

The Young Christian Man

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Bible Verse: Titus 2:6-8
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We return this morning to a very practical section of Scripture in Titus 2, and I invite you to turn there. I am very grateful for the earnest interaction I've had with many in response to the teaching of this section of God's holy word, and I look forward to the continued work of the Holy Spirit as we continue to consider it. As we have done in many of these messages, I'd like to read the entire chapter to set the context for us and then we will focus this morning particularly on verses 6 through 8 that are addressed to young men in the church. Titus 2:1 says,

1 But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. 2 Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. 3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. 6 Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; 7 in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, 8 sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us. 9 Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect. 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, 14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. 15 These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

One of the things that I've tried to do in the teaching of this passage over the past few weeks, is to show you that all of the exhortations to older men and older women, younger women and younger men, they're all rooted in a common salvation, they are all an

outworking of the common work that Christ did for us all. As you look at the end of the passage there in Titus 2:14, it says he "gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." There's a unity, in other words, to everything that is being said here, even though it is applied in particular ways to individuals according to their particular station in life. And one of the ways that you can see this commonality of it all, is to consider a couple of things. First of all, the word "likewise" that is in there. In Titus 2:3, you see, "Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior," thus linking what was said to older men to the instruction that was given to older women. We see it here in verse 6 that we're going to look at soon enough, where it says, "Likewise urge the young men to be sensible." And so there's this linking of it together so that none of us can look at one particular passage and say, "Oh, that doesn't apply to me," we're just seeing different ways that the same core principles apply to each one.

You can see it in another way as well, that one of the common themes of the instruction in the entire chapter is the call to be sensible. To be sensible. Look at Titus 2:2, "Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible," and in verse 5, the young women are "to be sensible," and in verse 6, the young men are "to be sensible," and in verse 12, addressing all of us, it says "instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age." And so what we need to see here is that there are these overarching common themes that run as a thread through all of the exhortations to the different segments of the church. And so, as we come to consider what the Scriptures say to young men in particular today, we should all realize that this is just being applied to them in a particular way to their particular situation; the whole chapter is speaking to all of us about our need and our responsibility to consider our salvation, to consider what Christ has done on our behalf to buy us, to redeem us, to set us apart for his own. We now belong to Christ, the church belongs to Christ, and as a result of that there has been substituted into us an entirely new way of thinking, an entirely new spirit by which we live. No longer do we live for our own selfish, worldly desires. Those have been cancelled in us. They have been put to death in us. We are to live according to the new man that Christ has made us and we live under his authority, not according to what we want to do in and of ourselves. Because we belong to Christ, because he owns us, because he has set us apart for his purposes, we have the responsibility and, frankly, the great great privilege, to come to his word to see what he says and to conform our lives to it, and that's what we have for the young men here today as we come to Titus 2:6 through 8. All of this has practical application for each one of us, even if we are not specifically a young man.

So let's look at verses 6 to 8 and just look at it in particular focus now as we pivot to the text this morning where the Bible says,

6 Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; 7 in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, 8 sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us.

And what we want to see here today, we want to see three things out of this passage that's addressed to young men. First of all, we want to see the exhortation in verse 6, we want to see the example in verse 7, and then we want to see the explanation in verse 8, and we'll look through those as we as we go along today.

First of all, the exhortation to young men. The exhortation to young men. If you're taking notes today, that's point 1: the exhortation to young men. Paul had told the older men to maintain dignity in life and to show maturity in their faith. Look at verse 2, "Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance." And that kind of becomes the foundation or the building block upon which the other aspects of the text are built upon. Verse 3, "Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior." The spirit of the Godly woman is to be like that of the older man: dignified, sensible, and sound in faith. Older women in verse 3 are to be reverent, "not malicious, gossips nor enslaved to much wine, but teaching what is good." We spoke about how important it is for older women to be conscious of what's coming out of their lips, what's coming out of their mouths as they speak, especially to young women. Verse 4, young women are "to love their husbands, to love their children." The young women are "to be sensible, pure and workers at home," and on it goes. We looked at that last week, no need to belabor it here this this morning. But all of that to show us that Paul as he comes to address young men is continuing the theme of the overall passage. He's not introducing something distinct that is unrelated to what has gone before. It's so tightly connected with the verbal phrases that he uses that you couldn't begin to miss it.

