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Grace Energized Men in a Sin-Energized World



Part 1 (071028AM)

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The eyes of the Lord are on a constant search for godly men this morning. His Word tells us that He is looking for those who have a heart for Him. As we open to [II Chronicles 16:9](#) listen to the voice of God sharing His quest:

2 Chronicles 16:9 "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal [1] to Him...NKJV"

The word loyal (NKJV) is rendered also: "perfect toward Him" (KJV); "completely His" (NASB); "fully committed to Him" (NIV). God is on the lookout for hearts that are turned His direction, completely His, and fully committed to do and be what He wants. Grace-energized men, who live for God in a sin-energized world is what we are starting to study today.

God's plan is to reach into every church, every marriage, and every home by changing the lives of men—who are the backbone, the God-designed leaders of the church, marriages and homes.

When the Lord wants to change a culture He works through the men and woman He changes one by one. The plan presented in Paul's epistle to Titus is a grace-energized man who lives and walks through this sin-energized world by the power of God—neither perfectly, sinlessly, nor effortlessly, but as a chosen path that is clung to by love for God, and by the grace He gives.

God Looks for Godly Men Every Day

This morning, as every morning—God is on the lookout for men who are sold-out, full-hearted, true-seekers of Him. This deep concern about what men are really like on the inside is one of the central truths of both the Old and New Testaments. To the very last book of the Bible the Lord is still reminding all of us that inside view of us He has:

"I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds" (Rev. 2:23).

As you sit 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? Does the Lord see a careful attention to know and obey the pattern set down in His Word? The standard we are to follow, and for which we will answer is the clear list of character-choices laid down in God's Word.

That's why we have these 2,000 year old words Paul gave to Titus before us this morning. For this young, missionary pastor/church-planter serving on the Roman provincial island of Crete, the challenge to train men in godliness was foremost.

Cretan men, who descended from the Old Testament era pagans we know as the Philistines, were the raw materials from which God was going to make godly men. Titus had his work cut out for him. Paul's Spirit-given directives were clear—aim for the head. There is no other way to be godly than to have a mind-transformation. Spiritual warfare and spiritual growth both take place in our minds. What a man thinks he becomes—sooner, or later.

Paul already said in [Titus 1:13](#) that this transformation had to include them becoming "sound in the faith". Now he says target the men first. Aim for their minds. Teach them what God expects, what God wants, what His grace can energize them to become—if only they will yield to Him.

Let's read the plan that God directed Paul to share was, give them healthy mind-food, truth about God that transforms. Stand/Read/Pray

Titus 2:1-2 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; NKJV

Paul said, "Titus you need to teach what is consistent with God's truth—that is what will

develop godly men". To transform Crete by the Gospel, Paul said aim first at the minds of the men. Paul didn't tell Titus to attack the system of worldly Roman culture, rather address the needs of individual men. Transform men, women, marriages, homes, and workers—from the inside out.

If You Believe Right You will Behave Right

Believers who are grounded upon right beliefs about God and His truths to live by will not be swept away by false teachers, false teachings, the changing circumstances of life, or even the alluring tug of sin. If we believe right, we will behave right. Wrong behavior is always tied to some lack of faith-prompted obedience to God's Word.

So Paul prescribed "sound doctrine" as the tool to shape a generation of former pagans now gathering in house churches around the island of Crete. What exactly is "sound doctrine"? Sound, healthy, or godly doctrine usually has four clear identifying marks:

- it comes from the Bible,
- it centers upon Jesus Christ,
- it produces right behavior, and
- it promotes spiritual growth, touching the heart and changing the life, not just the intellect.

Today's men have the same challenges that those of Crete faced two thousand years ago. The sins, temptations and pressures of all ages in the past have not changed—they are just compounded by the speed at which they travel towards us.

Sin is sin, the world is the world, the devil and his demons are not omnipresent—but, the exposure of modern men to media that carries sin-filled ideas, pointed temptations, and Satan's worldly-desires is nearly omnipresent. And all that media comes to men that are generally more stressed out than any other generation, partly because of information overload. We have too many choices in life, too many sources of information, too many facts to digest, coming in ever increasing waves so that we have neither the time or resources to respond. That produces the modern societal phenomenon called "stress".

