

What germs are to a physical body... false teaching is to a spiritual body...
(the church.)

It is hard for me to imagine that you have not heard this song... if you listen
to very much contemporary Christian radio...

It is called... "*Free To Be Me*" by Francesca Battistelli...

*At twenty years of age
I'm still looking for a dream
A war's already waged for my destiny
But You've already won the battle
And You've got great plans for me
Though I can't always see*

So far... it sounds good. The tune is catchy... and the message is right. ...
Christ has already won the battle... and He does have great plans for me...
... .. But then comes the chorus... which gets repeated over and over...

*'Cause I got a couple dents in my fender
Got a couple rips in my jeans
Try to fit the pieces together
But perfection is my enemy
And on my own I'm so clumsy
But on Your shoulders I can see
I'm free to be me*

Of course... trying to live perfect in our human strength will always lead to
disappointment. We will never meet the standard of perfection (this side of
Heaven... especially in the eyes of others... who might want... and expect
us to be more perfect.

But here is what concerns me – deeply. ... I cannot image anyone being
encouraged to live a more holy life... because of this song... which plays

constantly on Christian radio. ... What germs are to a physical body... false teaching is to a spiritual body... (the church.)

This happy... tune-catchy song encourages us to stop trying to grow to be more like Christ... Forget what the Bible teaches... here is your NEW theology... “Perfection is our *enemy*”... ... Christian! Here is your new theology: the Holy Spirit’s ongoing work in your life... (His work of sanctification) - THAT is your enemy. ... You see...the Apostle Paul got it all wrong... when he wrote to the Philippian church...

Philippians 1:6 (ESV)

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

A lot of translations use the verb “perfect” ... “He Who began a good work in you will perfect it...” because the Greek word “epi-teles-tai” has both... as its meaning. (Epi-teles-tai means to perfect as well as to complete.) ... So... according to this new theology... the work He has begun in us... is our enemy.

Furthermore... this new theology makes this even clearer to us by teaching that we climb on Christ’s shoulders... so we can be free to be... ***our own imperfect selves.*** I’m free to be me. I’m free to live life my way. Nobody needs to change me. I’m free to be me.

I don’t think that I am misrepresenting the message of this popular “Christian” song. Look at its wording and its context.

But does Jesus want me “free to be me”... or does He want ME to pick up my cross... to die to self... and follow Him by allowing the Holy Spirit to transform me into the image of Christ...?

What germs are to a physical body... false teaching is to a spiritual body... (the church.)

Our passage this morning will demonstrate how much bad theology has crept into Christianity today... (*“Here just pray this magical prayer so you’ll go to Heaven... and then you can live any way that you want. You’ll be free to be you...”*) We are about to see how critical good/sound theology is... to a proper living of our faith. ... Theology and holy-living go hand-in-hand.

The first ten verses of Titus chapter two... concern themselves with holy living... (what it should look like for believers)... and then verse 11... begins to show the reason why we would want to live that way... Verses 1-10 reveal what holy living should look like... and then verse 11 and following reveal the motivation... (what needs to fuel it.)

We will begin with the motivation first... and then go back and look at “How... then... should we live...” ... So we begin in the middle of our passage this morning... Titus chapter two... verse 11... Then we will go back to the beginning at verse one.

Titus 2:11

Paul writes... Live the way that I have just described... for this reason... (For what reason...?) The grace of God has appeared... bringing salvation for all people. ... In other words... *“Here is the doctrinal foundation for the practical instruction that I just gave... the grace of God!”*

What does the doctrine of the grace of God have to do with how we are to live...? ... It trains us...

Titus 2:11-12

The doctrine of grace puts moral steel into the hearts of Christian believers... and motivates us to live a godly life. The doctrine of grace not only saves – it transforms. The full doctrine of God’s grace... is that God’s grace saves us... and it also teaches and motivates us how to live.

Instead of believing the Biblical doctrine about God’s grace... we have allowed a new theology to come into the church that is reflected by contemporary Christian music. “*I don’t need to change... I’m free to be me!*” ... But Titus 2:11-12 here says differently. The grace of God that saves... also leads believers to live in a new way. One cannot truly claim to be a recipient of saving grace... if they are not being trained by it.

