

TITUS 2:3-5

LESSON 2 – OLDER WOMEN

GOD'S WORD FOR WOMEN TODAY

Vicki Lewis

TITUS 2:3-5 (NASB95)

Let's review the verses we are studying:

“Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.”

How are these truths relevant to women today?

OVERVIEW

In this lesson we will study what Paul wrote to Titus about the role of the older women in the church.

- **What should mature women be like in terms of their character or behavior?**
- **What should older women do with their experience, wisdom, and spiritual maturity?**

WHAT SHOULD THE OLDER WOMEN BE LIKE?

“Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good” (Titus 2:3)

Having told Titus what the qualifications for church elders are (Titus 1:5-19) and what the character and behavior of the older men should be like (Titus 2:2) Paul then addresses the character and behavior of older women within the church.

In the same manner as the older men are described, Paul has instructions for two groups of women - older and younger.

AMPLIFIED BIBLE, CLASSIC EDITION

- **“Bid the older women similarly to be reverent and devout in their deportment as becomes those engaged in sacred service, not slanderers or slaves to drink. They are to give good counsel and be teachers of what is right and noble”**
- **Deportment: “manner of acting in relation to the duties of life; behavior; demeanor; conduct” (1828); “the manner in which one conducts oneself” (M-W)**
- **“...As becomes those engaged in sacred service”**
- **What an amazing description of older women!**
- **Is this how society perceives older women today?**

HOW ARE OLDER WOMEN SOMETIMES VIEWED?

"We have bought into the notion that older people have had their day of usefulness and ought to make way for the young. But the principle here is quite the opposite. With age and experience come wisdom, and many older women have discovered secrets of godly living in relation to their husbands, children and neighbors and in the workplace that could save younger women a lot of unnecessary grief. And when the unavoidable trials come to the young woman, who better to guide her through than an older sister who has been through it before? Somehow the church must see that younger women have contact with older women."

VERSE 3: HOW OLD ARE "OLDER WOMEN?"

- The Greek word for "older women" is *presbyteris* (pres-B00-tis)(#4347), an old woman (Strong's)
- The feminine counterpart to "older men" in Titus 2:2
- "Paul does not specify the age a woman would have to be to qualify to be older. But childbearing typically ends at about 40-45 years of age and, correspondingly, child-rearing ends at about 60 to 65. It therefore seems reasonable to take older women as referring to women that are at least 60 years old." John MacArthur
- Remember this context.

VERSE 3: HOW OLD ARE "OLDER" WOMEN?

In a broader sense, "Being an older woman is not necessarily about being a certain age. It is about being willing to look at the younger women coming behind us and desiring to see them be nurtured in their faith. We should desire to invest in the Body of Christ through teaching by word and example those who are younger, whether we are 30 or 80 years old."

What might this look like?

The specific number of birthdays is not as important as the combination of life experience, faith, and maturity.

PRAY TO HAVE A "PAUL" AND A "TIMOTHY"

Not "Am I old enough to be an older woman?" but "To whom am I an older woman?"

- A woman of 35 can have wisdom to share with a college student or a new career woman.
- A married woman can have knowledge to share with a newly married woman.
- A mother of teenagers can have experience on loving and raising young children.
- Aunts and uncles can definitely assist in caring for and loving their nieces and nephews.
- These relationships will change over time.

VERSE 3: CHARACTER REFERENCES

Four qualities of the mature Christian woman are listed, 2 positive and 2 negative:

1. **Be reverent in their behavior:** “teach the older women to live in a way that honors God” (NLT); “to be reverent in the way they live” (NIV)
2. **Not malicious gossips:** “not false accusers” (KJV); “not slanderers” (ESV)
3. **Nor enslaved to much wine:** “Nor addicted to much wine” (AMP); not “slaves to much wine” (ESV)
4. **Teaching good things:** “teach what is good” (ESV); “teachers of good things” (KJV)

(1) REVERENT IN THEIR BEHAVIOR

- *Hieroprepés*, (hee-er-op-rep-ACE) "suited to a sacred character, that which is befitting in persons, actions or things consecrated to God"
- Reverent behavior: acting as a representative of God; to be godly examples of holiness; Anna is such an example (Luke 2:37-38)
- The compound word means venerable (calling forth respect through age, character, or attainments), pertaining to proper reverence, worthy of reverence.
- Has a root meaning of being "priest-like" and came to refer to that which is appropriate to holiness. These women were to be like people [priests] engaged or employed in sacred duties or service.
- They are to carry into daily life the demeanor of that called for of priests in the temple.

