

Adorn the Doctrine of God

Titus 2:1-10 - NCBC, February 28, 2016

Main Point: **Growing Christians give credibility to Gospel truth**

- The attractiveness of Spirit-controlled older believers (v. 2-3)
 - Older Men
 - Older Women
- The attractiveness of Spirit-controlled younger believers (v. 4-6)
 - Young Women
 - Younger Men
- The attractiveness of multiplication by modeling (v.7-8)
 - Spiritual leaders
- The attractiveness of faithfulness under submission (v.9-10)
 - Trustworthy Slaves

Application: **Grow spiritually and make God's gospel attractive**

Opening Announcements:

Deer Fry – Sat 3/12th - Encourage attendance

<<All to Us>>



Amen. Thank you Kurt for leading us in worship. We appreciate so much your help in worshipping our great God this morning.

I now invite you to prepare for our reading of God's Word from **Titus 2:1-10**. If you do not have a Bible with you today, our ushers are coming now to give you a Bible. Please catch their attention as they pass by and it would be our joy to give you a Bible. You are welcome to take this Bible home as our gift to you, or just simply return it after our service by placing it on the table in the back of the room.

Today we turn our focus to **chapter 2** of **Titus**. You can find this text on page **998** of the Bibles we've handed out.



Let's take just a moment now to review what we've covered so far in our study of this short letter from Paul to his Gospel partner Titus on the island of Crete.

Godly leaders must trust God and His gospel to transform people ...as they lead with character. And Spiritual leaders must recognize and respond to false teachers as well. That's chapter 1.

But now in chapter 2 the focus turns to the responsibilities of not just the spiritual leadership, but of every member in the churches. Sound doctrine will always produce sound living for every person who submits to its Gospel truths.

So as we stand in honor of the reading of God's Word, please listen with an ear to how God would have you to respond this morning, as I read **Titus 2:1-10** from the English Standard translation:

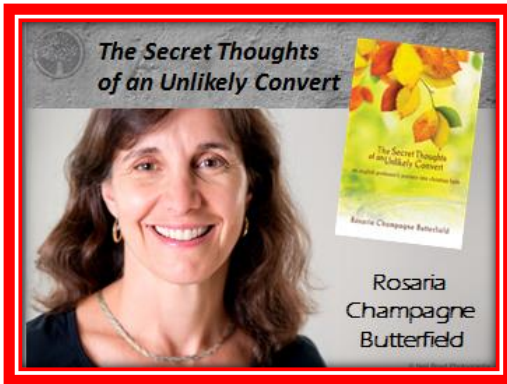
2 But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.

2 Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-

controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. 3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, 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. 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. 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.

**This is the word of our Lord. You may be seated.
Let's Pray.**

This morning I want to introduce you to a pastor's wife and homeschool mother. But this is not the stereotypical pastor's wife.



In 1999, Rosaria Champagne Butterfield was a tenured English professor at Syracuse University, a skeptic of all things Christian, and in a committed lesbian relationship. Her academic specialty was Queer Theory, a postmodern form of gay and lesbian studies.

Two years earlier she had begun a personal crusade against “the unholy trinity of Jesus, Republican politics, and patriarchy”¹ (those are her words). When she published an article in a local paper – one of the letters that came back to her was different than the rest of the hate mail.

It was from a local Presbyterian pastor named Ken Smith. His letter was kind and inquiring... encouraging Dr. Butterfield to explore the presuppositions that undergirded her positions. And it included an invitation for her to join Ken and his wife Floy for dinner at their home.