This week, a contemporary look at men was released in the New York Times. Here is what the world describes as the state of men in late-2007.

STRESS MESS IN U.S. [2]

We're stressed out, we can't sleep, we're drinking too much - and it's getting worse. 48% of Americans report regularly lying awake at night because of stress... [and] stress continues to escalate...affecting every area of people's lives.

So what is it we're worrying about while we stare at the ceiling all night? Primarily two things: money and work, the main woes for nearly 75% of Americans. More than half of people polled say paying the landlord or making the monthly mortgage causes great stress.

The high stress levels that many Americans report experiencing can have long-term health consequences, ranging from fatigue to obesity and heart disease.

More than three-quarters of respondents say stress is making them sick...people feel overwhelmed and out of control...

Because of the increasing pressures of life just to live from day-to-day, it is getting harder and harder to think deeply about God. Stress has robbed many of even the ability to concentrate.

That's what makes our study of Titus 2 so timely. Titus was to call the men who had been believers for a while, to live up to God's standard. There were six specific behavioral standards, mental choices, acts of the will—each energized by the Spirit of grace, that were to be the goals of every older man in Christ; and as we'll see further into this passage, six more for every younger man.

This morning if you are a man who knows Christ—this should be the desire of your heart to be now (if you are an older man) or to become (if you are a younger man).

Before any of you excuse yourself, saying that it is too hard to change—don't you remember how tough a group this letter was sent to? Paul's letter to Pastor Titus, the missionary church-planter to Crete—gives quite a description of the cultural background of the congregation Titus served two thousand years ago.

Titus 1:12-13 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 (NKJV)

What a miracle that an entire generation of believers were saved out of such a godless society. That is why I call this—

Grace-energized Living in a Sin-energized World

God says I have the power to make you able to be a godly man even when the whole world around you is ungodly! We need to underline again in our Bibles, those descriptive words of what Cretans were like culturally. Paul reminds us that they came from centuries of culture dominated by **total untrustworthiness** ('always liars'), **total out-of-control living** ('evil beasts'), and the **total undisciplined pursuit of personal lust-filled appetites** ('lazy gluttons').

But even in that type of atmosphere, permeated by sin, God's grace allows us to say no to sin

and yes to walking in His Spirit. Just like the pioneer missionaries found in modern times, God can change lives even in cultures dominated for centuries by immense evil.

Whenever it seems like the challenge of training those steeped in sin, with the sanctifying work of the Spirit is too hard, I always remind myself of one of the heroes I have admired since childhood—C. T. Studd.

Modern missions history contains the record [3] of what happen to those who allowed God's grace to energize them. Just over 90 years ago to a living legend named CT Studd went to uncharted regions of central Africa. After already serving 21 years in China and India, he went to invest his final years in the heart of Africa's vast, dark jungles among the fierce, cannibal, head-hunting pygmies.

By the hot, steamy summer of 1931 his congregation that sat for his Bible teaching numbered thousands of former headhunters. Their bodies, formerly the habitation of dark, foul fiends from the pit—are temples of the Living God. Before their beloved father in the faith they sit in an immense sea of white-toothed smiles. With faces turned heavenward they sing of the sweet by and by and that beautiful shore they will someday see.

Passed now are the years of darkness and savagery. The former enemies sit shoulder to shoulder. No weapons of war are left, only the bond of love. But these days in July would be the last sight of his dear saintly converts Studd would see on earth. After his message uttered between gasps for air, with every ear strained to catch each word, he is carried back to his hut. Exhausted, he rests for the day; though only his Savior knew it was his last.

In the night the Faithful Shepherd who had led him to China, then India and finally to the very heart of Africa -took CT home after a 21 year ministry in the Congo. In the morning only the shriveled earthly tent of his body was left. But around that hut and to the furthest reaches of the jungles and on mission stations around the world, the footprints of this giant can be found today.