And so for you younger men who are with us here today, this passage speaks to a particular kind of application of the same themes to you, and we see it there in verse 6, "Likewise urge the young men to be sensible." And now I'm just going to, as the passage does, I'm just going to speak directly to the young men in the audience. It's not so much about chronology, but station in life, those that are, you know, those that are entering into their career at the first stages of life, those that are at the early stages of marriage with young children at home, perhaps those that are that are young Christians even and just starting out on the walk of faith itself, early in life, early in stages, early chapters, this is what Scripture says particularly to you. And what does Scriptures say? Scripture commands the young man to consider the principles that have gone before in this passage, and to consider the examples that they have in the Christian men around them, and to make a conscious commitment, a conscious decision of heart that says, "I will incline my heart in that direction that I see. I have it in seed form in my heart through the work of Christ in my heart. I am going to incline my heart to pursue growth in these principles and as they are illustrated in the godly Christian men around me." In other words, young men, Scripture tells you to look at these principles and to embrace them in your heart, to give your heart over to Christ as he has expressed it here in his word, and if you belong to Christ, if Christ has done a work in your heart and you're conscious of new life coursing in your veins, if you're conscious that God has done a work in you and changed you, then you are to work this out in practical life. You are to work your salvation out in this particular way, and it starts with a mental cognizance, a thinking that recognizes, "Something eternally profound has happened in my heart by the work of Christ. Jesus Christ has saved me and set me apart. I now live for His purposes, and as a

result of that I need to know what those purposes are. I need to apply myself to His word. And I understand that it's not simply an acquisition of mental knowledge, it's not merely an acquisition of intellectual and theological knowledge that I need, although that is part of it, but going beyond that, that has a shaping effect on all of my affections, all of the things that I desire, the things of my priorities. This goes to the very character of who I am and that I have the blessed privilege of cultivating and pursuing Christian virtue in my life now as opposed to the carnal way that I used to think and live." It is a wonderful, magnificent calling. It is as though Christ has stood on the mountaintop of spiritual life and whistled to you and said, "You, come up here. You, come be with Me. Leave the world behind, sometimes leave your family behind if they would hinder you and not support you, and understand that your supreme loyalty is to Me now. You are to love Me," Christ speaking, "with all of your heart, soul, strength and mind."

And what does that do to a young man? How does that work itself out in his heart? Well, he embraces all of these things. He looks at the word of God, he looks at the word of God and he says, "This is the highest treasure that I have in life. This is God's word, and by His Spirit I can understand it. I can read it and I can grow and this word will change me as the Spirit works in my heart, and this is my lifeline connection to the God who saved me." And so you embrace it and you want it, and you read it, and you study it and you learn from men who have gone before you in the faith. That's what you do. That's part of being a sensible young man. But the idea is this, is that you are turning to the word of God and away from the impulsive desires of your prior youth. You realize that there is a new purpose operative in your life now. Perhaps the great career goals that you've had and the lustful thinking about worldly success and worldly recognition, you say, "I'm dead to that. That no longer motivates me. Oh, I may still have responsibilities in a secular career, and that's okay, but the objective of it is to glorify Christ in it, not to exalt myself, and to accumulate as many of the world goods as I possibly can, or to be recognized as great in my field. No, what I want to be known for is being known as a developing man of God."

