, you need to be looking. You need to be learning. You need to be looking at those examples. And what is good, you imitate.

And yeah, sometimes you have to say, you know what, that's not a good example and so I'm going to do something different. But the point is, is you, as younger men, need to be paying attention to those older men.

And the older men need to be setting an example for the younger men. That's how Christ made the church to work. Older, younger. Working together.

[17 : 24] Learning together. Living together. Growing together. younger men. And so, I just wonder, younger men, do you need to be doing a better job of looking up to someone?

And older men, do you need to be doing maybe a better job of getting in a younger man's life and being involved in their lives? Well, how do we need to be growing?

Younger men. Well, he says self-control. Paul says, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. Encourage is this present tense, present imperative, which just means he's commanding it.

But, it has this sense of you continually encourage them. Young men don't need to hear be self-controlled one time. They need to hear it again and again and again.

It needs to be reinforced. It needs to be brought to their attention more than one time. And so, as young men, we don't need to hear this once or twice. We need this encouragement, this urging. Be self-controlled again and again.

[18 : 30] Well, self-controlled in what? I suppose, I really could probably do a whole sermon just on this, but I didn't want to. But, just think of some of the areas that the Bible says that we should be self-controlled in.

So, I go to the book of Proverbs. And Proverbs says that we should be men, young men, be self-controlled in your speech.

The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil. Does your mouth have a scale that says, should I say this or should I not?

Does this need to be said? Is this kind? It weighs its answers. It considers its answers. The mouth of the wicked just gushes. It's a breach in the dam.

We've seen, you know, floods, and they break down the dam, and then they just go everywhere. That's the mouth of the wicked. No control. Where words are many, sin is not absent.

[19 : 39] But he who holds his tongue is wise. I'm going to show you what a huge nerd I am by this next quote.

Vittarino de Felter was an educator in Renaissance Italy, and he trained lots of the wealthy, prestigious, the princes, the families of merchants in Italy.

And part of that training that he did with these young men was character training. He was educating them on how to be princes, how to be rulers, and et cetera, but character was a part of it.

And he said this, and I read this 20 years ago, and it just has stuck with me ever since. He said this, and listen to me, young men, this is especially for you. For a youth who is silent commits at most one fault, that he is silent.

One who is talkative probably commits 50. So yeah, sometimes you should say something, and you don't, and that's a problem. But the talkative person, where sin, where words are many, sin is not absent.

[20 : 52] It just multiplies itself. It grows. It adds. So self-control in our mouths, holding our tongues. Be careful, little mouth, what you say.

For the Father up above is looking down in love. So be careful, little mouth, what you say. God is watching, and the world is watching. And so are your words any different than their words?

are you known for your gracious speech, your pleasant speech? Proverbs talks a lot about being pleasant in the way that you talk, as opposed to coarse and grating and thoughtless.

Pleasant words are a honeycomb sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. But a fool's mouth invites a beating. self-control and speech.

Self-control over your heart, over your desires, over your emotions, over your thoughts. Do you just lay the reins on your thoughts and on your feelings, and you just go wherever they lead you?

[22 : 05] Or do you lead them? Do you lead them? I am going to think about this. I am not going to let my emotions do that.

The fruit of the Spirit is self-control. The mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. And so men, we have to discipline. Men, discipline your minds.

Train your minds. Men, discipline your emotions and your desires. So when your spirit is rising up in anger and impatience, and I know that temptation and I know that sin, but men, in those moments, let's exercise self-control where we control what we're doing and what we're feeling.

God doesn't expect us to be beyond temptation and He's not expecting us to even have natural feelings, but He is saying godliness is controlling them.

It's saying no to sinful desires, sinful expressions. It's not that you never feel them or you're never tempted, but in the moment you control them.

[23 : 19] They're your soldiers. And you're the colonel. And if they aren't where they're supposed to be, we need to get them in line.

Are your thoughts out of line? Fantasizing about things you shouldn't fantasize? I'm not just talking about sexually, talking about anything. Get them in line.

That is the gospel-filled, the Spirit-led life. The Spirit, the gospel, teaches us to say no to ungodliness and to worldly passions.

