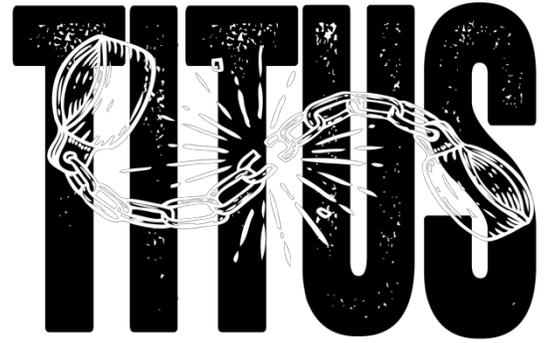


November 24, 2019 | DAVID ANDERSON

Paul's Instruction to Younger Men  
Titus 2:6-8



As Paul writes to Titus, he has challenged the older men, the older women, the younger women and now he turns his attention to the younger men. For the younger men, he doesn't have a list of things like he had with the other groups (2:1-5), Paul chooses one thing and only one thing to focus on.

There is one thing that will unlock the treasures of heaven and meaning for young men. There is one key that is absolutely critical for this stage of life for young men. Paul says one thing he wants the young men to be about—*sōphronēō*.

*Sōphronēō* is the Greek word for self-control. It's the idea of being sensible, balanced, thoughtful, delaying gratification, walking through the powerful impulses of life and sacrificing today for tomorrow.

What was undermining the lives and ministry of the young men in Crete was self-control. What may be undermining the life and ministry of the young men in this church family is self-control. Paul is presenting an alternative to the self-absorption of his day. Paul declares, "Young men, what you are looking for comes through the Spirit led process of denying yourself, delaying gratification and pursuing true meaning in Jesus Christ."

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<sup>6</sup> Encourage younger men likewise to be self-controlled,<sup>7</sup> showing yourself to be an example of good works in every way. In your teaching show integrity, dignity, <sup>8</sup> and a sound message that cannot be criticized, so that any opponent will be at a loss, because he has nothing evil to say about us. (Titus 2:6-8)

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The word, encourage, *parakaleo*, is to come alongside of someone and share with them. This is the primary ministry of the Holy Spirit described in the Upper Room Discourse as He guides us to Christ and His teaching (John 16:13-14).

*Sōphronēō* comes from a root word that combines two words: 1) *Soos* (safe) and 2) *Phren* (what regulates life). Paul has already used this word repeatedly--elders (1:8); older men (2:2); older women (2:4) and, younger women (2:5). He will use it again in a few verses in reference to all believers (2:12). The path out of immaturity according to Paul is Spirit-led self-control. It has a domino effect that sets a young man on the path to significance and success and service within God's kingdom.

Which demographic does Titus fit into? Titus fits in this category of young men. He is an uncircumcised Gentile that has been transformed by the grace of God (Gal. 2:1-14, 2 Cor. 2, 7, 8, 12). Titus is a young pastor, a pastor in training who was left to solidify the "wild west" churches on the island of Crete (Titus 1).

Who are the opponents that Paul is talking about? I think Paul is talking about the false teachers within the church that Paul describes at the end of Titus 1 but I think he is also talking about the watching, unbelieving culture and world of Crete. He tells the younger women to live in such a way

that the message of the Gospel would not be discredited (vs. 5). In vs. 15, Paul says, communicate these exhortations with full authority and don't let anyone look down on you.

Paul tells Titus, to be an example or pattern of good works. Interesting Greek word, it means to make an impression. Titus, be a pattern, make an impression regarding good works in the life of these young men. The false teachers in Crete are insubordinate, idle talkers and deceivers. They're not showing much restraint or self-control. In vs. 16, they profess to know God, but in works they deny him. Being disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. Titus not you. Be a pattern of good work. Show integrity and dignity in your life and teaching. This "healthy" or "sound" message is another description of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Titus 1:10-11).

The goal isn't that the Cretan society would think well of Christians; the goal is for Titus and the other church members to live in such a way that no corruption charges could be leveled against them. Titus' teaching must be respectable and distance itself from the opponent's rambling arguments (1:10-11; 3:9). Be faithful Titus because your faithful teaching of the Gospel of Grace, your faithful living out of this Gospel disarms your opponents.

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### According to Titus, why did Jesus come?

Jesus "gave Himself for us to set us free from every kind of lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people who are truly His, who are eager to do good" (2:14).

Paul's appeal to the younger men is to unlock their meaning in Christ through self-control which will allow them to grow up and to be eager to be good. What does this practically mean?

- Don't constantly seek to be entertained.
- Keep your word.
- Do the most difficult task first.
- Finish what you start.
- Accept correction.
- Practice self-denial.
- Welcome responsibility.

Two things we need to understand about self-control: 1) there is something in us that needs to be bridled and 2) you are not going to bridle it.

There is a traitor within us. There is a traitor that the Bible calls the flesh in us that lowers the drawbridge of our life to all kinds of doubts, temptations, unforgiveness and sin. 1 Corinthians 15 says this traitor will not be removed from us until Jesus returns and gives us a resurrected body. We do not have the power in ourselves to restrain ourselves. You've tried and I've tried and we have all failed.

True self-control instead is a gift from above, produced in and through us by the Holy Spirit as we realize who we are in Jesus (Titus 2:11-14, 3:3-7). It's a fruit of the Holy Spirit that comes when we walk in the Spirit, we depend on the Spirit (Gal. 5).

Start with these questions:

- 1) Where are you lacking self-control?
- 2) How is your lack of self-control impacting you, your family, your life, meaning all that Jesus is offering you?
- 3) If it is true that self-control is a gift from above. If it's true that self-control is a gift of the Holy Spirit. What are you asking Him to do with this? What is He asking you to do with this?