That's the call of Christ on the heart of a young man and so he turns away from the impulsive desires of youth toward these spiritual virtues that Christ calls him to in his word, and he does so gladly. He does so joyfully. He does so with a sense that this is the greatest privilege that God could ever have bestowed upon me is to live for Christ in this world come what may. And once you do, once you embrace that, and as the Spirit of God works in your heart, something starts to happen as you pursue this day by day by day, and understanding that this kind of spiritual growth is something that occurs over a lifetime, it's something that occurs in incremental day by day progress most of the time, but as you turn and embrace these things, as you live sensibly in light of and think sensibly in light of the work of Christ in your heart, you start to – watch this, this is kind of cool – you start to ingrain new ways of thinking in your brain. You ingrain new desires in your heart. You start to develop new habits that start to control you for an entire lifetime. Out of a conviction of the greatness of Christ, out of a recognition of the saving work of the Spirit of God in your heart, of the supremacy of Christ, the greatness of his person and work, you learn these things and you embrace them in your heart, then new powerful currents of desire or being activated in your heart that lead you in other ways of life and

living so that the things that you once thought were great and desirable don't hold the same attraction to you. The things that you once thought were dull and unattainable and indecipherable, that is the things of Christ revealed in God's word, now become the heart desire and the love of your life. Those are the things that happen, and as you live toward that, as you aim toward that, the Spirit of God uses that to change you into the image of Christ.

Now listen, young men, there is nothing in the world to encourage you in this direction, and frankly there is very little in the broadly speaking Evangelical church to encourage you in this direction either, as the church gets involved in false doctrine, gets involved in entertainment, gets involved in matters of social justice at the expense of the true gospel of Jesus Christ, gets involved in political issues either on the left or the right, whatever it may be, understand that there is so precious little to feed this in your heart coming from external sources. It's incumbent upon you as a young man to recognize where the fountain of these things comes from, it comes from God's word. It comes from being under the teaching of God's word. It comes from being in fellowship of people of like precious faith and you will have to actively seek this out for yourself. You will actively have to deny ungodly desires and ungodly lusts and pursue these things and in that show that you're going to be a sensible young man, whether you're 18 or 28 or whatever the case may be.

You know, years ago they were saying that the age 25 today had become the new 18 in terms of becoming an adult. You know, it used to be you were 18, moved out. You got a job. You started working, supporting a family, moving on with your life. You know, "Well, now I'll go to college. Now I'll go to grad school." And all of this gets postponed and that's okay. I went, you know, I had education in my background as well. The only point that I'm making here, young men, is this, is that the immaturity of young men around you, the silly things with which they occupy their time and on which they spend their money, are a sign that they are not sensible, they are not thinking rightly about life, they are squandering. Oh, it's so sad to consider they are squandering prime years of their development for the sake of things that are being frittered away. They are spending their lives on lottery tickets. I'm using a metaphor there, not speaking about literal lottery tickets, wasting their time, wasting their thinking, wasting their energy on things that have no long-term constructive value whatsoever. They are not sensible, and the world recognizes it and said they used to be an adult at 18, now you look at them and they're 25 and maybe they're starting in that direction, maybe they're not. Young men, you don't have time to squander. You don't have time to waste. You can't devote yourself to those senseless things of the world. And so what you must do, if you are to live for Christ, you must think broadly and deeply, recognize that drift among your contemporaries and consciously reject it and you say to yourself deep in your heart, you say it in the presence of God and in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you say, "O God, the world may be like that, the world is like that, but by Your grace I will not be like that. I will stand apart. You saved me that I might be Your own possession," Titus 2:14, "You saved me to be Your own possession, to be zealous for good deeds, to be sensible, that's what I give my heart over to, O God, now You lead me in it. By your Spirit help me. Bring the right people into my life that can help develop me in that direction. Cultivate in me a desire for the right

reading of the right books. The right activities that would feed those things and not undermine them."