(2) NOT MALICIOUS GOSSIPS

- Malicious gossips (false accusers or slanderers) (#1228) (*diabolos*) (dee-AB-oh-los)
- Not just idle chatter, the word “malicious gossips” is one word, *diabolos*, which is the very name of Satan used of him 34 times in the N.T. Satan has always been a false accuser
- The unwise sharing of sensitive or confidential information; “They refuse to listen to, much less propagate, slanderous or demeaning words about others.” John MacArthur
- SLANDER (1828) = “A false tale or report maliciously [with deliberate intention to injure] uttered. and tending to injure the reputation of another by lessening him in the esteem of his fellow citizens, to tarnish or impair the reputation of one by false tales”
- A godly woman will not repeat damaging stories about others; she will not spread rumors or half-truths that damage someone’s reputation

(3) NOT ENSLAVED TO MUCH WINE

- “Enslaved” (#1402) (*douloo*) (doo-LAH-oh) means to be brought into bondage by wine, in this case, or to be made a slave of
- A godly older women is not to be in bondage to or addicted to wine, “temperate in their use of wine” (Wiersbe)
- Not given to drunkenness (Wuest) – The perfect tense speaks here of a confirmed drunkard. Drunkenness among women was especially abhorred in Roman tradition.
- Today “not given to much” goes far beyond merely wine. Whatever we do is to be tempered by the glory of God. He must be the object and focus of all we do.
- “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” 1 Corinthians 10:31

(4) TEACHING GOOD THINGS

- The compound word *kalodidáskalos*, (kal-od-id-AS-kal-os) (#2567); teaching that which is good, a teacher of goodness; used nowhere else
- Having spiritual integrity; godly women living what they teach; “instruction in that which is noble, excellent, and lofty” (MacArthur)
- “It is not only that older women should show the younger mothers how to keep house, but that they put within their hearts and minds the right spiritual and mental attitudes.” (Wiersbe)
- This older woman is to be a teacher of good, beautiful and beneficial things both by example and instruction; this was a greatly needed mission then and in our day.
- Note that it was the older women, not Titus, that were to teach the younger women how to be truly beautiful, namely, to be godly.

VERSE 4: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

- “...so that they may encourage the young women...”
- “Encourage” = *sōphronízō* (so-fron-ID-zo) (#4994) = “to cause someone to be of sound mind and to have self-control; helping others cultivate good judgment and sensibilities” (MacArthur)
- “So that they will wisely train the young women to be sane and sober of mind (temperate, disciplined)” (AMPC)
- Older women are to teach and demonstrate how a younger woman can be of a sound mind, be self-controlled, and have good judgment.
- Quite a challenging job description!

TRAIN THE YOUNGER WOMEN

“Training is the process of bringing a person to an expected standard of proficiency by practice and instruction. The Greek word translated as ‘train’ means ‘to make of sound mind’ (via correction). We don’t need training for something we have already mastered, so we can conclude from this passage that loving one’s husband according to God’s expectations does not come naturally. What does come naturally, because of our sinful nature, is the desire to always have our own way and our own authority, with little to no regard for anyone else.”

SUMMARY

- In this lesson we studied what God's word said about the character and behavior of godly women in their sixties and beyond.
- Unlike the world's dismissal of older women as unnecessary, put out to pasture, or sent off to have some well-deserved rest and fun, God has definite ministry goals for older women.
- "God wants a godly woman whose life speaks louder than her words. A woman whose character is noticed and prompts other women to examine their own lives and seek to emulate her joy, her peace, and her walk in the Spirit in evident and practical ways. The Titus 2 older-woman-in-the-faith's life is a pattern for others to use in shaping their own lives."

NEXT LESSON

- **In Lesson 3 we will study what God's Word said to Titus about the younger women in the church.**
- **There are seven areas that younger women need training for and examples of as they mature in their roles as wives and mothers.**