

Look for Spiritual Excellence
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Titus 2:1-15

- It has been said that, *“EDUCATION without APPLICATION is only ENTERTAINMENT!”*
- **What does that quote mean? What is the difference between education and application? Hearing versus LISTENING? Reading versus COMPREHENDING?**
- Example: Topical cream --- “skeeter bites!” What are the directions?
- Sadly, many leave church and say, *“I heard that sermon, but it didn’t make any difference.”* Or, *“I read my Bible but I just didn’t get anything out of it.”*

Bible study and Bible teaching are NOT about gaining KNOWLEDGE or hearing some encouraging words; the goal is GETTING WISDOM TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. Wisdom so Christians can LIVE LIKE Christians!

- In chapter 2 of Paul’s letter to Pastor Titus he begins with telling Titus to go beyond just teaching sound doctrine. Verse 1 says:

Titus 2 (ESV)

1 But as for you, (Titus) teach what accords with sound doctrine.

- See the wording? “...teach what accords with sound doctrine.” Titus, don’t just teach sound doctrine...teach the people how to LIVE what that sound doctrine says!
- Then from verses 2 through 10, Paul gets very specific about each age group in the church, and how to APPLY what scripture says about their ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES, to live an EXCELLENT CHRISTIAN LIFE. Christians living like Christians!
- Before we dig into those verses, let’s get some thoughts from all of you.
- **If you were looking to an older Christian as a role model, what QUALITIES would you want them to have?**
- Let’s see what Paul told Titus about this:

2 Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. (ESV)

- **What kind of man do you picture based on Paul’s description?**
- Put another way: (HCSB) *level headed, worthy of respect, sensible*. That word, “sound” is the word from which we get HYGIENE. “Sound” here means HEALTHY. This is a man who has a HEALTHY faith in God, a HEALTHY love for others, and a HEALTHY dose of endurance ---meaning someone to be COUNTED ON.
- **Does this mean an older Christian man has to be dull, boring, and can’t have any fun?**

- One commentator writes: *“Paul is not saying that it is inappropriate for older men to have fun. But he does mean that the fun is to be kept within bounds. Older men are not to play the fool. There is to be a seriousness about them that reflects the seriousness of life and the seriousness of the things of God.”*
- There’s a time for fun, but when wise counsel is needed, we want someone who can also think and LIVE soberly and sensibly.
- How old do I have to be before I have to settle down and live like this? Ancient Greek literature would indicate the word “older” could have meant as young as fifty.
- Even before age fifty, all of us have something to model for younger Christians.
- Men, verse 2 is for YOU and ME even if we’re not quite there yet. This verse is the STANDARD we should be striving for as we MATURE as Christian men.
- What about the ladies?

3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good,

- **Ladies, what do you think these descriptions mean? What is “reverent in behavior?”**
- **Still, just the ladies, what does “not slanderers” mean? “Slaves to much wine?”**
- Paul is saying the ladies have a position of INFLUENCE with the young women...

4 and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

- **Ladies, some today would say this verse is ‘out-dated’. What do YOU think?**
- **Does “working at home” mean a woman shouldn’t work outside the home?**
- **Can you think of another Bible passage that would prove your point?**
- **What DO you think it means?**
- In verse 5 and back in verse 2, both men and women, young and old are to be “self-controlled.” **Why would self-control be important to a Christian witness? What good things come with self-control?**
- Verse 5 says do these things “...that the word of God may not be reviled.” Though it’s attached to the instructions for older women to teach younger women, I believe those words easily apply to ALL these roles Christians are to play.
- **What about: “...that the word of God may not be reviled.” What’s at stake here?**
- As I challenged the men, I would challenge you ladies. We all, both men and women need to take seriously our role to be MENTORS for younger men and women.
- What about the younger men? Paul expected Titus himself to work on them!

6 Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. 7 Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, 8 and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

- Paul told Titus to be a MODEL for the younger men, HIMSELF.

- Verses 6 and 7 are not only a good standard for a pastor but for all men!
- "...a model of good works," "integrity, dignity, and sound speech."
- **What affect does living this way have on those who criticize God's people?**
- Paul also had instructions for "bondservants" or "slaves." A reality of those times.
- **How would we apply this to people today? Instead of "bondservants"?**

9 Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

- Christians are not only to live out our faith with excellence at church...but at work.
- Do your BEST, don't mouth off, don't steal even small stuff.
- **What does it say results from this kind of Christian employee?**
- That word "adorn" is the Greek word kosmeō, sound familiar?
- When you ladies adorn yourselves you highlight your natural beauty and make it even more attractive to others.
- Conducting ourselves this way as a Christian employee does that for "the doctrine of God our Savior." It makes Christianity MORE ATTRACTIVE to unbelievers.
- Christians LIVING LIKE Christians makes the believer's life more ATTRACTIVE.
- Verse 11, Paul summarizes for Titus...and us...WHY we need to live the way he's described.

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Then Paul says to Titus as the pastor of the church in Crete:

15 Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

So, What's the Takeaway?

- As we said, Bible study and Bible teaching are NOT about gaining KNOWLEDGE or hearing some encouraging words; the goal is GETTING WISDOM TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE the way a Christian ought to live.
- Last week we talked about having a PURPOSE in our lives. I gave you a very simple example of a purpose statement: *"Leave people and situations better than I found them, to the glory of God."*
- This week's lesson has given us specifics on HOW to LIVE OUT our purpose in life based on scripture. To APPLY scripture to HOW WE LIVE.
- What will you do with this passage this week? Will you set some goals based on these verses? Will you pray and ask God to bring someone in your path either to MENTOR or to be MENTORED by? Will you change your conduct at work in some way?

- Whatever you do --- DO SOMETHING with these verses. Don't just HEAR and FORGET, but LISTEN, LEARN, and APPLY.