And so, brothers, instead of crying that we are tempted in this or that area and that it's hard, whoever said it was going to be easy, we need to lean into Jesus Christ in those moments and say, Lord, I am tempted.

Lord, this is hard. I have this problem. I am going this way. My feelings, my thoughts, I'm the problem. Lord, you be the solution.

[24 : 27] And so I'm saying no, but I feel so weak. And so Jesus, make me strong. And by faith, by active faith in Jesus Christ, we draw strength. We draw life. We draw control from Him.

And so in self-control, we say no. And it is a fight. It's not easy. I can't help but think that our culture in our present day has given us this idea that all of life is supposed to be easy.

I think earlier generations when life might have been harder, it was more accepted that, yeah, it's harder. It's not easy all the time. But the grace that, the grace of God actually teaches us to say no.

We're going to get to that a couple of weeks. Not just that we should say no. It does do that. The grace of God teaches us to actually do it. It shows us how.

It gives us the strength. It gives us the will. And so maybe, men, that's for sexual purity. And men, probably it is for you. Maybe that's your emotions or your tongue or your life or your eating or your sleeping or your TV watching.

[25 : 43] It is just too easy to give way. To think that life is like going to the water park and you lay in the lazy river and you just got to float along until you get to the end and then you can get off.

So men, men of Christ, we're at war. You like watching war movies? You like reading about war history?

You like playing Call of Duty? There's no need to pretend. You're in a real war. You're in a real war. And I'm preaching to myself here.

Christ came to destroy the works of the devil and the devil's not going to lay over and bend over backwards and just retreat. Christ came to build a kingdom that will never end. And so self-control is the standing order of the day.

It's the call that God has given to all men. So the world is watching. The world is watching. Penn Jillette from the Magician's Penn and Teller is a strident atheist.

[26 : 49] But he says he has no problem with people evangelizing him. He has no problem at all. And he says, and you might ask, well, why?

Because this is what he says, because if you really believe there is a hell and I am going there, I hope you'll love me enough to tell me. I respect that. If that's what you think, then you better tell me.

He respects the serious. But if you're just playing around, then what do I care what you have to say? Your play says you really don't believe what you say.

And so men, the world is looking to see if our words and our lives match up. Sloppy, lazy, blabbing, out of control lives says, you're no different than I am.

There's no reality to this gospel. It's just more of the same. But self-control says something. It says something about seriousness and integrity and what you're teaching.

[27 : 57] And that's Paul's next point. And so instead of taking all of these separately, I just want to put them together. Titus is to set an example for the younger men in doing what is good, in integrity, in seriousness, and in soundness of speech.

That is in the health of what he is saying, in the wisdom and the goodness of what he is teaching. So what is, so just back to Josh Harris, what is killing the church with this whole Josh Harris thing right now is it's his loss of integrity.

It would have been, it would be nothing for a 40-some year old man to have these thoughts. but it's his loss of integrity. He said, write a love story that you'll be proud to tell and his own love story is one of two people that have drifted apart and now are divorced because they say they're two different people.

And I guess I'm sorry, but that's what marriage is. Yesterday was my anniversary and I'm different than who I was and Steph is different than who she is. But yet marriage is saying I'm going to love that person no matter what.

Sickness and health and all of the rest. It's integrity. Integrity. Where your life matches what you say.

[29 : 17] Where you said something and now you're going to do it. Where your life matches your convictions. Where your life matches your words. The world's biggest complaint is that we're hypocrites.

That our lives don't match what we say we believe. Is a lot of that unfair? Sure. I mean the gospel isn't that we're perfect.

But they don't know that. We can argue all day that why we're not hypocrites or it's just a few of us. We really can't do much about what everyone else is doing.

But men, we sure can do something about what we're doing. And we can make sure that they see in us people that are eager to do what is good.

That's what Paul says. Eager to do what is good. Generous. Kind. Merciful. Because God is that. Outgoing in our service.

[30 : 16] Because that's the way our God is. And we can be sure that they see in us people who are serious. Life is not about recreating your way through it.

It's not the lazy river. It's not just memes and YouTube videos. Videos. It's not just video games. And I'm not saying that we can't have fun or that we're dour pranks.

But they should be able to say, hey, that guy is no fool. Innocent as doves. Wise as serpents.