Now with that said and lest I be misunderstood, I think the most important thing that a pastor can be in teaching God's word, he must be clear. Clarity is the key to right and good preaching. You may not be dynamic, you may not be good at illustrations and things like that, but a pastor must be clear so that people understand the word of God because understanding the word of God is what produces the transformation. If people walk out with a cloudy sense and a lack of understanding about what the text really means, then, you know the word of God is throttled in its impact upon them. So clarity is important here and in order to be clear, I want to say this also to the young men, the young men in our church that I respect and love and appreciate so much for the work that God is doing in them. And I want to say and now I'm going on a tangent of a tangent here, that's always dangerous. But I'm speaking to young men in our church that I know that many of them are pursuing this and exemplify it in their lives, and I'm proud of you, and I'm encouraged by you, and it gives me confidence about what's coming up after, you know, this existing generation of leadership. I'm confident about that and so I want you to know, I want you to know that I'm speaking to strengthen your hand, not to rebuke you for something that you're not, but because I see these things in you and want them to grow and flourish all the more, and I'm confident that that's what you yourself want. You just need the help of God's word to do it. And so that's what we're trying to accomplish here today. I'm on your side completely. I support you and I believe in you.

Now with that said, a sensible approach to life does not mean that you don't enjoy life. It doesn't mean that you have a sour disposition, and you can only think about heavy, introspective things. That's not what we're saying at all. A sensible approach to life as Scripture describes it is simply this, it can be boiled down to what I'm about to say here: a sensible approach to life simply means this, it means more than this, but at the core it means this, it means that you recognize that life matters, that you will give an account to God for how you live, and as a result of those fundamental convictions, you live in the fear of God, you live with reverence to God. Those are the fundamental things and there is all kinds of joy to be found in a life like that. The fruit of the Spirit, as I keep going back to, is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness. It's a good life. It's a joyful life and the fact that it's mischaracterized and slandered against by the world and misrepresented in the church should not dissuade you into thinking that somehow this is not an excellent life to live. This is the most excellent life. This is the most noble life to live. In whatever circumstances and occupation and skills and service opportunities the Lord gives you, this is the only way to live. Be sensible, young men. Pursue the life that God is giving you in obedience to Christ and obedience to Scripture with a humble, repentant heart and not let the world or the devil dissuade you from that which is good and to live with excellence to him who called you by his own glory and grace.

Now going back to the text here, Titus 2:6. Here in the NASB, verse 6 ends with "urge the young men to be sensible," and then verse 7 starts out by saying "in all things," giving the appearance that "in all things" goes with what follows rather than what preceded it in verse 6. In all things, however, I, you know, as I understand the text, it goes with the call

to be sensible. In other words, the view of the text is this, "urge the young men to be sensible in all things." In other words, this is a comprehensive approach to life. This means that you don't squander your money. This means that you don't squander your time on fruitless endeavors. You realize that there are things to invest in, to invest your time and energy in. And so the idea to be sensible in all things means that you are cognizant of your thoughts, your tongue, and even your temper. You control your thoughts, your tongue, and your temper, and in the simplicity of these building blocks of life, which used to be taught with regularity and now are dying life skills, you want to put this on the bottom shelf where it's easy to get to? Young men, you want to be sensible? Here you go: spend less money than you earn. That's one place to start. Spend less than you earn. Do what you say you will do. Show up on time. If you make a promise, keep it. Be sensible about life. Be somebody that someone else can depend upon. "Now, you know what, Jim said he would be here. I know he will be because he does what he says. He's sensible about these things." You want to be sensible? Stay away from the dark side of the internet, start there for some of you.

Now step back and ask this question, pastor speaking about these things and it all seems so kind of earthly and simplistic and common, it sounds so common, doesn't it? You know, telling me to watch my budget and watch my mouth and watch where I go on the Internet. You know, what about supralapsarianism versus infralapsarianism? Those are theological terms that one day maybe we'll address. What about those lofty things that I can read about on the internet? Does talking in these earthly terms sound too unspiritual? Does it sound too earthy to be worthy of your time? Oh, young man, young man, think differently about it because this is where the outworking of these things starts.