Here is my point... a person who thinks they have been saved by grace... but audaciously claims perfection is their enemy... and that they are *free to be me*... probably... has not experienced God’s grace that saves. ... If you think that you have been saved by God’s grace... but there has never been any real change in your life... and if you have no desire to grow to be more Christlike... there is little doubt in my mind that you have never actually experienced God’s true grace that saves. Paul told Titus that grace that saves trains us to live godly lives.

What germs are to a physical body... false teaching is to a spiritual body... (the church.)

Over the years Evangelical Christianity has been busy getting people to merely pray a sinner’s prayer of salvation. Our churches are full of people who prayed that prayer... but have no work of grace at work inside of them... training them to live godly lives. ... Today’s Christian music only

reflects this sad truth. ... But many cling to a false hope. They still need true saving grace – which the Bible says... it also trains...

...And do you know what else...? (According to the very next verse) It also makes us eager for Jesus to return to earth to set up His Kingdom reign. ... So... If you are having too much jolly fun with this present world... and you don't really care when or if Jesus returns... this may be another indication that you have not actually experienced God's saving grace. God's saving grace trains us to live godly lives... and it trains us where we should be looking...

Titus 2:13

God's grace gives us a growing anticipation... (a love flamed desire) for Christ to return... (for when He will establish His kingdom of righteousness here on earth.) The Greek word for **waiting** (pros-dech-omai) carries a connotation of eagerness. ... Eagerly expecting the return of Christ - is the way grace trains Christians

I hope that you have experienced God's grace. It is a grace that saves and trains and gives us an eagerness for His return.

Jesus did not save us... just to give us fire insurance from hell. "*Here is your get-out-of-hell free card... now you are free to be you!*" ... No...

Everyone that He saves... He saves to make pure... (that kind of sounds like perfection... which I hope that we all agree now... is not our enemy...) He saved us to be pure vessels for His Own possession... and zealous for good works.

Titus 2:14

Well... now that we have seen that everyone who experiences God's saving grace is not "free to be me..." and we have seen what trains us to be holy and what makes us eager for Christ's return... it is time for us to look more closely at the holy life we are being trained for. So let's turn now to the beginning of Titus chapter two.

Titus 2:1

Good doctrine is connected with a holy life... and therefore... it is imperative that Titus should give it first place. ... There can be no godliness without it... Theology and righteous living are one.

So far... we have looked at a sound doctrine which says... grace that saves... also trains us to live holy lives... The lack of giving ourselves to this doctrine... has resulted in "I'm free to be me..." ... Now we are about to deal with one more sound doctrine... which counters another set of faulty thinking... that has crept into the church... .. What germs are to a physical body... false teaching is to a spiritual body... (the church.)

Our next sound theology is this: If you have been saved... it is to impact the lives of others by observing age related and gender roles... through church community life. This is what holy living is – it recognizes Biblical age and gender roles... in seeking to impact others... in our homes... and at our places of employment... **but... primarily... through church community life**.

Undoubtedly a large percentage of people in the modern church... are not driven by an inter-dependence... but by a consumer mentality. ... They value only what is beneficial to them... and partake only of what pleases

them... at the times that are not disruptive to their schedules... and at costs not significant enough to burden their lifestyles. ... Such persons will pick the church activities that are attractive to them... but never think of the impact of their actions on others. ... Only the most mature have a sense of personal investment in regular fellowship... disciplined worship... **and church community life.**

We live in a culture that is drowning in gender confusion. The lines have become blurred... and we are groping about trying to understand what it means for a man to be a man... and a woman to be a woman... It is perfectly clear that the cultural engineers that dominate the media... our educational system... (from the preschools to the university)... and other strategic places of influence... they all want to neutralize... if not eliminate... the gender distinctions and differences... that God has hardwired... into human beings. ... But we must stand firm... because what germs are to a physical body... false teaching is to a spiritual body... (the church.)

In Titus 2:2-10... God's roles for men and women in the church plain and clear. ... Paul outlined God's expectations for each of the four major groups in the church in terms of **gender** and **age**. ... He defined godly living that seeks to impact others in our homes... and at our places of employment... **but... primarily...through church community life.**

Titus 1:2

Paul first tells Titus to teach the natural leaders of the community... the older men. ... They are to be “sober-minded.” Sober-minded means restraining one's natural desires... and presenting a balanced Christian life.

