

Text: Titus 2:1-15

Title: “Growing Disciples ... Surrounded by Godly Believers” Pt.2

In the swirling controversy of what has blown up on social media and appeared on the front page of the Star-Telegram this past week I want to remind us of what we learn from Jesus about how we are to view and behave toward women. Jesus always dealt tenderly, respectfully and graciously toward women. He highly valued them regardless of their physical or spiritual condition. Jesus taught that a man is not to look lustfully upon a woman whether in person or in pornography. He calls it heart adultery but it is also degrading to women to see them as mere objects of pleasure. Women were an integral part of the ministry of Jesus. They followed Jesus and care for His needs and He loved them for it. He elevated the status of women by affirming their acts of devotion. Jesus, in His sacrificial death on the Cross, set the example for how husbands are to love their wives, laying down their lives for them. He would never demean or abuse His bride, the church. And husbands should never demean or abuse their wives. After the death of Jesus women were the steady ones who tended to His body. Women were the first eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus. A woman, Mary Magdalene, became the first evangelist of the resurrection. At Pentecost the OT prophecy was fulfilled that the Lord would pour out His Spirit on His servants, both men and women.

Taken together this leads us to the conclusion and the expectation that women and men are to be equally valued as the image-bearers of God. We do not condone disrespectful behavior toward women in any setting. They're not to be spoken of in a crude fashion. Husbands are to protect their wives from verbal, emotional or physical abuse. The spiritual giftedness of women is to be valued along with that of men. Their place in the home and in the church is to be highly esteemed.

So with that in the background let's open our Bibles to Titus 2:1 where we have been studying for the last several weeks. Paul writes to Titus who has been assigned to strengthen the churches on the island of Crete. He is to do so by appointing elders in the churches who will provide the teaching and structure that will enable the churches to produce growing disciples. Paul writes...

Titus 2:1 - You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

Sound doctrine is not just head knowledge about theological matters. Sound doctrine leads to sound behavior or godliness. Jump down to v.11. **Read Titus 2:11-14.**

It says in v.11 that the grace of God brings us salvation and v.12 says that this grace also teaches us to live godly lives. The life to which God calls us is only possible through the grace of God which we receive by faith in Christ. The Christian life isn't a DIY project. It's not about self-improvement. We are changed when we are saved through Christ. In v.14 we see what God is up to ... purifying for Himself a unique people who are zealous for good deeds. The grace of God saves us and sanctifies us to live godly lives.

Sandwiched in between v.1 and v.11 Paul shows Titus what godly living looks like for various groups in the church. In vv.2 & 6 we see what godliness looks like for men. In vv.7-8 we see what godliness looks like for Titus as a pastor. In vv.9-10 we see what godliness looks like for slaves and the way they relate to their masters. But being that it is Mother's Day I want us to focus on what godliness looks like for women. **Read Titus 2:3-5.**

As growing disciples of Jesus we need to be surrounded with godly believers, including the women God places in our families and in our church. Here's where it starts:

1. GODLY WOMEN DEMONSTRATE TRUE REVERENCE.

Paul focuses first in v.3 on the "older women."

ILLUSTRATION – I was taught from my earliest days that you are to never to ask a woman her age. And we have this notion that age is an enemy of women. So there are all kinds of products, treatments and procedures that are supposed to be weapons in the battle against aging. I wonder if that has distracted us from what the Bible considers the most desirable beauty ... the beauty of godliness.

You should know that in the early church they had a particularly high regard for older women. I don't have time to go into detail on this today but you'll see in places like I Timothy 5:3 where proper honor is to be given to older widows. They are to be respected and Paul says, in turn, they are themselves to demonstrate reverence.

Titus 2:3 - Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good.

There are four adjectives in v.3 related to godliness in the lives of older women. First, they are to be "reverent" in their behavior. This word picks up on way priest

would go about their duties in the temple, respectful of and devoted to the things of God.

EXAMPLE: The Gospel of Luke tells us that when Jesus was a baby Mary and Joseph took him to the Temple to present Him to the Lord, similar to our parent/child dedication this morning. In the Temple there was a godly woman named Anna who was an elderly widow. Luke 2:37 says that “she never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.” When she saw Jesus she praised God and began to tell everyone about the Messiah. That’s what reverence looks like.

Second, these reverent women are not to be “slanderers” or malicious gossips. The Bible has so much to say about gossip. Why is it that we can hardly have a conversation without it deteriorating into gossip? I Timothy 5:13 warns us about women who are “gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to.”

ILLUSTRATION – Those of you who are older may remember the TV series *Hee-Haw*. They had a segment where some women sang a song about gossip, “We’re not ones to go ‘round spreading rumors. Really, we’re just not the gossiping kind. O you’ll never hear one of us repeating gossip ... so you better be sure and listen close the first time.”