¹ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/january-february/my-train-wreck-conversion.html>

For the next two years God gave Ken and Floy Smith the opportunity to love on Rosaria – and here’s how Rosaria later described what happened,

“Oh, I had seen my share of Bible verses on placards at Gay Pride marches. That Christians who mocked me on Gay Pride Day were happy that I and everyone I loved were going to hell was clear as blue sky. That is not what Ken did. He did not mock. He engaged. So when his letter invited me to get together for dinner, I accepted. My motives at the time were straightforward: **Surely this will be good for my research.**

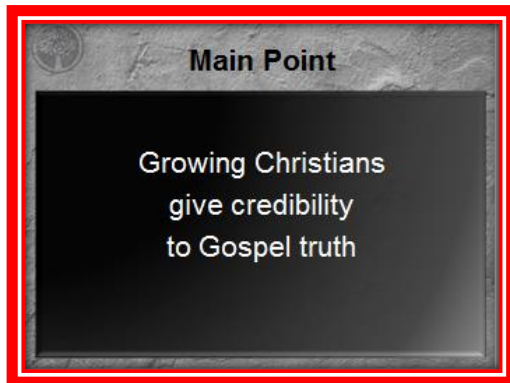
Something else happened. Ken and his wife, Floy, and I became friends. They entered my world. They met my friends. We did book exchanges. We talked openly about sexuality and politics. They did not act as if such conversations were polluting them. They did not treat me like a blank slate. When we ate together, Ken prayed in a way I had never heard before. His prayers were intimate. Vulnerable. He repented of his sin in front of me. He thanked God for all things. Ken's God was holy and firm, yet full of mercy. And because Ken and Floy did not invite me to church, I knew it was safe to be friends.

I started reading the Bible. I read the way a glutton devours. I read it many times that first year in multiple translations.”¹

And two years later in 2001 the grace of God converted the soul of Rosaria Butterfield... her soul was rescued from sin – thanks in part to the magnetism of the holy lifestyle of an older couple named Ken and Floy Smith.

The salvation testimony of Dr. Butterfield is so instructive for us today. We, like the believers in Crete, live in the midst of a perverse and lost people. But it's our own holy behavior that God intends to be a compelling attraction to unbelievers around us. Christians should live to make the Gospel as attractive as possible for those around them.

This morning our study of Titus 2 teaches us that **Growing Christians give credibility to Gospel truth**



Rosaria Butterfield would have not known the rescuing grace of God apart from the Spirit-controlled lives and lips of Ken and Floy Smith.

Our saved lives should provide living proof that God saves people and changes lives. Or to say it the other

way, the Gospel is not attractive to the lost if its claims are nullified by the lives of its followers.

In chapter 2 Paul is encouraging Titus to teach the gospel in such a way that it creates practical righteousness in the church. Contrary to false teachers who are not fit for any good work, true Christians should be under the control of God's Spirit – thereby enhancing the gospel's reputation with their practical living.

So this morning we learn that growing Christians give credibility to Gospel truth. Sound doctrine will always produce sound living, in lives that are controlled by God's Spirit.

First then, let's consider the difference that sound doctrine makes in the **SO^F group** – Saints over Fifty. For in verses 2-3 we observe the **attractiveness of Spirit-controlled older believers**.



Verse 2 speaks to older men, and verse 3 speaks specifically to the older women in the church.



Paul’s reference to older men does not refer to the office of biblical eldership – rather he’s speaking to segments of the church based on gender and age. Some commentators suggest a believer fits this category as young as 40, others suggest the age of 60 based on Paul’s instructions to widows in 1 Timothy.² But more than likely, if you’re 50 or more, verses 2-3 are written for you.

One of the strongest forces for spiritual ministry in the church lies with Spirit-controlled older believers. Those whose theology has been enriched and deepened through the weather of life’s sufferings.

² 1 Tim 5:9

But age alone does not produce spiritual maturity. In fact, we probably all know someone whose aging has just become justification for a lifestyle of “grouchy stubbornness and resentment to change.” So we must teach sound doctrine in such a way that,



...look at verse 2...

² *Older men are to be sober-minded*

[that means **clear-headed** and having his mind under control. A sober-minded man will not easily be led astray by false teaching. Teach older men to be],

dignified,

[meaning **worthy of respect** and of good character, and]

self-controlled

[Now please notice that **self-controlled** is commanded for every believer in the church in verses **2, 5, and 6**. The word means to be self-restrained in thinking and desire. Believers should be free from the power of anger, lust, greed, and pride. And finally, verse 2 teaches that older men must be],

*sound in **faith**, in love, and in steadfastness*

[The lives of older men in the church should tell the story of a healthy trust in God, a healthy **love** for others, and a healthy **endurance** and staying power in the midst of difficulty].

