

God's Recovery Program is Sanctification

Titus 1:10-16

God's recovery program for fallen mankind is always sanctification.

Christ's New Testament church was born into a sin-warped, dark-hearted world of mixed-up marriages, sin-scarred lives, and confused families.

As we open to the book of Titus this morning, never forget that is the context. Paul, guided by the Spirit of God, was writing a letter to Titus, the missionary church planter sent to the island of Crete.

Roman culture in the First Century was closed to God's ways. That meant that every man and woman on Crete had been born into a sin-warped society. Each person Titus encountered was living out their life each day darkened by sin, enduring mixed-up and struggling marriages, and limping along with sin-scarred lives and families. But despite their failures, God wanted to make them useful again.

God knew that the men and women who were gloriously saved could not automatically become great wives and mothers, or husbands and fathers. When they came to Christ and were forgiven, God graciously gave them everything they needed to become godly wives, mothers, husbands, and fathers. But, they needed something else called sanctification to change them into useful servants of God.

The book of Titus captures the pattern God gave for every believer as the goal and direction of their life. Being a Titus 2 person of godliness should be the desire of every parent for their child; and every partner for their mate; and of every believer for their own life. The key is to remember that:

Titus 2 is the Pattern God Gave

If you want to be vital in Christ's church, useful in God's Kingdom, rewarded at Christ's Bema Seat Judgment these verses are your marching orders. There is no clearer pattern for a godly life in all of God's Word than the 24 character qualities recorded in these verses. This is what God desires, explains, and expects from obedient and godly saints.

- Now let the immensity of what God has given to us sink in a bit. If you are looking for a passage to study in depth that can change your life—**here it is**.
- If you want a special passage to memorize and meditate upon that can transform your thinking and life's direction—**here it is**.

- And, if you want to go through life confident that you are doing exactly what God wants you to do each day—**here it is**.

Most of us as we look back at how fast time passes, struggle with our purpose in life, always wondering if our days are spent wisely.

God shares a curriculum that any believer can accomplish—all you need is to love and follow the Lord; and you can start down the Titus 2 track.

God is asking each of us to check how we live. He wants us pointed His way so that our life can become a pattern of grace that can be used to mentor, encourage, coach, tutor, teach, train and guide another's life towards Him. That is:

The Pathway of Usefulness to God

There is nothing greater in life than to be useful for God! As we stand with our Bibles opened to Titus 2:1-8, listen to the very voice of God speaking not to a select few, but to every man, woman, and child here today:

*¹ But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: ² that **the older men** be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;*

*³ **the older women** likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— ⁴ that they admonish*

***the young women** to love their husbands, to love their children, ⁵ to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.*

*⁶ Likewise, exhort **the young men** to be sober-minded, ⁷ in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, ⁸ sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you."*

Pray

When God set the curriculum for His Church, thus is what He chose to be taught. In simple words that everyone alive in the First Century church could comprehend, Paul wrote to Titus. The early believers of Crete not only understood, but they had a picture of this quality burned into their mind from the Roman culture alive and moving all around them.

Note with me the four groupings that make this passage touch every person in Christ's church. You may even want to circle these four categories of believers as I emphasize them.

- In Titus 2:1-2 God lays down ***six vital qualities He wants to see in godly OLDER MEN*** in the faith to model by their lives.
- In Titus 2:3-4 God has actually laid down ***five strong characteristics He wants to grow in the lives of OLDER WOMAN*** as role models.
- In Titus 2:4-5 God describes the ***seven clear pursuits He wants to plant into the heart of each YOUNGER WOMAN*** needs to learn, that have already been mastered by their “older women in the faith” role models.
- In Titus 2:6-8 God finally sets down ***six non-negotiable character qualities that should be embraced by every YOUNG MAN*** who wishes to be godly and useful for Christ's church.

Now back to our theme today. Remember that:

God’s Recovery Program Is Sanctification

When God changes us, to be what He intended us to be, that is called sanctification.

Christ's church grew into the potent force for changing the world in the quiet nurturing sessions that Titus 2 men and women performed in practical discipleship. Just as important as the preaching and teaching of the doctrines of God's Word was the modeling and nurturing of individual saints through practical hands-on lessons in godly living.

The building blocks of Christ's church are Spirit-filled men and women who give their lives back to God each day as obedient servants of God. Since all of us in this auditorium are either men or women, it is imperative to know what God has to say to what pleases Him in our daily life as a man or woman.