Third, reverent women are not to be “addicted to much wine.” Apparently this was an issue on the island of Crete because Paul addresses it with potential elders, older men and now older women. Don’t be under the influence of anything but the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, reverent women “teach what is good.” So here we get a glimpse of a woman’s ministry of imparting truth to others. And that leads to the next thing about godly women.

2. GODLY WOMEN REPRODUCE SPIRITUAL DAUGHTERS.

Titus 2:4 - Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children,

Notice that there is to be a culture of disciple-making in the church. Paul has disciplined Titus. Titus is to disciple pastoral leaders who become elders or overseers. Growing disciples need to be surrounded with godly believers so we can admonish one another to godly living. Here specifically, older women are to

mentor younger women. Obviously those who are moms would do this with their daughters. But it goes beyond that. Older women are to be teachers of what is good and they are to train younger women.

This is the fulfillment of the Great Commission of Jesus to go and make disciples ... producing reproducing disciples. Part of discipleship is how fulfill our God-given responsibilities at home. Older ladies, there are younger women around you who would die to have quality time with you to hear the lessons you have learned in life as an older sister. They need strong role models of feminine godliness. Take the initiative. Seek them out. Train and encourage them. This is the way that godly women reproduce spiritual daughters in the Lord.

Specifically older women can train younger women how to “love their husbands and children...” Now this is interesting. The word for “love” does not describe romantic or sensual love. That ebbs and flows in any marriage. And it’s not even a particularly spiritual love, like we find in the word *agape*. This word “love” in v.3 is really just practical affection. Notice that younger women need to be “trained” to love. So it’s not necessarily natural or even spiritual. It’s practical love that a woman can actually learn to give to her husband. He may be unlovely and insensitive. He may miss the mark in a thousand different ways and irritate you to no end. But you can learn to love and to show affection toward your husband and children. Next...

3. GODLY WOMEN POSSESS INNER VIRTUES.

There are five more adjectives in v.5 and the first two are really inner virtues. First it says they are to be self- controlled. Interestingly, this word “self-control” appears five times in Titus. It applies to elders, to men, to women and to all believers. Self-control means being sensible in your behavior. It’s just plain common sense and good judgement. To be “pure” here is the virtue of moral purity, which would most definitely include sexual purity and marital faithfulness.

You see, outer beauty may attract a husband to his wife, but these virtues create an inner beauty that attracts a husband to God.

1 Peter 3:1b-2 – (Unbelieving husbands) may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

So those are the inner virtues that godly women possess. And then...

4. GODLY WOMEN EXHIBIT FAMILY FAITHFULNESS.

The next three adjectives in v.5 describe how a godly woman is faithful to her family responsibilities.

First, v.5 says she is to be “busy at home.” Literally she does her “homework.” It’s a high calling for a woman to be entrusted with the making of a home. Women may have all kinds of other responsibilities in the marketplace or in the church. They are fully capable of the most demanding of leadership duties. But whatever else they may have to do, there’s no higher assignment that God can give to a woman than that of making a home. Many feminists today would call that hogwash, but there’s no disputing the fact that the Bible places great honor on the role of homemaking.

Next, v.5 says they are to be “kind.” We’re talking here about the gentleness and sympathy that is a necessary ingredient for any relationship to work, particularly at home. Mom, you have a front-row seat for some really dumb things your husband and kids do. And you would be justified in sending the whole lot of us off to bed without supper. But I’m reminded that the Bible says that the kindness of God leads to repentance. As you display kindness in the face of all kinds of foolishness you become an instrument God uses to change your husband or your kids.

Then v.5 says godly wives are “to be subject to their husbands.” This is the consistent teaching of the NT. God has placed upon husbands and dads the enormous responsibility to lead their families in every way, including spiritually. Guys, we’ll give an account to God for how we do that. So wives and moms are to allow their husbands to do what God has assigned them to do. So wives should position themselves under the leadership, provision and protection of their husbands.

And this links all the way back to the very first quality of reverence.

Ephesians 5:21 - Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

We all live in submission to someone. We all submit to the authority of the government except when we’re asked to do something unbiblical. We do it out of reverence for Christ. Employees submit to their bosses out of reverence for Christ. Children submit to their parents out of reverence for Christ. And wives submit to

their husband's leadership out of reverence for Christ. And this is all a powerful witness to others.

Titus 2:5c - so that no one will malign the word of God.

The word for "malign" is the word from which we get our word "blaspheme." How many times have we seen the word of God and the testimony of Christ dishonored because believers did not behave in a godly way. When non-believers see that kind of behavior from us they think, "There must not be much to this Jesus business if the people who claim to be His followers don't do what He says." The purpose behind our godly living is that the word of God will be honored in the eyes of others.

Matthew 5:16 - In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

So as godly men love their wives and their kids they are loving Christ. As godly women love their husbands and their kids they are loving Christ. As pastors lovingly lead their churches they are loving Christ. As godly slaves faithfully serve their masters they are loving Christ. And it's all because Christ is purifying for Himself a people who are eager to do what is good.