

## Living out the Faith

Part 1 - Titus 2:1-5

According to the website [www.history.com](http://www.history.com) the first recorded mention of the game of golf is from March 6, 1457 from King James II of Scotland.

He issued an edict forbidding his citizens from playing football (which I assume is soccer) and golf because it was taking people away from practicing fighting skills for their mandatory military service.

I have no idea how successful the ban was at the time, but I do know it did not last and people kept playing and eventually the golf made its way around most of the world and is now played by millions and millions of people.

I know Golf isn't for everyone.

Some people try it once or twice and never want to play it again, but others pick up a club and never want to put it down.

When I was around twelve or thirteen years old and I found myself in the latter category.

I can't explain it beyond the fact that something captivated me about the challenge of taking a small white spherical object and trying to hit it into a 4 ½" hole hundreds of yards away.

For the most part my dad taught me how to play and one of the first things he did was give me a book called, "The Five Fundamentals of Golf" by Ben Hogan.

I read the book carefully and I learned a lot about the proper technique of swinging a club, but you know the first time I went to the driving range after reading the book the results were pretty much the same.

I had a whole bunch of new head knowledge about how to play, but that did not automatically translate into being better.

I needed something else, I needed practice.

That is how I spent the vast majority of my summers over the next few years.

I got a summer job at a local golf course and took every chance I could get to practice on the driving range.

There were days when I hit so many balls my hands would be blistered and bleeding.

Over the course of time by applying the good knowledge I had learned from my dad's instruction I improved.

I improved to the point where I could be confident most of the time that the ball was going to go where I intended.

Along the way I learned that there is always room for improvement, I learned the better you get the harder it becomes to get better, and I learned that when you stop practicing your progress can disappear pretty quickly.

Whether you love golf or you hate it you can probably relate to those lessons.

Most people have attempted to do things that take some skill of one kind or another so we know the need of knowledge and we know the need of putting into practice what we have learned.

*That is 100% true of the Christian life.*

There are definitely things we need to know in order to be a Christian.

We need to know that we are sinners in need of the Saviour, we need to know that only Jesus has done anything useful to rescue us by dying in our place and being raised again.

We also need to know that coming to Jesus is about more than being forgiven for all the wrong things we have done!

Anyone who truly believes on Jesus' name knows how important and wonderful it is to be completely forgiven by trusting in Christ alone by faith alone!

We know that there is no hope for us apart from the inexhaustible grace of our glorious God Who loves His people beyond measure.

We also know that God does more than forgive our sin in salvation, we know that He also changes our hearts.

He gives us a desire to know Him, to love Him, and to love His ways and those things happen over time and in increasing measure.

[That is the focus of our text this morning **Titus 2:1-5**. Taking what we know and believe and putting it into practice. In other words living out the faith. Having just finished telling Titus of the need to put to shame those who teach things that ought not to be taught in the church, the apostle Paul here pivots to talk to Titus about what he should be teaching in the church. Look with me at what he says here in **verse 1**. One of the things Titus needs to do in order to fulfill his task of establishing healthy churches on the island of Crete is he has to teach people what it looks like to live out the Christian faith from day to day. He begins again in verse 2 by speaking to men and continues in verses 3-5 speaking to women. From these instructions we can take away at least two lessons concerning what it looks like to live in accordance with what we say we believe. The first lesson is that...]

**Point #1 – Christian men consistently think, behave, believe, and love rightly. (Verses 2)**

Men who love the LORD must see their lives as an opportunity to demonstrate the faithfulness of God.

*It is fitting here that the apostle begins with men because of the emphasis he puts on the need of godly men to serve as elders/pastors/overseers in chapter one.*

He wants to make sure that we see godliness as a call on the life of every Christian man. It is impossible to have sound doctrine and be a healthy church if the men of the church show little concern about how the life changing good news of Jesus Christ is actually supposed to change our lives.

We are given a taste of what that looks like in verse 2.

**“Older men”** he writes **“are to be sober-minded.”**

Another way to translate that would be the word ‘temperate’.

