

The 21st Century Woman of Grace:

That they Admonish

“Investing My Life in Others in

A Detached World”

Titus 2:4a

As we open to Titus 2:4 look at the first three words: “that they admonish”. This is the final quality God desires to see in every older woman of grace, which describes their lifestyle of admonishing, encouraging, or calling others to realize what God has clearly stated they are supposed to do.

This quality is God’s call for women of grace to wise living, encouraging counsel, discreet or focused living, and restraining life choices. In the English-speaking world, when we see someone doing something totally unprofitable, that shows they are oblivious to something far greater they should be doing there is an expression that goes something like: ‘you are just arranging deck chairs on the sinking Titanic’.

That is an almost 100-year old expression for ‘refocusing their attention’, or pointing out that there is something far greater they should be doing.

The term Paul uses in verse 4 captures that very idea for Christians. We are called by God to something so much greater than us, so much bigger than anything else we could find to do.

As we go through life, we more and more learn what God expects from us, and respond. Then we notice that some of our friends are wasting their life doing things that do not please the Lord. This word Paul uses is a call to each of us to first examine our life, and then reach out to the lives of others so that none of us waste our precious, never to be repeated moments in life:

Arranging Deck Chairs On the Sinking Titanic

I have always looked a little differently at the Titanic than others may, because of my grandmother’s experience. On April 10, 1912 as the greatest, fastest, largest, and most expensive ship in the entire world docked at Southampton, my grandmother looked wistfully at its grandeur.

She held a lowest deck, third-class ticket in her hand to the maiden voyage of the Titanic, but as she stood in line at the White Star Lines office, she had to get a refund. Her passport papers from the embassy had gone through, new life in America was just a

walk up the gangway; but a clerk had failed to sign and stamp one area of the paperwork; and she was denied boarding on the mighty ocean liner.

As the blast of the Titanic's departure horn sounded, my grandmother was handed tickets for another ship, the TSS Rotterdam, to sail third-class on another day, so she could go back after the weekend and get her paper work signed.

We all know the story of what happened just 4 days later as the Titanic plummeted to its watery grave two miles beneath the icy waters of the North Atlantic. For me, I have always been amazed at God's Providence in that clerk's omission without which my mother would never have been born in 1920, nor me in 1956, nor any of our 8 children since 1985.

With that scene in your mind, look back to Titus 2:1-4, and feel in your heart the urgency of this word we are listening to, that God has spoken to us in His Bible.

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,

Pray

If you were on that sinking Titanic 98 years ago, and saw one of your close friends oblivious to the disaster soon to swallow them, busily rearranging and straightening the deck chairs. Just think of how clearly you would feel your responsibility to them.

Wouldn't you want to look that person in the eyes and say, "What you are doing is wonderful and helpful; but, what you don't understand is that you are investing all your efforts on a sinking ship that will be plunging soon into the depths. Focus on what you are supposed to be doing here: getting yourself and as many people as will respond, off this doomed ship!"

That would be an example of calling the deck-chair-arranger to their senses.

That is exactly what Titus 2:4 calls women of grace to be doing with fellow-believers.

We have been saved from doom; and the One who saved us left us here to live a life that is useful to Him. To be useful we have to get in step with the plan He left us in His Word. We were left on earth to please God by following the clearly described lifestyle He left for us to follow; and He commanded us to spend our lives investing in the lives of people showing them how to also be Christ's disciples like we are.

This means that a mature woman of grace is a believer who wants to be personally **Investing in others in a Detached World**. We can confidently conclude that this quality of going to people and pointing out to them the need to follow God's plan is:

What God Wants in Every Believer

This is the only universal character quality of this list. In the space of the six verses in Titus 2:2-8, Paul declares this quality God desires is stated as part of the life of faith in Christ's church.

- Titus 2:2 that the older men be sober, reverent, **temperate**¹ [4998 *sophron*, adj.] sound in faith, in love, in patience; NKJV
- Titus 2:4 that they (the older women) **admonish**² (4994 *sophronidzo* verb 1x) the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, NKJV
- Titus 2:5 [younger women] **to be discreet** (4998), chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. NKJV
- Titus 2:6 Likewise exhort the younger men to **be sober-minded** [4993 *sophroneo*], NKJV; the key to survival in a wild and distracting world.