Look over it th book of Luke 16. Luke 16. Oh, if I could instill this into the hearts of young men by the power of the Holy Spirit to take the word of Christ to shape a man of Christ, I would start right here. No doubt about it to simply help the young man see this. Luke 16:10, "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much." You see, it's the training ground. These daily things of daily living are the proving ground where you develop faithfulness in your character. It's not just about the task or the virtue that you're considering, it's about being faithful to it day after day after day. And so, young men, according to Scripture, cultivate faithfulness, especially in the little things of life, especially in the details of your job, especially in the details of your studies, especially in the details of keeping your word. Be scrupulous about those things because that is where faithfulness and character is established. No one in a responsible church is going to approach a man who can't keep his life in order and offer a significant ministry opportunity to him. His prior track record of unfaithfulness in details shows that he won't be faithful in significant responsibility so they'll move on to someone else. And not just on a human level, God won't entrust major responsibilities to someone who shows that he can't handle and won't handle simple ones.

And so young men, be sensible. Be sensible and understand that the work of God in your life is something that works itself out over a course of years and even decades. Don't worry if it seems like you're being neglected or overlooked today. Work and cultivate

yourself and just say, "I'm not living for today anyway. I want a character that in 10 years from now is going to be proven in faithfulness and I'll just trust God for whatever He gives to me then." But it starts with the mind, sense, the sense of the mind, the sensibleness of mind. And so young men, I plead with you, I encourage you, I call you according to the word of God, that you would commit in the presence alone to Christ, that insofar as it depends on you, you will be devoted to Christ no matter what anyone else does. If your family forsakes you, if your friends try to dilute that commitment, you say, "By the grace of God, I will be devoted even if no one else is. I will stand alone if I must." Not in a proud sense, not that I'm the only one who does this, not like that spirit but just at the core of your being, "I will defend the word of God. I will live for Christ. I will trust Him for His mercy when I fall short. I will be stable. I will be one who will be faithful."

And young men, I know that that's a rocky path to choose. It's steep, and there's a lot of places to fall off of it, and I would just encourage you with this word: realize that that foolishness, a lack of sensibility, has also invaded the people of God, those who would claim the name of Christ. You see it in the maturity and foolishness of the way that the churches handle the word of God. There's nothing serious about that. It's so man-centered. It's so driven by entertainment. Perhaps they mean well but they're so far off-track. Young men, you need to recognize that and not be drawn into it. Young men, you need to realize the excesses and the destructive doctrine found in the charismatic movement and all these claims to healings and supernatural, revelation and prophecies, and speaking in tongues, all of that stuff which Scripture refutes when it's studied carefully. You must understand that even at a doctrinal level you need to be sensible and say, "This is wrong and this is right, and I won't be drawn into the other things." The mere fact that someone names the name of Christ and exercises that kind of immaturity and charismatic access, oh young men, that's not your invitation to join them in the foolishness and in the revelry. That's not a call for you to be like them. That is your opportunity to distinguish yourself as a man of God and to see that distinction as your opportunity to stand out for Christ as your lifelong pursuit, and let God bless it or deny it however he chooses to do so, deny it in terms of outward advancement or whatever. "But God, whether You bless me or not, whether I see external signs of Your favor or not, in my heart this is what I'm committed to. God, You might as well bless it because I'm not going anywhere and I'm doing this for the sake of My Savior."

Oh young men, young men, I'm pleading with you through the word of God or the word of God, better, is pleading through me to you for these foundational commitments that shape your life and set the cornerstone of your life going forward, that this is what you build on going forward the rest of your days. Will you commit yourself to Christ like that? Will you embrace it in heart and ask God to help you understand what the working out of that looks like going forward? And to others of you still wandering in sin with no commitment to Christ, young man, young woman, oh, the grievous consequences, just being so wrapped up in the things of the world and the things of career and the things of, you know, human relationships with no commitment, no defining principle of vertical devotion to Christ that drives it all and defines everything else in its wake. To those of you that are like that, hear the call of God's word, hear the call of Christ. Leave your

foolish life behind and turn to the Christ who said, "Follow Me." That is the sense of being sensible, defining your life in light of the purposes of Christ who saved you to set you apart for himself.

