

Sound Teaching For Sound Living (Tit. 2:1-10)

© 2011 Tony Garland

I. Context

Paul continues his instructions to Titus concerning what needs to be done to establish a healthy Christian community in Crete.

- A. The Need for Elders
- B. Qualifications of Elders
- C. The Task of Elders

II. The Task of Elders

A. Defensive Tasks

1. Idle Talkers and Deceivers

- i. Insubordinate
- ii. Professing with Words but Denying by Actions

2. Mouths Must be Stopped - Households Spiritually Subverted

Upholding truth involves more than just positively teaching that which is right. It also involves the unpleasant need to confront error.

B. Offensive Tasks

The subject of this passage - sound teaching leading to sound living.

III. Sound Teaching Produces Sound Living

But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers [diabolous], not given to much wine, teachers of good things-- that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet [sensible, self-controlled, modest], chaste [pure, innocent], homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Likewise exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. (Titus 2:1-10)

A. Teach First, Apply Second - The New Testament Pattern

As for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine that...

Sound = "healthy, well-grounded, correct"

Doctrine = "teaching"

That = purpose clause, links what follows to the sound teaching.

1. Romans

Chapters 1-11 are primarily doctrinal - teaching truths which are foundational to Christian living. Chapters 12-16 take the foundational truths and seek to apply them in the life of the believer.

i. The "Hinge" Passage - Romans [12:1-2](#)

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

2. Ephesians

Chapters 1-3 focus on the glorious truths and inheritance of the believer. Chapters 4-6 focus on applying those truths in the life of the believer.

i. The "Hinge" Passage - Ephesians [4:1-3](#), [17-23](#)

a. Ephesians [4:1-3](#)

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

b. Ephesians [4:17-23](#)

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind...

B. Danger of Application before Interpretation

How we live grow as Christians is through the renewing of our mind, primarily by digesting the truths of God found in Scripture. When we jump immediately to application and bypass interpretation and meditation then our application will sometimes be inaccurate and our growth will be limited. We will be *professing* Christians, but *living* out-of-step with the will of Christ and the teaching of the Bible.

IV. Believers as a Living Testimony

A. Younger Women

1. Verse 4

admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

(This assumes that the husbands are not expecting obedience in following after or endorsing their own unbiblical behavior.)

B. Younger Men

1. Verses 6-8

Likewise . . . in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works . . . that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed having nothing evil to say of you.

C. Bondservants

1. Verses 9-10

... be obedient ... be well pleasing, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

Adorn is a word based on the same Greek root from which we get the word *cosmetics* and which means "to put in order, arrange" or "to make beautiful and attractive." Paul wants the believers in Crete to live a way of life that recommends the doctrinal teachings--that does credit to the teachings and demonstrates that the teachings are beneficial to society because they are based on truth and a way of living which God has designed for man's benefit.

D. Focus on Godly Behavior

Just look at the characteristics which Paul maintains should be manifest in the life of a Christian!

Sobriety, reverence, temperance, soundness, faithfulness, love, patience, without slander, not given to much wine, teachers of good, lovers of family, discrete, chaste, makes and maintainers of the home, obedient, with integrity, incorruptibility, being

beyond condemnation, pleasing, not answering back, not stealing.

Do these describe Christians in our culture today? They *should!* What would happen if they *did!*

Do you suppose this would have an evangelistic effect upon the culture?

This is why our primary focus *within* the weekly church meeting is to edify and equip *believers* who attend on a regular basis so that *they* can "do the work of the ministry" (Eph. 4:12). When we, as the body of Christ, are equipped doctrinally and serious about applying what we come to know, then we will be a true witness to Christ and the truth of God's Word which will not go unnoticed by those outside.

E. 2 Corinthians 3:2-3

You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

This is an important form of real-world evangelism: how are professing Christians living where the rubber meets the road?! Is this not a serious issue in our own day when so many believers profess to be "Christians," but deny His teachings with the way they live?

F. Fellowship Spanning Age, Sex, and Social Standing

Paul's comments to Titus describe a fellowship containing a healthy mix of age, sex, and differing social background.

1. Older Benefit from Younger

Titus, who appears to be somewhat younger, is speaking God's truth to the older men and women.

Younger saints tend to have a spontaneity of thought and a readiness to question accepted practices which can be healthy for a fellowship. They keep the older saints on their toes and needing to have their sword sharpened in order to readily answer issues which they sometimes raise.

2. Younger Benefit from Older

Older women are teaching and admonishing younger women.

Older saints have great experience and greater wisdom. Both from life experiences and often also from having walked with Christ many more years.

Here we see that the older men are to exercise, among other things, *patience*. No doubt, this is required in some measure due to the brashness and self-assuredness of some of the younger folks who think they know more than they do!

We also see the older women admonishing [literally, to *train, teach advise*] the younger women concerning their important role in marriage and in the home. Here again, the older women have real-world experience concerning the challenges involved and how to best apply God's Word to the task.

Titus is to *exhort the young men*, especially that their way of living would witness to Christ.