With Bibles open to Titus 2:4 lets have a pop-quiz:

- What is the one word that sums up the **only** spiritual quality God asked to be **personally taught** as what EVERYONE in Christ's Church should have?
- What is the one word that sums up the first life-style choice for every younger man who wants to mature his heart and life in God's Word?
- What is the one word that sums up of the ministry of every older woman of grace who has allowed the Lord to shape her heart's desires to be His?
- What is the one word that sums up a characteristic shared by every older man and younger woman?

The answer to all of those questions is the single word that God inspired Paul to write to Titus in Titus 2:4. We are looking at what we may call the universal quality we all need to embrace, a life-long task of:

Encouraging People to Respond to God

We live out each day surrounded by doomed people who are not even aware of the judgment for their sin they will eternally face. But if we are not careful to reach out and touch other's lives with God's Word, all that we do in life is no more valuable than arranging chairs on a sinking ship: because we are not doing what is useful to God.

¹ This word (Strong's number 4998 *sophron*: of a sound mind, sane, in one's senses; curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate) is an adjective that occurs 4x in the New Testament:

² We find this same word as an action verb (4994 *sophronidzo* verb 1x) describing the need for the older, godly grace-energized women to exhort earnestly the younger women by "restoring them to their senses, so they moderate, control, curb their minds".

The Greek word God inspires Paul to write is **sophron** translated in the New Testament as “discreet, sensible, or self-controlled”. The meaning of this word is vital to our spiritual lives. God is asking for believers to desire and seek by His grace to be:

“...serious about spiritual things; not being known as a clown; living a disciplined life: self-controlled and not addicted to anything; in control of your choices, knowing your priorities; serious about life; temperate and avoiding excesses; a clarity of thought that leads to an orderly life.”³

The universal application is that God wants all of us to be: serious about spiritual things; and God Wants all of us restoring others to serious spiritual living.

God is looking for godly, mature women who will make it a life-long goal to resist the temptation of self-absorption in all the activities of life and instead begin to always be on the lookout for younger women to come alongside and call them to their senses, by pointing out to them what God desires for their lives. God has said that we all are living on a sinking ship. This planet is headed not for a watery grave but a fiery one. Everything around us will someday be burned up and completely consumed.

This wise, focused, and restrained living was the single character quality God wanted in every level of His Church.. This is the only common denominator that describes what God expects from everyone, and that He personally promises:

His Grace To Empower

Look down at the end of this great passage in Titus 2:12, and notice that for the fifth time in this short passage, this word is repeated again down there:

“ teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should **live soberly** [4996 **sophron**]⁴, righteously, and godly in the present age” (NKJV)

His grace teaches us how to live a disciplined life: which means self-controlled and not addicted to anything; so as believers we are in control of our choices, so we choose to seek out God’s priorities.

People of Paul’s day were immersed in a self-seeking, lust-feeding culture.

When they came to Christ they had to go on living in that world. To make it through life without getting neutralized, defeated, and sidelined, Paul starts with the key to godly living.

For a believing marriage partners, this quality of self-restraint learned as a young person, leads to a mutual submission that characterizes a godly, love prompted marriage and home. Each building block of a godly lifestyle, including a self-sacrificing

³ These definitions are from MacArthur, Shepherdology: A Master Plan for Church Leadership, Panorama City, CA: Masters Fellowship, 1989.

⁴ This same word is found as an adverb (4996 **sophronos** adverb 1x: ‘with sound mind, soberly, temperately, discreetly’) further down in this chapter.

spirit, a loving and tender tongue, and a compassionate heart—all flow from self-restraint.