Now as you move on in the text, Paul takes the general principle, this exhortation to young men, he takes the general principle and now as you read on in verse 7, he applies it to Titus in particular, that Titus should be an example to all, and that brings us to our second point this morning: the example to young men. The example to young men. Paul bleeds over from the general exhortation to all young men and now addresses Titus in particular in verse 7 as he says this, "in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach." Paul now addresses Titus, who is a young man with responsibilities and spiritual leadership. He's a young man that is responsible for appointing elders under apostolic direction. He has a lot on his plate and a lot of responsibility, and Paul says to Titus, he says, "You be an example of everything that I'm talking about here." He individualizes it and particularizes it to Titus. And thus Titus, the pastor of that flock, so to speak, his responsibility is to exemplify in his life that which the general exhortation went to all young men. Regarding the importance of a spiritual example and of a young man manifesting this, especially one in spiritual leadership, Charles Spurgeon said this and I quote, he said, "We have all heard the story of the man who preached so well and lived so badly that when he was in the pulpit everybody said he ought never to come out again, and when he was out of the pulpit, they all declared he never ought to enter it again." Spurgeon goes on to say, "We do not trust those persons who have two faces, nor will men believe in those whose verbal and practical testimonies are contradictory. An ill life will effectually drown the voice of the most eloquent ministry."

"Titus, be an example. Don't simply teach but model by your life the principles of which I am speaking here in this letter to you." And so the call goes to his conduct but it also goes particularly to his teaching. These two are linked together. They are married together. They are two sides of the same coin in the responsibility of a young man in spiritual leadership. Look at what he says and we'll take verses 7 and 8 together here now. He says, "in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds," there's the personal application part of it, and then he switches back to the teaching and what Titus says, "with purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach." Paul is setting forth to Titus, and now at addressing the content and the conduct of his teaching ministry, he says, "Titus, in all things show purity in doctrine." Purity in doctrine, it has the idea of being healthy. "Let your doctrine be pure. Avoid corruption in your teaching. Teach so as to instill true principles about Christ and the truth about Christ, His person and His work. Teach to honor Christ, to edify men, not for your personal gain, not to entertain unbelievers." If you set out to entertain unbelievers and to make them like you in ministry, you have already chosen to corrupt your doctrine. You have already chosen to corrupt your teaching if nothing else, by hiding those things that are offensive to the carnal man. All of the Scripture, the full counsel of God must be taught, and we understand in advance that that will not be appealing to the world but that's not our point. We are set apart, remember? He's redeemed us for his own possession, zealous for good deeds as Christ defines them. And so we're set apart to teach what Christ wants,

what Christ commands. Matthew 28, "teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you." Christ, the source, Christ, the Commander in Chief, we go out under orders from Christ, not taking opinion surveys to see what the neighborhood wants us to say. That's impure. That's corruption. Scripture says be pure in it.

Paul had already exhorted Titus in this way at the beginning of the chapter. Look at chapter 2, verse 1, where Paul says, "But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine," chapter 2, verse 1. Speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. Verse 7, purity in doctrine. Verse 8, sound in speech. Beloved, the repetition shows how important this is, the doctrinal, objective, knowable content of Scripture to be communicated through the teacher to the congregation so that they understand true doctrine. That repetition shows how vital it is to emphasize it, at the beginning and at the end of the text shows that this Christian virtue flows from biblical teaching. And the fact that some men are unwilling to bear sound doctrine is not an indication that sound doctrine should be abandoned or that sound doctrine should be softened down or dumbed-down to the lowest common denominator or the most carnal person in the church or they're going to leave. That's the wrong way to approach it. The answer to that dilemma is not to dumb-down the doctrine, the answer is for the carnal people in the congregation to repent of their godlessness, to repent of their indifference to the truth of God's word. But the man of God, the young man pursuing spiritual leadership, elders in the church, do not have the luxury or the liberty of compromising doctrine for the sake of accommodating the carnal tastes of a congregation. The word of God must be taught, it must be upheld, because this is done for Christ, not for men and as we do it for Christ, then Christ uses it in the lives of men to accomplish his purposes.