3. Spanning Social Status

The fellowship includes both bondservants and free -- and may even had both a bondservant and his master in the same fellowship as equals in Christ.

Nowhere in the NT do we see the idea that differences in age, sex, or social standing within the congregation merit a plethora of ministries addressing the narrow 'felt needs' of each subgroup.

G. Benefits

There are considerable benefits when our ministry is mixed--spanning every possible dimension which secular society tends to cluster into isolated groups.

1. Witness to Work of The Spirit

This in itself is a witness to the work of the Holy Spirit--when we spend significant time with others who we would normally not interact with much in the culture.

2. Antidote to Selfishness

Our comfort zone and selfishness are challenged in a way which is spiritually healthy -- young people have to learn to appreciate things which minister to the oldest saints and vice versa.

3. Broader Exposure to Ideas and Personalities

We benefit from a healthy cross-pollination as various age groups and interests interact.

4. Attending for Biblical Reasons

It weeds out those who come to church for the wrong reason: who find it mainly to be a social club or interesting activity, but who are not seriously in the process of being drawn to Christ and "bearing with one another."

5. A Balanced Emphasis and Teaching

It safeguards the teaching of the church from catering to any particular age or interest group.

V. Christian Growth does not Result from Programs

In recent years, there has been a trend to run churches much like businesses.

1. Identify your potential customers.
2. Develop a "product" which will appeal to their interests or perceived needs.
3. While they are hanging around the ministry, try to "soft-sell" God's truth to them, all the while being careful not to "spook" them away.

Such an approach will never result in true spiritual fruit because it elevates man's schemes above the drawing of the Holy Spirit.

It also makes the fatal mistake of trying to preach God's truth while avoiding hard truths which offend. This is both unbiblical and impossible.

This trend, at its base, is driven by the large measure of *selfishness* which has developed within our culture.

A. Our Selfish Meet-My-Needs Society

When we focus on *activities* as the primary reason people attend Church -- keeping them busy and engaged with others in their same age group -- instead of remaining centered on the teaching of God's Word among a diverse congregation, then we are easily drawn in the direction of our culture which endorses the idea that each person should be catered to individually. In which other society has one had so many choices:

- 1) flavors of ice-cream [QFC's "wall of ice cream"]
- 2) variations in drink flavors and composition [lattes, soda drinks, health drinks, energy drinks]
- 3) colors of cell phone skins, and on and on it goes.

But treating elements of our congregations with this same focus on meeting self-perceived needs leads to ever greater fragmentation within a fellowship. There are fellowships for alcoholics, fellowships for bikers, fellowships for young adults, churches within a church for youth groups, and any number of age-segregated activities.

One large church in another town in our region at one time had Sunday morning classes for "20-somethings," "30-ish," "40s-to-50s", and so on. Such a view of Christian fellowship does not find its basis from the New Testament and seems completely out-of-step with the picture we find in Paul's writings here and elsewhere.

This "specialization" of ministry into narrowly targeted groups is foreign to Scripture.

B. Martyn Lloyd Jones

When we transparently and truly live out the gospel in our day-to-day lives, then our families, our community, and our culture will be transformed. When we are faithful to do this, then God will use the testimony of our lives in an evangelistic way--people will take notice. Instead, the modern Church is swept up by a series of fads focused on attempting to meet the needs of the culture, often through a proliferation of Church programs.

D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, a Welsh preacher of the early 20th century who grew up during the tail end of a great Welsh Revival, understood the priority which Scripture places on the transformed and consistent witness of the lives of believers as an important evangelistic tool. He lived to witness great revival by the Holy Spirit. Yet his approach to Church programs was the antithesis of much of what we hear and see today.

His biographer describes his seemingly-unorthodox approach to church programs at the commencement of taking on the pastorate in Sandfields, Wales:

To bridge the gap with those outside, Sandfields for some years had maintained various activities, including football, musical evenings, a dramatic society, and a 'Brotherhood' on Saturday nights, although with small success, as we have seen. At Dr. Lloyd-Jones' induction, the former pastor, T. J. Lewis, after referring to the fact that he had been unable to reverse the non-church going habit, advised the newcomer that 'he used to go into the streets round about their church and found he could always minister to about six times as many people as he had in his church'. There were others in Sandfields who seemed to think that the best hope lay in the area of children's work: "Our work amongst the children is capable of great expansion," E. T. Rees reported to the Forward Movement headquarters in 1926: "If we had the teachers, a Sunday School of 500 juniors would be obtained within a month." In the event, Dr. Lloyd-Jones had nothing to say about any new programme. To the surprise of the church secretary he seemed to be exclusively interested in the purely "traditional" part of church life, which consisted of the regular Sunday Services . . . , a prayer meeting on Mondays and a mid-week meeting on Wednesdays. Everything else could go, and thus those activities particularly designed to attract the outsiders soon came to an end. The demise of the dramatic [drama] society posed a practical problem, namely what to do with the wooden stage which occupied a part of the church hall? "You can heat the church with it," the new minister told the Committee. -- Ian Murray, "D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones - The First Forty Years" (Carlisle, PN: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1982, 1998) ISBN:0-85151-353-0, pp. 134-135.