Likewise in verse 3,

³ *Older women ...are to be reverent in behavior*

[literally behaving as a priestess in a temple – or we would say to be holy. Living in light of the fact that we belong to God, and not to ourselves. Titus... teach the Gospel in such a way that older women do not become],

...slanderers or slaves to much wine.

[Not enslaved to loose lips whose gossip assassinates many a character. And slavery to alcohol and other

substances was also a huge issue in Crete. On the island, heavy drinking was an admirable coping mechanism for old age. But older women who are under the control of God's Spirit must behave very differently if their lives are going to bring credibility to the Gospel.]

They are to teach what is good,

[The informal personal testimonies of their lives should communicate a pattern of right behavior and excellence that is in line with the indwelling power of God.]

You see the point of verses 2-3 is clear – the reputation of God's gospel gains credibility through the ongoing spiritual growth of older believers.

Now if you're part of the Saints-Over-Fifty crowd... do you feel the challenge of this today? Younger believers need you to continue growing until you cross the finish line. Show us the Gospel is sufficient to help you end well.

Titus 2 teaches clearly the contagious power of Spirit-controlled older believer – the person who is **self-controlled** so that they don't always have to have things their own way. The person who is **sound in faith** and does not spend a lot of time complaining that things are not as they used to be...but rather grows thankful with change. The person who is **sound in love** and sees the

needs of others and moves generously to meet those needs. The older believer who is **sound in endurance** does not hide when things get difficult or quit when they get hurt. But they are an example of an overcomer... continually modeling how to overcome personal temptations and trials for God's greater glory in their lives.

There is little that is more attractive to the world than Spirit-controlled older believers... people like Ken and Floy Smith with Dr. Butterfield. But in verses 4-6, we also observe **the attractiveness of Spirit-controlled younger believers**



... 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.

And then in verse 6, Paul commands Titus to:

...urge the younger men to be self-controlled.



It's interesting to note that Titus was responsible to teach young women *through* the ministry of older women. In verse 4, the older women are responsible to:



Now I always have been struck by the command for older women to mentor young women how to love their husband and love their children.

The word for love in both instances here comes from the word behind Philadelphia – the city of brotherly love - meaning show young women how to become friends with their husband. It's not natural for marriages to remain sweet over time... it takes work and encouragement. So older sisters – train the younger wives how to really love their husband and maintain a sweet companionship in their covenant. Help them keep their prayer times sweet and meaningful. Mentor them how to discipline and disciple their children on Sunday mornings when runny noses, spilled milk, and a fleshy husband all threaten the joy of a day of praise and worship together at church.

And encourage the personal character of young women as well... to be self-restrained in desire and their thought life...and to pursue sexually purity and chaste virtue... this is what older women are to be mentoring the younger sisters with.

My wife and I love to do premarital marriage counseling. It's so good for our own marriage. But often young Christian husbands can be too eager in their desire to spiritually shepherd or lead their new bride. And so we encourage the grooms – help your wife find a godly women mentor she can regularly meet with for spiritual encouragement. Free her however you can so she can develop a good relationship with a Titus 2 woman. For such relationships encourage great spiritual growth...and God knew that a young bride will often receive spiritual

correction and encouragement much better from an older woman than she will from her new husband!

Older women are to practically show young women how to be diligent homemakers – meaning to keep their responsibilities at home at the right priority. It doesn't mean a Christian wife can't ever work outside the home, but regardless how old-fashioned it may sound today – God's good design is for godly wives to prioritize the keeping of the home. The wife has a God-given responsibility to cultivate a spirit of kindness and grace in the home for her husband and children.

Finally, verse 5 commands older women to help young wives learn what it practically means to continue to live in voluntarily submission to their own husbands. There is so much confusion these days on what submission means, and what it doesn't mean. We could take an entire message on each of these responsibilities, but for now let me just summarize that biblical submission means **God desires for wives to help make their husbands live more pleasing to Him. Help your husband truly be successful.** Not give him everything he wants. Not mute compliance. Not comatose weakness. But submission is strong Spirit-controlled love within the God-given roles in marriage. And when done well with the coaching of a Titus 2 woman – it enhances the attractiveness of biblical doctrine.