But look at it again with me. I just don't think that this can be overemphasized. Titus 2:14. Christ is the head of the church, that means he is the authority in the church. His word is law, so to speak, and we bring ourselves into submission to that. And he has the right to command us. He has the right to direct us. He purchased the church with his own blood. It belongs to him. If you go out and you buy something in a retail place, you understand that by paying the price asked of the merchant for what you have, you take ownership of that. It belongs to you. It's not for someone else to come and without your permission hijack it for their purposes. If you buy a car, it's not for your neighbor to come and drive it away to what he wants to do. You paid for it. It belongs to you. You have authority over it. You understand this on the most simple way, and if anyone violated it in your stuff, you would be outraged. You would be talking about it. "Can you believe what that person did to my stuff?" Well, extract the carnality of our selfishness from all of that, look at the purity of Christ and look how the church came into being. Verse 14, he "gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed." He gave himself. He sacrificed himself on the cross. He paid the redemption price in his own blood. As a result of that, the church belongs to Christ. It is his. He has authority over it, and his purposes must be honored in it. So that he says that his desire is "to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." We cannot pervert the church into an instrument of human attainment, human desire, human entertainment because that's not what Christ purchased it to do. And it belongs to him. We're just under-shepherds. We're stewards of

what belongs to him, and what Christ says is that there must be purity in doctrine, that doctrine must be taught so that people understand the full counsel of God.

Purity in doctrine, verse 7. He goes on and says, "dignified." The idea of dignified is that the teaching should be done with a high moral tone and with a serious demeanor. A high moral tone, a serious demeanor, that demonstrates the importance of it. A comedian in a pulpit cannot possibly teach people that doctrine is important. A jokester, a human storyteller, one talking about his kids and his family all the time to illustrate everything that he wants to talk about, "Me. Me. Me," can't begin, can't begin to elevate people to the lofty things of God. It has to be dignified. It has to be sober-minded if people are going to learn something about the fear of God. The comedian teaches people not to fear God, "This isn't that serious. Go have a good time. Drink a few brews on me." It's treachery. It's treason against Christ to do that. It's unthinkable. It's undignified. Men will not take the gospel seriously if the pastor doesn't.

And do you know what else? There's another aspect to it. Forget the long-term consequences for now, for a moment, picture somebody wandering into a church service looking for hope, spouse just left, daughter tells him that she's in trouble, lost a job, stage IV cancer, "I've got three months to live. What am I going to do? There's a church here. Maybe I can find an answer here." And you enter in, and the guy is in a T-shirt telling jokes, talking about his family, talking about his favorite beer. What have you done to that person? What have you done? What have you done? They come in and this is a hypothetical person, but you get the point, they come in, "I was looking for hope and he trivialized it all and I'm in a worse place than when I went in. What a waste of time." The Puritan Richard Baxter said this, he said, "Whatever you do," this is about being dignified, right? "Whatever you do, let the people see that you are earnest. Don't break men's hearts by jesting with them."