God had a plan to change the world, and He began to implement that plan during the darkest era of history—the time of the Roman Empire—when marriage had reached its lowest ebb.

From the very start, ministry to marriages and families in Christ's church was never easy. Paul’s letter to Pastor Titus, missionary church-planter to Crete, described the cultural background of the congregation Titus served two thousand years ago:

*“One of them, a prophet of their own, said, ‘Cretans are **always** liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.’ This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith” (Titus 1:12–13).*

These two verses reveal that the landscape was very bleak when the Gospel of Jesus Christ entered the Roman world of the New Testament. Just think of what a miracle it was to find a group of believers saved out of such a godless society.

Paul reminds us that they came from centuries of culture dominated by three deeply set habits. These Cretans were in God's perspective, people of:

- **total untrustworthiness** ('always liars'),
- **total out-of-control living** ('evil beasts'), and the
- **total undisciplined pursuit of lust-filled appetites** ('lazy gluttons').

The power of the Gospel is in the strength of Christ's sanctifying grace, which can change us into His image! For that reason, I truly believe that this insight into the Cretan culture can stir our hearts to glorify the amazing grace and saving power of God.

After all, if the Gospel of Christ could reach into a culture of people who were the descendents of the wicked, pagan Old Testament Philistines (as in Goliath and David) and build them into grace-energized servants of Christ's church, **He can use any marriage and any family no matter how bad they've been.**

And if God could make saints out of people who had so descended in their personal character until Paul described them with this trio of disparaging words—"liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons"—**He can change any marriage and any family, no matter how weak, how wicked, how undisciplined.**

Now join me in a survey of the essence of what we will be learning for most of this year, if the Lord allows us to live and serve Him through 2010.

Our great God offers to us and anyone, a complete new beginning each moment we rest in Christ's blood that cleanses us from all sin. Titus 2 reminds us of the very clear plans God has laid down to make us useful in our very ungodly generation.

God's plan of discipleship for Christ's church for nearly 2,000 years is a church-wide discipleship curriculum that starts with the backbone of any church, the older men.

These men were to be mature, godly, gifted men who are in step with the Spirit. As we open to Titus 2:1, note the four distinct group profiles.

Group one:

Christ is looking for Godly Men of Maturity

As we look at the slides on the screen we start with the men of Crete, saved by grace, who were to be personally trained by Titus in the six areas that God considered paramount for the survival of His Church.

As we read through these descriptions of the highly useful men of Christ's church, ask yourself, "Is this the direction of my life?"

*v.1 "But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine, v.2a that the **older men** be...":*

1. **"sober"**: This is a call for older, godly men to **Maintain A Balanced Life In An Obsessive-Compulsive World;**
2. **"reverent"**: God also asks older men to **Stay Serious About God In An Amused World;**
3. **"temperate"**: Then they are to be characterized by **Living Wisely In A Foolish World;**
4. **"sound in faith"**: This means God wants them always **Guarding A Healthy Mind In A Sick World;**
5. **" [sound in] love"**: Means that God also wants His servants to **Stay Tender Hearted In A Cruel World;**
6. **"[sound in] patience"**: And finally, God wants older men to **Finish Hopefully In A Despairing World.**

Group two:

Christ is looking for Godly Women of Influence

Titus is next instructed to be sure that the older women are tuned to what God considers most meaningful and profitable for their lives. Paul says to Titus, be sure that each of the older women are taught that these five characteristics should be characterizing their daily lives.

As I read this list and describe these qualities, do a mental check up on how you are doing ladies. These five qualities are to become the life-priorities for grace-energized women.

v. 3 *"...the **older women** likewise, that they be"*:

1. "reverent in behavior": **Living holy in an unholy world;**
2. "not slanderers": They also were characterized by **Speaking Gracefully in a Graceless World;**
3. "not given to much wine": The godly women also were visibly marked by **Disciplining (their) Appetites in an Undisciplined World;**
4. "teachers of good things": These qualities gave the older women a powerful platform as they are **Modeling Godliness in an Ungodly World;**
5. v. 4 "that they admonish": And, as the goal of their lives, these women were to make it a life long goal to be personally **Investing in others in a Detached World.**

Group three:

Christ is looking for Young Women of Godliness

Paul then asks Titus to address the younger ladies in the congregations. The younger women were to be pointed down a pathway that would lead to them becoming the godly, older women of great influence in Christ's church.