So there's plenty of pastors who are driving down the church aisle on their motorcycles and preaching lessons from Marvel movies. And that's their series.

And the world rolls their eyes and a few fools clap their hands and say, that's great. It's wonderful. And plenty of other pastors and other young men, they aren't serious about righteousness.

[31 : 11] They aren't serious about holiness. They aren't serious about what we talked about in Sunday school, about love. They're good at calling others out but not good at listening or saying I'm sorry.

They're good at picking fights but they aren't good at thinking and listening. They throw egg on other people's faces but they never humble themselves to anyone else. And their speech is foolish and their lives are meandering.

They claim a holy God. They claim a suffering Savior. And yet the world says, where is your goodness? Where is your humility?

Where is your love? Why are you such a joke? And men, we can either curl up in a ball and say, why do they hate us?

Why are they so unfair? Or we can be tightest to men. Yes, they are our enemies. They are opposing us.

[32 : 11] But your enemy can be a good teacher. An enemy, a critic, can be a good teacher. And what I mean by that is enemies drive you to heights of seriousness and carefulness and watchfulness.

Men stand guard best when there's a threat of attack. I don't think men stand very well on guard duty when you're in Idaho somewhere.

I don't know. I'm saying, your enemies, hostility, the hostile audience, can make you watch your words and your lives more closely. And in that way, they can bring the best out of us.

And so, men, this is not a time for retreat. It is a time for older men of grace. By that, I mean grace fellowship, and I mean Christian men.

It's time for older men of grace to say to the younger men of grace, be serious. Be serious. And it's time for younger men of grace to say, I was a child, but now I have put childish things behind me.

[33 : 24] And many of you, many of you know the story, and all of us should know the story of Henry Martin, who was dead at 31. And you've probably heard this story before.

He was a missionary to India, and he was dead in some backwoods town in present-day Iran. He left home and country. He translated the Bible, parts of the New Testament, other parts of the Bible, into three or four different languages.

Great Britain sent an army to colonize a part of India. And he tended the dying soldiers. And he put his hands on their wounds and stopped the blood, and he gave drinks, and he prayed over those who were dying.

And at the end, he went home, and he begged God that Great Britain would send ministers of the gospel of peace instead of colonizing soldiers of war. Eventually, he got sick.

And the doctor said, go home, and he started to go home. He wanted, he said, I want to burn out for Christ. And in that backwoods town in Iran, his fever killed him, and he burned out.

[34 : 45] 31. And he was serious. And in England, his portrait hung over Charles Simeon's study, and Charles looked up at it often.

And when asked about it, he said, I look at it, and it's almost as if I hear him speaking to me right now, saying, don't trifle. Don't trifle. And I think with a smile, Charles would say, and I won't.

And I won't. And so, men, it's too easy for us to trifle. Don't trifle. The world is watching. Christ died for you to make you his very own eager to do what is good.

Why did he die for you? Why did he claim you as his own to be eager to do what is good? And so, you belong to him. So, don't trifle. You're blood-bought.

You're spirit-filled. You're dearly loved. And so, don't trifle your life away. Let's pray. Oh God, I would speak for the young men here and confessing sin to say that we have trifled too much.

[36 : 14] And we've let good and necessary recreation and good and necessary fun to fill too much of our lives. And we've not thought about what you are doing, but only what we want to do.

And we haven't thought about the suffering that our Lord Jesus went through to do your will. We've only thought about what was easy and what was according to our will.

And we haven't been eager to do what is good sometimes. And so, for these sins of lack of seriousness and lack of love and lack of humility and lack of zeal and lack of self-control, we would ask that you would forgive us.

We, this is who we are in ourselves and we don't want to be this way. And so, we ask that the Lord Jesus would cleanse us from all of our sin and fill us and make us into men that love him and serve him and are useful to the Master.

thank you that we aren't left to ourselves but we live in the light of grace and love and your joy and your power and your strength.

[37 : 36] And so, we do not measure ourselves and our abilities by just what we can muster but we measure what we can do by Jesus Christ and we know that we can do all things through him.

So, I pray that you would teach us to lean upon him, teach us to live differently, to not trifle away our lives but to live for our Savior who died for us.

I pray this in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.