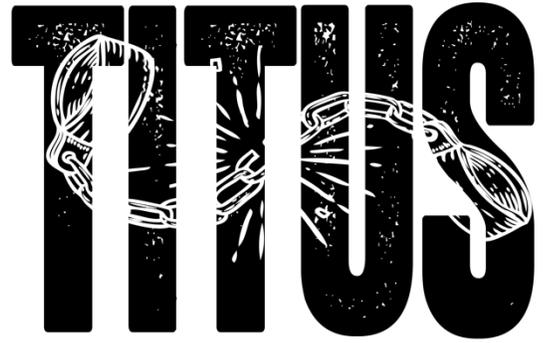


November 10, 2019 | DAVID ANDERSON

The Prime of Life pt 2
Titus 2:3



When is the prime of life?

Many, including me, would argue that our last two decades of life are usually the prime of life spiritually speaking. Our older disciples of Jesus have accepted their own finiteness, they have accepted the imperfections of this present world and they have realized how the world's pleasures can't satisfy.

The older generation has seen the hand of God, has seen prayers answered, has seen God's love walk them through tragic circumstances. They have seen the power of forgiveness and the healing work of the Holy Spirit. They can speak to these things on a deep, profound level because they have experienced this.

The tragedy is that many saints forfeit the prime of their lives through moral failure, bitterness and resentment, unforgiveness, and a list of "what ifs and could haves".

But Paul has a different plan for the older women on the island of Crete. According to Paul in the Book of Titus, when you and I find ourselves in the fourth quarter of life, God calls us to drive those legs into that end zone with every ounce of spiritual, emotional and physical strength left in our bodies. At the beginning of Titus chapter 2, he gets very specific about what is going to allow our older women to get into that end zone.

Older women likewise are to exhibit behavior fitting for those who are holy, not slandering, not slaves to excessive drinking, but teaching what is good. (Titus 2:3)

Chapter 2 begins with an emphatic pronoun, "But as for you". It's in contrast to the false teachers who don't preach sound doctrine, who turn people away from the truth, who subvert households, and whose lives are abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. It's directed to Titus. "Hey, you, Titus, here's what I want you to do. I want you to teach older men, older women, younger men, younger women and slaves what spiritual maturity looks like as they live out their assignments in Crete. Communicate the behavior that goes with sound teaching!"

He gives four qualities of older women: 1) behavior fitting for those who are holy, 2) not slandering, 3) not slaves to excessive drinking, 4) teaching what is good.

Holy/reverent (<i>hieroprepes</i>)	This is the only place in the New Testament where <i>hieroprepes</i> is used. The idea is that the behavior would be fitting for the temple. The older woman's life demonstrates who she belongs to and her life is reserved to worship the living God. The term, especially in the context of Titus, denotes an inward transformation that can be seen by others (e.g. Ignatius, To the Trallians 3.2). The good is seen!
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<p>Not slandering (<i>diabolos</i>)</p>	<p>It's the exact same term used of Satan in the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament). Satan is diabolical because Satan is "the accuser" (1 Chr. 21:1, Job 1, Zech. 3:1). Revelation 12:10 says Satan accuses the brothers and sisters all day and all night.</p> <p>Satan does a good enough job accusing and slandering us; he doesn't need anyone's help. And He certainly doesn't need anyone's help from the family of God. Why do we slander others? Because we don't understand who we are in Jesus Christ. We feel insignificant or insecure or powerless, and for that moment when we are slandering someone we feel important or interesting or entitled.</p>
<p>Not slaves to excessive drinking (<i>doulos</i>)</p>	<p>Paul goes on to say to the older women - your last leg of life should not be characterized by enslavement to alcohol. Clearly they liked to party in Crete. The older men got the same warning. There were "liberated" Roman women at Cretan dinners and banquets and these women were linked to a loss of self-control that hurt the proclamation of the Gospel.</p>
<p>Teaching what is good (<i>kalodidaskalos</i>)</p>	<p>The older women's lives should be characterized not by slander or enslavement to alcohol, but instead should be characterized by teaching what is good.</p>

WHO WILL TEACH THE NEXT GENERATION ABOUT JESUS?

We need an army of spiritual mothers and grandmothers who will teach the goodness, truth and grace of Jesus Christ.

We don't want to be in our 50s, 60s, 70s, or 80s and tired of each other, tired of life, tired of Jesus. We don't want to be just rerunning the old unresolved stuff of our past, never able to make breakthroughs with all the junk that paralyzes the good works that Jesus has for us.

The Bible doesn't ever talk about retirement. The saints of God must fall exhausted across the finish line of life. We need to serve Jesus Christ down to our last breath.

Here are three questions every godly, older woman must constantly ask herself:

1. How can I make a difference?
2. Who can I encourage or disciple? Who can I teach what is good?
3. What needs can I meet? (in my church, neighborhood, family, at work?)