To be that woman of influence, these were the seven characteristics God was looking for on your spiritual resume, Paul asks Titus to explain.

*v. 4b the **young women:***

These seven qualities are to become the life-priorities for grace-energized young women.

1. "to love their husbands": The most powerful tool in God's hands before a watching world is a band of godly wives who live out in their marriages, Christ's **Self-sacrificing Love in a Selfish World;**
2. "to love their children", v. 5: Then these women continue as mothers who demonstrate Christ's **Nurturing Love in a Loveless World;**
3. "to be discreet": The younger women who are in tune with the Lord also are **Focusing on God in a Foolish World;**
4. "chaste": They seek to be **Pursuing Modesty in an Immodest World;**
5. "homemakers": And, knowing the role God has given to them, they seek His well done good and faithful servants by **Pursuing Homemaking in a Hostile World;**
6. "good": And all through life they are **Pursuing Kindness in a Harsh World;**
7. "obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed": And finally, in step with the Spirit, and energized by grace they are **Pursuing Submission in a Rebellious World.**

Group four:

Christ is looking for Godly Young Man

Finally, Paul said that God put the spotlight on the next generation of leaders for Christ's church. The young men, who want to grow up to be the godly and mature servants of God must begin while they are young to cultivate these six qualities.

v. 6 “Likewise exhort the **young men**”:

1. “to be sober-minded”, v. 7: First in any godly man’s life is a firm resolve to **Live A Restrained Life In A Lust-Filled World;**
2. “in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works”: Next, these men seek to **Become Representations of Christ In A Christ-less World;**
3. “in doctrine showing integrity”: Then is the constant desire to **Maintain Godly Purity In An Impure World;**
4. “reverence”: And the vigilant attitude of **Keeping A Singular Focus In A Blurred World;**
5. “incorruptibility”, v. 8: This means that God wants His servants to shine before our sin-darkened world by **Keeping an Incorruptible Life in a Decaying World;**
6. “sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you”. (NKJV): And finally, the whole reason God left His servants here was to go and “tell”, so godly young men are **Speaking God’s Words In A Godless World.**

God’s plan is that each of us be a grace-energized person, living for Him in a sin-energized world.

Following God’s Plan

The standard we are to follow, and for which we will answer to Him is the clear list of character-choices laid down in God's Word.

As we stand before Him this morning—what does God see you really are on the inside? Does He see a longing on your part to be all that He wants you to be?

Please bow your hearts and heads before our Great God this morning, and whisper to Him in your heart that you want to become the person He wants you to be starting TODAY!

Six qualities are to become the life-priorities for grace-energized men.

Sober: Maintaining a balanced life in an obsessive-compulsive world

Reverent: Getting serious about God in an amused world

Temperate: Living wisely in a foolish world

Sound in Faith: Guarding a healthy mind in a sick world

[Sound in] Love: Staying tender-hearted in a cruel world

[Sound in] Patience: Finishing hopefully in a despairing world

These five qualities are to become the life-priorities for grace-energized women.

Reverent in Behavior: Living holy in an unholy world

Not Slanderers: Speaking gracefully in a graceless world
Not Given to Much Wine: Disciplining appetites in an undisciplined world
Teachers of Good Things: Modeling Godliness in an ungodly world
Admonish: Investing in others in a detached world

These seven qualities are to become the life-priorities for grace-energized young women.

Love Their Husbands: Self-sacrificing love in a selfish world
Love Their Children: Nurturing love in a loveless world
Discreet: Focusing on God in a foolish world
Chaste: Pursuing modesty in an immodest world
Homemakers: Pursuing homemaking in a hostile world
Good: Pursuing kindness in a harsh world
Obedient to their Husbands: Pursuing submission in a rebellious world

These six qualities are to become the life-priorities for grace-energized young men.

Sober-Minded: Living a restrained life in an unrestrained world
Pattern of Good Works: Becoming representations of Christ in a Christless world
Showing Integrity: Maintaining Godly purity in an impure world
Reverence: Keeping a singular focus in a blurred world
Incorruptibility: Keeping an incorruptible life in a decaying world
Sound Speech: Speaking God's words in a Godless world

Will you choose to surrender to God's plan written in His Word before us today?

If you did so just now or have done so today—would you just raise your hand before the Lord as a memorial to that great decision for Him?