Isn't that the motive behind this practical teaching in verse 5?

So that the word of God may not be reviled.

The attractiveness of Spirit-controlled <u>younger</u> believers	
Young women (2:4-5)	Younger men (2:6)
Continue Training & Urging Them To ...	
Love husband & children	Be Self-controlled
Be Self-controlled & Pure	<i>self-restrained in thinking & desire</i>
Work at home & be Kind	
Be Submissive to husband	
<i>...so that God's Word not be scandalized</i>	

In other words... the younger believers need mentoring from older believers so that their lives will not nullify the claims of Gospel truths. God's Word is scandalized every time Christian wives mock their husbands publicly and embrace the media's propaganda against biblical roles and responsibilities of a Christ-centered marriage. God's Word is blasphemed every time a young Christian man looks at pornography, escapes with food or substance, or lets his anger vent in full rage.

But believers who truly live out the fruit of the Spirit in the pressure-cooker of young homes give credibility to the power of God's transforming grace. Such is Paul's desire for the churches in Crete, and so is our desire for our church family today.

Then in verse 7 Paul directs some personal comments at Titus himself. He wants to make sure that Titus is clear

about the **attractiveness of multiplication by modeling** (v.7-8)



You see a church will rarely rise any higher than its leadership. So if the church members are to really grow spiritually in their practical righteousness...they are going to need to see it modeled from their own **spiritual leaders**.



Multiplication or spiritual growth in the body happens through modeling.

Verses 7-8 direct Titus to,

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,

Be a Model or Pattern to Follow	
In Life	"Good Works"
In Teaching	"Integrity" of sincere motive "Dignity" of serious manner
In Life	"Sound Speech" above reproach

As a child – have you ever taken a piece of paper and a pencil and laid it over a coin...and then rubbed the lead pencil on the paper over the top of the coin? What happens?

The image of the coin is copied onto the paper.

So it should be with younger believers as they “rub” their lives up against the older people and spiritual leaders in the church – it should impress the image of Christlikeness upon them.³

³ Proverbs 27:17

So leaders – watch your life and doctrine closely.⁴

The world won't come to understand your teaching until they've first experienced your good works and sound conversation that is impeachable. **It is the credibility of a leader's love that often earns a hearing for his sincere and serious message of grace.**

And again what was the motive for such practical godly behavior for a spiritual leader? The end of verse 8 says,

so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

Be a Model or Pattern to Follow	
In Life	"Good Works"
In Teaching	"Integrity" of sincere motive "Dignity" of serious manner
In Life	"Sound Speech" above reproach

...so that God's People not be scandalized

Again Paul is concerned about the reputation of God and His People among unbelievers. When spiritual leaders fall in sin, it scandalizes God's people and gives God's

⁴ 1 Tim 4:16

enemies ample reasons to say evil about the Gospel we claim has so transformed our lives.

False teachers live duplicitous lives. But godly leaders understand the contagious power of multiplication through modeling.

Growing Christians give credibility to the Gospel. When older believers and younger believers are Spirit-filled, it makes the Gospel attractive. When spiritual leaders humbly model what they teach in their own lives, the Word is proclaimed in power.

And then in verses 9-10, Paul addresses slaves. He wanted to make sure the church understood the **attractiveness of faithfulness under submission (v.9-10)**.



Think with me for a moment again about the context of this letter to Titus. Remember the churches were just getting established – so how would the Cretans come to think about the spread of Christianity on their island? Christianity was going to get a reputation right? How the new Christian wives started living out Christianity with their unbelieving husbands was going to say a whole lot about the power of the Gospel. How the older believers were going to handle their former addictions and trials of aging was going to say a lot about whether or not there was anything to this whole Christianity thing. Paul didn't want any lack of spiritual growth to stand in the way of the Gospel's missionary impact on the island. And slaves were coming to Christ – but how the slaves lived out their new Gospel identity in practical response to their masters would either endear their masters to Christ, or cause them to despise these new doctrines of grace.