What would this admonishing/encouraging ministry look like? Just using these 7 words starting here in v. 4, this is what a godly older woman would teach younger ladies of any age:

God has a Seven Desires For Every Young Woman

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

1. If you are married, or ever are going to get married **God wants you to Love your Husbands:** but whether you ever are married or not, the God of the Universe is pleased by your life if you cultivate—Self-sacrificing love in a selfish world. That is lesson number one!
2. If you are married and have children, **God wants you to Love your Children:** but even if you are never married or have children, the God of the Universe is pleased by your life if you cultivate—Nurturing love in a loveless world. That is lesson number two!
3. No matter what your situation, background, or temperament, the **God who owns you wants you to be Discreet:** He is pleased when you Focus on God in a foolish world. That is lesson number three!
4. Even in the midst of a society given to wickedness, even if everyone else does it, if you want your life to be rewarded with the greatest of all joy when you hear Christ's "Well done, good and faithful servant", then you must **obey the desire of God that you be Chaste:** Jesus Christ is pleased when He sees you Pursuing modesty in an immodest world. That is lesson number four!
5. If you are married, with or without children, the God who made you desires that you respond to His call to be a **Homemaker:** but even if you are never married, and whether or not you have children, God asks you to please Him by Pursuing a welcoming home in a hostile world. That is lesson number five!
6. The colder and darker the world may get, the **Lord wants us standing out clearly as Good:** our Master is pleased when we are Pursuing kindness in a harsh world. That is lesson number six!
7. And finally, for every woman who is married, the **Lord has clearly called you to an attitude of Submission to your Husband:** but whether or not you are ever married, God is pleased by you Pursuing submission in a rebellious world. That is lesson number seven!

Ladies, this is God's clearly stated desire for you. Have you said yes to Him?

Offer your time, your words, your schedule to Him. Cry out to Him that you:

Won't Waste Your Life Arranging Deck Chairs

The world is sinking all around us, generation after generation passes into eternity covered by their sins, sinking to the depths of eternal punishment.

To most widely impact our culture, to most clearly present the Gospel: the Lord has designed for Christ's church to live before a watching world a life that conforms to His will.

Each new generation of believers needs to be brought to their senses.

They must be personally nurtured and challenged to stop ignoring God's plan, and going with the flow of what will just be destroyed with the world.

The life that counts is a life invested for God, into the lives of others, following His Word.

Are you wasting your precious days on this sinking ship by not offering your life back to God?

Why not renew your willingness to be a godly woman of grace today?

He wants you investing in His Church, and explaining to people that following Jesus Christ is the ONLY lifeboat.

He is the Way, the Truth, and the only way to Life.

God Wants our Usefulness

To apply this word, a woman of grace would come alongside other women and as they befriend them they would ask them if they wanted to know what God expected from them in His Word. In the context of Bible study and discussions as friends they would:

- **Encourage the younger woman in** what is worth living for, she invests her time, money, and strength carefully, living by priority rather than the moment—and has become contented with fewer and simpler things.
- **Encourage the younger woman in** how to exercise appropriate emphasis upon the priorities they have concluded are theirs before God.
- **Encourage the younger woman** to not give in to overindulgence, knowing what God's Word that the pleasures gleaned from self-indulgence cost far more than they are worth.
- **Encourage the younger woman in** mental sobriety exhibited in self-restraint, a freedom from the debilitations of rash decisions, words and behavior, as well as being stable, circumspect, and clear-thinking.
- **Encourage the younger woman** to be in charge of their priorities, to be steadfast, morally decisive, and not under the sway of the various allurements of the world, their flesh, and the devil.
- **Encourage the younger woman** to not be controlled by outside circumstances but directed by inward convictions. In English we would say they are level-headed, clear-minded, well-balanced, and unwavering.

Words that God Chose for Us

That brings us back to the plan of God for your mind. When the Lord set out the description of the godly New Testament woman of grace He chose a word that deeply communicates His desire. That word is the Greek word **sophronizosin**.

There are many ways to study the Bible: book studies, chapter studies, verse studies, subject and topic studies, background studies—but perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Bible studies are those that examine closely the individual words that God chose to use in His Book. That is what we will be doing this morning.

Because God's Word is the best commentary on God's Word join me for a study of this very uniquely Christian word. God used this word only to describe believers, and makes it a quality He wants to see in all believers.

The basic meaning of this word **sophronizosin** in the New Testament (a Greek word here as an adjective) is being serious about spiritual things; living a disciplined life: which means self-controlled and not addicted to anything.