This man is wise in his decision-making... and careful when making judgments. ... He is clear on what really matters and decisive in making godly choices. All that matters to him... is to please God.

Next is "dignified." It comes from a Greek word that means... "others give him honor." ... You cannot be a dignified man without being involved in other people's lives. A dignified man is such... because of his community life.

Then... older men are to be self-controlled. They are to curb their desires and impulses. This is probably the key idea of this passage. ... Some form of the word appears to each of the four key groups of the church. Young... old... men... and women... all need self-control... because the Christian community... (then and now)... is made up of people from differing backgrounds and viewpoints... making conflict inevitable.

"Faith" describes a personal relationship with God. ... "Love" describes relationships with others. ... "Endurance" describes steadfastness... in maintaining these relationships. ... Mature Christianity is defined as a commitment to maintain the vertical relationship (to God)... and horizontal relationships (to others). ... A mature Christian man is the opposite of an old grump... who goes around saying... *"Ahhh... Go away! You bother me! Leave me alone!"*

Titus 2:3-4

"Likewise" connects verse 3 to verse 2. These "older women" have a task parallel to that of the older men.

The first character trait they should pursue is reverence... a word that literally means "temple fitting" or appropriate behavior in a temple. ... Their behavior reflects the fact that Jesus is always present... in every thought and deed. They don't forget the fact that... He knows! He is aware!

"Not slanderers" comes next. This woman has a control... a governor... on her tongue. ... She knows that the saying "*Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names (or words) will never hurt me*" ... is not true. ... So when she speaks... she speaks the truth... and she speaks it in love.

And this daughter of God... is "not addicted to much wine" (or to much alcohol.) ... Alcoholism must have been a severe problem... since it is an issue in the appointment of church leaders in every list. (We see it in 1 Tim 3:3,8; 1 Tim 5:23; and we saw it in Titus 1:7.) ... While this is true in almost every culture... one commentator points out that it was especially true in Crete... (now get this...) where they viewed heavy drinking as a virtue.

"Teach what is good" - Like their godly counterpart... (the older men)... these mature disciples of Christ are to be adept at teaching. ... "They are to teach what is good."

This is the informal... one-on-one... or small-group instruction... that these mature women pass on to their younger spiritual sisters. ... Issues of marriage... family... and child rearing... are set alongside basic matters of spiritual life in Christ.

This mentoring of the younger by the more mature is a biblical pattern we have too often neglected to our great hurt and harm. ... Younger women desperately need the role modeling... teaching... discipling... insight... and

practical wisdom... that these older ladies can provide. ... Being more experienced in life and in the Lord, they can pass on a godly legacy that will hopefully reproduce itself for generations. A godly home will orbit around a godly wife and mother.

This ministry of women to women opens up numerous possibilities in terms of the format... and content. ... This teaching could take the form of home visitation... Bible study groups... social outings... one-to-one friendships... book readings and more. ... The one proviso... is that what is taught should be good... (in other words) thoroughly Christian and practically helpful.

I find it interesting that verse four says that younger women are to be taught to love their husbands... and their children. ... Interestingly... this is the only time in the Bible... where a woman is encouraged to love her husband. ... Husbands... of course... receive multiple... and detailed instruction in this regard (Eph. 5:25-33 and Col. 3:19... are two great examples.) ... Paul was concerned that a woman's first commitment... under the lordship of Jesus Christ... was to her husband and her marriage.

But here is what I find worth taking special note of... This verse is saying that “we do not so much ‘fall in love’... as we have need to ‘learn to love’...” Love is a decision to act – not a feeling that simply falls on us.

Here are a few more things that older women are to teach the younger...

Titus 2:5

Here we see “self-control” again. The best way to learn this is to see it up close and personal in the life of another. Young women will best learn to

exercise balance and wisdom in their lives as they observe it in the lives of older, more mature women.

I think that the evangelical church is in for a world of hurt... as we see more and more churches target a single age group. So many churches ignore what Paul is teaching us in Titus here... as they singly focus on primarily attracting young people and young families. ... The church growth movement has taught that the church is like a radio station. Radio stations will always fail... if they try to play all kinds of different music.... symphonic... followed by an acid rock song ... then Motown... then a 1940's swing... then Italian opera. ... Mix it all up like this... and nobody will listen. But if you single in on just one style... then people who like that style will listen. ... The church growth movement teaches that churches must do the same. The way to grow a big church (they say) is to do the same. Focus on only one age group. Target your service with the type of music and worship that appeals to only one age group. ... A lot of churches do this. And their churches do grow big. But what are they loosing...? ... They are not a "Titus 2 Church"... that's for sure.