And so Paul urges slaves to be trustworthy ...



... to demonstrate the attractiveness of God's Gospel through faithfulness in voluntary submission.

In verses 9-10, Paul commands Titus to urge,

Bondservants ...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...

Submissive in Everything		
Attitude	+	"Be Pleasing"
	-	"Do not talk back"
Fidelity	-	"Do not steal"
	+	"Show good faithfulness"

Notice the commands are for the slaves' attitudes, and for their fidelity.

Slaves – your situation is very difficult and hard. Your hearts are prone to sin... and slavery is an ugly circumstance that will excite your heart towards all kinds of self-justified rebellion against your earthly masters. But God's grace is sufficient even to help you be voluntarily submitted to your earthly master as you are more submitted now to Christ your heavenly master.

So be pleasing to your master. In other words – voluntarily work to make them successful in everything. Have a Joseph attitude. Do not make it your habit to talk

back or be rude and complaining when asked to do something.

And don't steal anything that belongs to your master. This was the sin that Onesimus fell into with Philemon,⁵ and it's going to be tempting for you to justify petty theft as well...but rather make it your habit to provide proof of your honest faithfulness for the good of your master.

And again, what is the stated motive for such submissive faithfulness among the slaves?

We see it at the end of verse 10,

so that in everything [Christian slaves] may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

Submissive in Everything		
Attitude	+	"Be Pleasing"
	-	"Do not talk back"
Fidelity	-	"Do not steal"
	+	"Show good faithfulness"

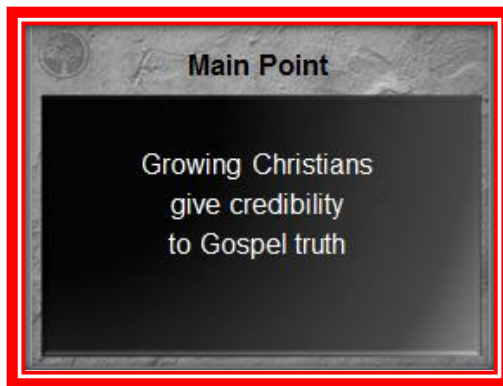
...so that God's Gospel may be adorned

... so that God's gospel may be adorned or enhanced. So that God might be glorified as others are given reasons to give God a good reputation.

⁵ Philemon 18

Can you imagine the talk in the neighborhood bars or the city squares as the unbelieving Cretans would gather to unwind And the talk would turn to religion... and some would speak of Zeus, and others of the Jews, but then someone would bring up those who called themselves Christians. And what then would be the response?

What reputation would God's Gospel have in the minds of the community because of the behavior of those who called themselves Christians?



The main point of our text this morning has been that Growing Christians give credibility to Gospel truth.

Transformed lives are the greatest apologetic for the goodness of God and His saving grace.

So then it's time for me to ask you to seriously evaluate your own life. No matter who you are this morning – no

matter how evil your spouse or your unbelieving slave-master at work... no matter how weak and frail your body has become in old age ...or no matter how vibrant and strong you are in your youth... how is your behavior affecting the reputation of God's gospel for the lost around you?

This morning I'm joining with Paul to implore you to **Grow spiritually and make God's gospel attractive**



Our non-believing friends need more than just the truth. They need to see the outworking of God's gospel in our homes and in our personal lives. They need to see the supernatural transformation of God's grace in our own lives. It is by our own continued spiritual transformation, that God's gospel is made attractive to our watching community.



Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.
Jude 24

Religious systems have no appeal if those who claim to follow the teachings live unchanged lives. But effective Christianity is demonstrated in the day-to-day situations and relationships that are common to everyone – as the fruit of the Spirit is put into action for all to see.

Let's be intentional church to grow spiritually together more this week. Reach out to others around you. Connect with someone older, and connect with someone younger...and get intentional about spiritually encouraging one another. Walk in transparency with others – be open about your temptations and your sins, and ask a mentor for help. Don't wait for a better time to put your faith into action. Sound doctrine always produces sound living – for those who joyfully submit themselves to the Holy Spirit's control.

Let's pray. **Closing prayer.**

Closing Song

Benediction