Sophronizosin is part of a family of New Testament words that use the noun, verb, adverb, and adjective form of the very same word. Let's look at these words in the order they appear in the Greek vocabulary of the New Testament.

1. God Wants You Serious About Spiritual Things

This word (Strong's number 4998 **sophron:** of a sound mind, sane, in one's senses; curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate) is an adjective that occurs 4x in the New Testament:

- Titus 2:5 [younger women] **to be discreet**, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. NKJV
- Titus 2:2 that the older men be sober, reverent, **temperate**, sound in faith, in love, in patience; NKJV
- Titus 1:8 [an elder] but hospitable, a lover of what is good, **sober-minded**, just, holy, self-controlled, NKJV
- I Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, **sober-minded**, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; NKJV

2. God Wants You Restoring Others to Serious Spiritual Living

We find this same word as an action verb (4994 **sophronidzo** verb 1x) describing the need for the older, godly grace-energized women to exhort earnestly the younger women by "restoring them to their senses, so they moderate, control, curb their minds". That is the sense of this word in--

Titus 2:4 that they **admonish** the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, NKJV

This same word is found as an adverb (4996 **sophronos** adverb 1x: 'with sound mind, soberly, temperately, discreetly') further down in this chapter.

Titus 2:12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should **live soberly**, righteously, and godly in the present age, NKJV

- God says that His grace-energizes us into being serious about spiritual things;
- His grace teaches us how to live a disciplined life: which means self-controlled and not addicted to anything;
- Believers energized by God's grace are in control of their choices, seeking out God's priorities;
- God wants us serious about life, temperate, and avoiding excesses;
- God's grace gives us a clarity of thought that leads to an orderly life;

- His grace leads us to thinking through the Philippians 4:8 grid.

3. God Wants You Regaining a Confident Mind

Again we find this word in a noun form with another shade of meaning (4995 **sophronismos** noun/masc. 1x: 'an admonishing or calling to soundness of mind, to moderation and self-control; self-control, moderation') as Paul encourages Timothy his son in the faith. Timothy exhibited a problem many believers struggle with, he was timid and fearful. This verse was Paul's strong encouragement to him in his struggle.

2 Timothy 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of **a sound mind**. NKJV

Even a casual reading of II Timothy 1:4-8 leads us to see that Timothy was fearful, timid, felt worthless even to the point of tears, and even struggled with being 'ashamed' of his ministry for the Lord.

Note that Paul does not harshly rebuke him, but gently reminds him of many things. He tells Timothy he has nothing to be ashamed of. He had a great upbringing though his father didn't help, his mother and grandmother were godly (II Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15). Paul reminds Timothy of his special position as a choice servant of the Lord, personally trained (Acts 16:3) with a special gifting (II Timothy 1:6). In short Paul says there is no reason that Timothy should be timid and fearful—yet he was!

Timothy appears to have a life-long need for encouragement to be bold and go on serving the Lord. It is very possible that the stomach problems he struggled with (I Timothy 5:23) were directly tied to his emotional problems of a fearful and timid personality.

If you are a person that feels uncomfortable around people, if you draw back from people who reach out to you, if you feel inferior to others, and you are afraid of always saying the wrong thing so that people dislike you—then welcome to the club.

One of the greatest pastors and servants of the Lord of all time was so much like you. Timothy, son-in-the-faith to Paul, servant-of-the-Lord to the largest church of the New Testament world was just like you. Paul does not chastise him, scold him, rebuke him harshly, or say that he was unspiritual. Rather, Paul says give your mind back to Christ's control each time you start to fear.

The fear, the discomfort, the feelings of inferiority and shame that Timothy felt were just part of living inside a fallen body, with flesh-influenced minds and emotions. The solution was to make a conscious choice by faith to keep surrendering his mind back under Christ's control. Paul was saying—

- Timothy, God's grace can energize your mind to understand who you are in Christ;
- Timothy, His grace teaches your mind to live a disciplined life: which means self-controlled and not addicted to anything including fear and timidity.

- Timothy, believers energized by God's grace are in control of their choices, seeking out God's priorities which include fearing not;

This one word is variously rendered into four different English words by the top four versions: "teach" (KJV); "admonish" (NKJV); "train" (NIV); and "encourage" (NAS). The context and the word imply that this was to be a process of teaching, explaining, encouraging, training, and holding the young wives to a standard that was unfamiliar to them and yet vital for the success of their marriages and families.