Before we move on... I need to say something about a phrase and a single word that are used in verse 5... which I have little doubt send shivers down the spines of many. The phrase is "working at home". ... **Working at home** does not prohibit working outside the home. (If it did... then it would contradict such Bible passages as Prov. 31... specifically verses 16... 18... and 24.) ... What this phrase in Titus 2:5 indicates... is that Paul expects wives to carry the primary responsibility ... for the day-to-day care of their homes and children.

It is unlikely that Paul had in mind concern about "career women" or mothers in the secular workplace. ... His emphasis is not on the location of a wife's work... but on being productive in the normal occupations of a wife each day. Her home is her primary base of operation... and the main focus of her attention. ... The apostle... without question... ranks a wife's obligations to care for her husband and children over her personal benefit or fulfillment. ... Any woman who makes career status... or financial advantage... a higher priority in her life... than the welfare of her marriage... children... or home... is opposing this Biblical principle.

The word that is used in verse 5... which I need to say something about is "submit." ... The Greek term for "submit" is *hupotasso*... it means "to arrange under." It does not mean that a wife is to suppress her intelligence... talents... and gifts in the home. ... Rather... she should fully express these gifts in the purpose of supporting her husband in the spiritual leadership of the home. ... Suppression of gifts is not the point. ... Proper expression of them is. A Christian wife arranges her gifts and talents under the higher purpose of supporting the spiritual nurture of the household.

Sin is a principle of rebellion against God's appointed order with its legitimate... inbuilt authorities. ...Satan began the great rebellion... when he refused to submit to the place and function that God had appointed for him. ... Ever since... he has been teaching human beings how to do the same... by rejecting those authorities that God has appointed in the family... church and state.

Christian wives... in being subject to their husbands... are actually doing what Christ does to His Heavenly Father. ... Both are God. ... One is not less than the other. It is a matter of working efficiently.

But just to be clear... being subject to their husbands... does not mean: ...that wives must be subject to the unreasonable demands of their husbands... or... they must be subject to the abuse of male authority in physical or psychological ways... or... they should have no say in the running of the home or in the decision-making process.

Titus 2:6-8

Here we see “self-control” one more time. Boy do young men need it!

1. The bodies of young men are more sexually alive. ... Attraction and passion increases and stirs the young man to pay attention to the opposite sex. ... But young men must control themselves. ... Passion can engulf a young man and drown him.

2. The young men are discovering themselves and searching for and finding their place in society. They face two of the biggest decisions they will ever have to make... the decision of *leaving home*: when to leave home and take on the total responsibility for oneself and perhaps a family... They also face the decision of *employment or profession*: what work to do in life.

3. Young men are full of vision and dreams and energy... but they lack experience. ... The result is that they often become reckless and inconsiderate and unfeeling. ... And they often make mistakes. So... they

must be mentored to be self-controlled... and sound in speech... as they move forward in life.

Titus 2:9-10

Most of the 1st century work force in Roman society were slaves. Since we don't have slavery in our culture... I am going to apply these principles to career workers who have bosses... those who are part of our culture's work-force... to show what godliness looks like.

1. The Christian workman is to be obedient. He is to follow the instruction of the person over him. (Notice): he is to obey "in all things." In the workplace there is to be no instruction that is not to be obeyed. ... This... of course... does not mean he is to obey orders that are contrary to the teaching of the Lord.
2. The Christian workman is to go beyond the call of duty. ... He is to actually please his master in all things. This includes such things as *attitude and spirit*: he shows commitment and loyalty... eagerness and diligence in his work. Also his *thoughts*: he thinks about his work... how to improve it and to be more efficient. ... In his *relationships*: he seeks to build good relations with all fellow employees and management. ... In his *work and labor*: he is on time and gives a full day of labor *plus* some. He actually seeks to increase his own productivity and that of the whole workplace. He helps the company when extra effort or hours are needed and goes well beyond what is required.
3. The Christian workman does not answer back, talk back, or contradict his manager.