In Africa at his death there were 30,000 fellowshipping in the churches, born again, baptized and disciplined saints whom C.T. found in 1910 as naked, murderous, grossly immoral cannibals butchering each other in the darkest jungles of Africa. That reminds me again that...

The Only Thing We Can Take To Heaven are People

Just think about what has resulted from the life-investment C.T. Studd made when he opened the Word, and taught the truths of grace-energized living to those people. Today, at this very moment, they all are singing around the Throne of the Lamb, clothed in white raiment and worshipping Jesus Christ with their spiritual father C.T. Studd. Can there be anything greater than taking people with us to Heaven that we have been a part of bringing to Christ? I don't think anything can compare to that hope, joy, and crown of rejoicing (1 Th. 2:19-20) as Paul calls those we bring with us to Heaven! Look back at [Titus 1:12-13](#):

Titus 1:12-13 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 (NKJV)

Again we see from these two verses that when the Gospel of Jesus Christ entered the Roman world of the New Testament the landscape was very bleak. Christ's church was born into a sin-warped, sin-darkened world of mixed-up marriages, sin-scarred lives, and confused families.

I really believe that this insight into the Cretan culture can stir our hearts to glorify the amazing grace and saving power of God.

- If the Gospel of Christ can reach into a culture of people who were the descendents of the wicked, pagan Old Testament Philistines and build them into grace-energized servants of Christ's church—**He can work with any man, no matter what his past.**
- If God can make saints out of people who had so descended in their personal character until Paul describes them with this trio of disparaging words—**He can change any man no matter how weak, how wicked, how undisciplined.**

That is why Titus tells us that...

God has a Six Desires For Every Mature Man

What was the plan God had in mind to transform the men of Crete? The same plan He has for all the mature men of Christ's church! Six qualities are to become the life-priorities for grace-energized men. Listen to the first trio of godly choices in...

Titus 2:2 Teach the older men to be sober, reverent, temperate...

- 1. MAINTAINING A BALANCED LIFE IN AN OBSESSIVE-COMPLUSIVE WORLD**
v. 2a "sober"
- 2. GETTING SERIOUS ABOUT LIFE IN AN AMUSED WORLD**
v.2b "reverent"

3. LIVING A CONSISTENT LIFE IN A FOOLISH WORLD

v.2c “temperate”

Then Paul gives the second trio of qualities...**Sound in faith, in love, in patience.**

4. GUARDING A HEALTHY MIND IN A SICK WORLD

v.2d “sound in faith”

5. STAYING TENDER HEARTED IN A CRUEL WORLD

v.2e “[sound] in love”

6. FINISHING HOPEFULLY IN A DESPAIRING WORLD

v.2f “[sound] in patience”

Grace-energized men living in a sin-energized world is God’s plan.

God is on the lookout for men who are sold-out, full-hearted, true-seekers of Him.

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. These six are what God expects, what God wants, what His grace can energize you to become—if only you will yield to Him.

As you sit 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?

If not, why not surrender to Him right now? Bow your head and heart before the Lord and whisper to Him in your heart that you want to become the man He wants you to be starting TODAY!

[1] This word is the adjective form of the Hebrew verb shalam. **8003 shalem**: perfect 16, whole 4, full 2, just 1, peaceable 1, misc 3; 27x in Old Testament : complete, safe, peaceful, perfect, whole, full, at peace; full, perfect; finished; **7999 shalam**; verb; be at peace; to be complete, be sound
[2] STRESS MESS IN U.S., By MARK JOYELLA and ELAINE CHAN, *October 25, 2007*:
http://www.nypost.com/php/pfriendly/print.php?url=http://www.nypost.com/seven/10252007/news/nationalnews/stress_mess_in_u_s_.htm
[3] Born 1858, and went on after salvation to serve in China 1885-1900; then to serve in India 1900-1906; returning to organize a mission in England 1906-1908; and finally to expend his life in Africa from 1910-1931. His beloved wife Mrs. Studd died in 1929. And finally C.T. died July 1931.

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