The answer to all of those questions is the word God inspired Paul to write to Titus in Titus 2:4. We are looking at what we may call the universal quality we all need. The word

1. 4998: For Godly Older Men it is translated: "Temperate" as this Greek⁵ word **sophronous** is rendered in the KJV and NKJV; or "Self-controlled" as we find in the ESV and NIV; or "Sensible" as translated in the NAS. This word is chosen by God, and communicates to us the third quality He wants to see in His highly useful and rewarded men which is: **LIVING WISELY IN A FOOLISH WORLD**. God wants older men whose lives are yielded to His control. God wants us to live in such a way that our lives demand an explanation from a watching world. This man's life is characterized by the defining qualities of the Greek word **sophronous** which means, "self-controlled, restored to one's senses, earnest living". God wants a man whose life speaks louder than his words; whose character is noticed and prompts other men to examine their own lives and seek to emulate his joy, his peace, and his walk in the Spirit, in evident and practical ways. The Titus 2 older-man-in-the-faith's life is a pattern for others to use in shaping their own lives.
2. 4994: For godly older women it is translated: "That they admonish" as the Greek⁶ word **sophronizosin** is rendered in the NKJV; or "and so train" in the ESV; or "then they can train" in the NIV; or "that they may encourage" in the NAS. God is looking for godly, mature women who will make it a life long goal to resist the temptation of self-absorption in all the activities of life and instead begin to always be on the lookout for younger women to be personally **Investing in others in a Detached World**.
3. 4998: For godly younger women it is translated: "to be discreet": The Greek⁷ word here is a form of the same word given to all four groups of the church younger women who are in tune with the Lord also are **Focusing on God in a Foolish World**; Titus 2 women train younger women to be **discreet, sensible, wise in the decisions and choices they make**. What a rich resource for new marriages and families to have a young woman walked through those days side-by-side with a godly, Spirit-filled woman who will regularly, personally, individually mentor, mother, coach, and cheer on younger women in skillfully living as a wife, mother, and woman of God on a day to day basis. Titus 2 women were hands on

⁵ Strong's number 4998

⁶ Strong's numbers 4994

⁷ Older men #4998; older women # 4993; here for younger women # 4994; and younger men # 4998.

tutors nurturing younger women in the laboratory of life--walking through life together praying, sharing, learning, and loving.

4. 4993: For godly younger men it is translated: "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;**

One of the strongest forces for spiritual ministry in the local church lies with the older believers. Those who are retired have time for service. It is vital that we mobilize and use these important people. In my own 30 years of pastoral ministry, I have been constantly helped and encouraged by godly older saints who knew how to pray, how to teach God's Word, visit, troubleshoot, and help edify Christ's church.

In teaching what is good they "encourage the young women" (Titus 2:4). This opening phrase of Titus 2:4 "that they admonish" is one Greek word in Paul's letter, the word is **sophronizosin** and means, "to train someone in self-control, restore to senses, admonish and exhort earnestly."

"You will note the similarity of this form to characteristics of elders, "prudent" (1 Tim. 3:2), and older men, "sensible" (Titus 2:2). Older women are to train the younger women to learn the art of self-restraint. This training process requires that you older women be committed to being responsible, confrontive, and affirming in an ongoing relationship with a younger woman."

The first four spiritual qualities are all present to make this quality work. God wants a godly woman whose life speaks louder than her words. A woman whose character is noticed prompts other women to examine their own lives and seek to emulate her joy, her peace, her walk in the Spirit in evident and practical ways. The Titus two older woman-in-the-faith's life is a pattern for others to use in shaping their own lives.

Who is doing the Admonishing/encouraging?

So the older-in-the-faith, godly women of the church were:

- To behave like holy priestesses of the Almighty God,
- To show restraint and discipline of appetites and words,
- To live what they speak so that the younger women want to learn from them how to live and please God in their lives and families.

Godly women live as a priest for God; with guarded tongues; and no excesses; with visible integrity; as earnest mentors