4. The Christian workman does not steal. The Greek word actually stresses the stealing of small... petty items. How many have stooped to stealing, to doing what so many in the world do. How many feel that they are not getting what is due them, therefore, they are justified in taking a little here and a little there. The Christian workman is not to steal—*not ever*.

In short... Both in **action** and in **attitude**... the servant of Christ puts on display for all to see the grace of God... that has trained him/her in righteousness.

Paul has listed for us these different classes of people... that should be in every church. Godliness is not simply for the spiritual elite. All true believers are expected to have their faith reflected in their conduct and to have their conduct affirm their faith.

What may seem like straightforward advice that can easily be applied... however... turns out to have some curves and angles... that the church of the 21st century may have to negotiate. ... Older men and women today are trying hard to be contemporary... and be "pals" with their grandchildren... rather than seem pious and remote. ... The old image of a grandmother knitting in her rocking chair... hair in a bun... humming hymns... is long gone. ... Young women are not usually only "busy at home" ... but are more likely to be found on the judge's bench... in the executive suite of a downtown office... or skillfully using the latest computer program and searching out the newest exciting website. ... Ambition has overtaken them and many young men... who have little spare time for moral or religious concerns after rising early to hit the gym for a workout... commute 30-40

miles... and put in long hours on the job... to say nothing rushing back home to watch football... basketball... or baseball... in seasonal rotation.

But... what ***is*** relevant from our passage today... is that we must find ways... to increase the flow of God's grace in training us in righteousness. That flow... according to our passage starts with the older and passes to the younger.

Old age is...actually... an opportunity in itself. ... One does not have to have the same activities and ministries of youth... to have challenges and usefulness. ... Arthritis may limit action... but it does not limit prayer. (Neither does failing vision or hearing...) ... The greatest opportunity for cheerfulness and witnessing may come... not in a corporate office... but in a Sunday school class... or an AWANA event. ... While young children may not enjoy being a captive congregation... hearing repeated advice... and moralistic stories... from the older generation's younger years... they can be blessed by going to their games and concerts... listening with interest to their joys and woes... and (perhaps without their realizing it) filling out a list of prayer needs for their life.

Young women are often turned off by the repeated criticisms of older women... because they go to work... have their children in day care... and share decision-making with their husbands. ... They may already feel sad and even guilty for having to work... and letting others care for their children. They need understanding and encouragement... rather than criticism. ... Older women may have little concept of how much a mortgage... food... and taxes take out of even two regular paychecks. ... And if mother or grandmother thinks that daughter Michelle's payments on

two cars and a large screen TV are unwise or unnecessary... perhaps more prayer and loving help in learning about caring for a family will bring Michelle to new spiritual perspectives and values.

Most important... in light of this passage... is that the older must seek ways to have fellowship with the younger... sharing with them (without "preaching" *at* them) what they have learned along the way from the Lord.

There is a willingness among the men of the church to work cross-generationally, even though they would naturally tend to be with men of their own age.

Agnes lost her husband early in their marriage. With two daughters to raise, the menial jobs that she could get would not provide enough income. So she supplemented her small salary by baking wonderful, melt-in-your-mouth sourdough bread. When the daughters grew up and left home, the baking did not stop. The woman who had given herself so much for others was simply in the habit of putting others first. She kept baking bread and giving it away to friends.

Then something began to affect her sight. She progressed from weakened sight to total blindness very quickly. With so much against her, and so much pressure simply to survive, no one would have blamed her for calling it quits on everything except what was needed to take care of herself. But instead of submitting to the darkness, the elderly woman made an important decision. Baking bread was what God had given her to do to express her love and care to others. She would not give it up simply because she could not see.

So she mixes the flour and water she does not see, finds the dials on the oven in the dark, bakes the bread by instincts long developed in the light, and gives the loaves to people whose faces she can only imagine. She cannot tell you entirely why she bakes blind - only that God has given her love to share with those whose future and present need the yeast of her selfless love in order to share the bread of life with others.

Whether we are attending church or a Bible study or offering fellowship to another family or are baking blind, we do not physically see the spiritual effects on others. But what we share with each other in these settings is spiritual life, nourishment, and protection more sustaining than earthly eyes can estimate. Still, Heaven sees and blesses through such selfless sharing that prepares us for the future, protects us in the present, and shapes hearts forever.