So the one who teaches Scripture must cultivate respect for the Bible in others by the very demeanor in which he does it. He goes on, Paul goes on here, look at verse 7 and 8 with me again. Purity in doctrine, dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach. By the way, young men, as you're reading this, as you hear Paul addressing Titus and the way that Titus is to carry himself, remember that he's holding Titus up and teaching Titus how he can be an example that the young men in that congregation can look to and aspire after, that they would model after Titus what Paul is talking about here. And so he tells Titus to be sound in speech which is beyond reproach. The teaching, in other words, should be untainted by error. That means that the man who would teach the word of God has to study it first to know what truth is and to know what error is, what to avoid and what to advance. It takes effort. It takes time. It's not done overnight. It's not done in a year even. But the whole point for the man of God in the pulpit, what Paul is imposing upon Titus as his bound and duty in the presence of Christ is this, "Titus, take what the apostles wrote and serve it faithfully for the spiritual consumption of your audience. Take what the apostles taught, teach it without changing it, without diluting it, without polluting it so that they could move forward, and that people would have the truth instilled in them as well."

We've spoken about this in recent weeks. To Timothy Paul said this, 2 Timothy 2:2, he said, "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." "Timothy, I have the baton. You take it, you give it to men who will pass it to other men, unchanged, undiluted, unpolluted. It's got to be sound in speech." We're not trying to be creative. We're not trying to invent new ideas that others will find enticing and that will sell books. We're trying to be faithful to what's been given to us. That's our task.

Listen, we're trying to carry out this task, young men, we're trying to carry out this task in a world that hates everything old, that thinks newer is better, if an idea is old, it needs to be discarded. This cuts against the very spirit of our age. You can read about this in an eloquent discussion of this in Carl Trueman's book "The Creedal Imperative. The Creedal Imperative," by Carl Trueman. Everything about this is countercultural. What is the motive for this urgent instruction? Point 3. The explanation for young men. We've seen the exhortation to young men, the example to young men, Titus by the way he conducts his ministry is to be an example to the young men, now in our third point this morning you get the explanation for young men. This exemplary conduct, the pure motives in ministry, the dignified demeanor, it works to silence those who would otherwise criticize the gospel. Look at verse 8. Why do we do all of this? Here's part of the reason, verse 8. It's so that, here's the purpose, "so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us." Critics are everywhere. Good teaching and a godly example can shame them into silence.

Titus sets the pace for the young men to follow. Now, it's not that they're silenced forever. It's not that gospel teaching will be forever unchallenged at all. Paul's own ministry was opposed repeatedly. But young men, here's the opportunity for you as you think about your life in the broader context of the purposes of God for your godliness. The goal in all of these things is that the gospel and biblical teaching would not be challenged legitimately. Critics are shamed when their opposition is groundless. Critics are silenced before others when it's obvious that they are saying falsehoods against the teaching of God's word, and what Paul is saying here to us as men, and saying to the young men, is that the very way that you live contributes to that protection and that defense of the truth that we hold dear. Godly lives protect fellow believers from criticism, Young men, your godly life contributes to the testimony of Christ, contributes to the testimony of the church to which you belong.

Listen, listen, and another aspect of this that is just so contrary to the spirit of our age, the individualistic spirit of our age, "Don't put your laws on my body. Don't tell me what to do." It's all anti-authoritarian. It's all so self-centered and so selfish. Young man, you have to think differently if you are going to live biblically. You have to think beyond yourself and realize, "My life has an impact on the believers around me. We're all in this together and whether God gives me a narrow sphere or a broader sphere, I will pursue the dignified, sensible kind of living that He calls me to based on the blood of Christ and I'll do so, in part, knowing that it's a service to the rest of the body as I do whether anyone notices or not. I'm in this together with the others. My life is not my own. I live for Christ. I live for the people of God." May God give us grace through his eternal Spirit,

and may God give you, young men, grace by his eternal Spirit to honor Christ in precisely this way.

Let's pray together.

Father, so much cuts against the fulfillment of these principles in our lives. Even our own man, Paul said, "The good that I wish, I do not do, and the evil I hate, that is what I do." There's a conflict in our own flesh, Father, that cuts against this and so we realize we're unable to do these things on our own. Grant us help by Your Holy Spirit to understand the principles, to understand the doctrine, and then to transform our hearts so that we live in accordance with that possession that Christ purchased us to be for His own that we might be zealous for good doctrine, zealous for good deeds, all to the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.