The idea is to be even keeled or consistent.

The Christian man is not to be an emotional and behavioural roller coaster.

Next ‘older men’ are to be ‘dignified.’

The Christian man is to be respectable and honourable in his conduct, he is to be someone people can take seriously.

If we get a picture in our minds here of a stick in the mud then we have missed Paul’s point.

He is talking about being so anchored in the glory of the gospel that there is a weightiness to our demeanor which I believe the character of our Saviour shows us this is the deepest kind of joy.

Next he says, ‘older men’ are to be **‘self-controlled’** a word repeated a few times in the context of these verses.

This is one aspect of the fruit of the spirit and it is something that puts Christian character in sharp contrast with the philosophy of the world today.

The world tells us that we are at the mercies of our inner desires.

So much so that people are encouraged to see themselves as being defined by their inner feelings.

No Christian should ever accept those lies.

Human beings have the capacity to govern the desires of our hearts and the Spirit of the living God dwelling with in us gives us the desire to control ourselves.

By God’s grace we have the capacity to govern our bodies and we so he commands us to exercise that capacity and be self-controlled.

Next he says ‘older men’ are to be ‘sound in the faith.’

That is he should have a clear understanding basic Christianity.

He should know about justification, sanctification, the Trinity, the incarnation, the atonement of Jesus, the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible, the hope of Jesus’ return and the resurrection of the dead, baptism, communion, and alike.

Men it is our responsibility to know these things to the best of our ability and to grow in our understanding of them and all the more as we hit our senior years.

To being ‘sound in faith’ he adds ‘sound...**in love.**’

It is easy to be cranky and self-centered as our strength and health decline with age, but the Christian man must fight against that and cultivate a tender heart for the highest good of other people.

*Lastly he says to be, “sound...**in steadfastness.**”*

Christian men are to persevere in all these things.

We keep it up.

Quitting is for unbelievers, not men to know and love Jesus.

Listen, the grey hairs of a godly life are a powerful testimony to the work of God.

[How many of you have ever heard the phrase, “They don’t make them like they used to?” We usually say that when something that is relatively new breaks. It is a way of saying that things that last a really long time show how well they were made to begin with.]

That is what aging in the pursuit of godliness does for the Christian man.

It shows that God has done and is doing a glorious work in His life.

Old age, brothers and sisters, is something the believer ought to see as a gift.

Not one of the things mentioned here depends on physical ability.

I’ve seen them in godly men who can’t even get themselves out of bed and I thank the LORD for men like that.

[Our culture, in many ways, despises aging, but in the church we ought to see things differently. We ought to see God’s graciousness to His people in the glory of the gospel. So listen up old men! Strive for consistency in your thinking, behaviour, faith, and love. Next, the apostle has something to say to ‘older women’ which shows us this second lesson about living out what we say we believe.]

**Point #2 – Christian women model and teach the goodness of God’s designs. (Verses 3-5)**

The Bible teaches that men and women are equal and yet also distinct and that the LORD has done this with life giving purposes and his people recognize that and delight in that.

*Verse 3 begins with the phrase ‘Older women likewise’ meaning that the call on the life Christian women is every bit as high as the call on the lives of Christian men.*

First, he says, “Older women...are to be reverent in behavior.”

That phrase in the original language is likely intended to point us to the Temple in Jerusalem.

The Temple like the Tabernacle before it was the place that God had chosen to cause His glory to be visibly present.

For that reason, those entering its courts especially as those approaching the Holy of Holies had to take great care as they went about their duties.

It required an appreciation for the awe and majesty of the LORD.

*That is the sense of what older women are being called to here.*

Conduct yourself like you are serving in the presence of God with awe and wonder for the glory of His name.

I'm sure all of us here would say we believe in the omnipresence of God, meaning we believe God is present everywhere, but I wonder how often we live like it is true.

Be reverent in behavior, he says to older women, 'not slanderers.'

The NAS says 'malicious gossips'. The idea is saying unverified or unhelpful things about people that are destructive.

When you are talking to people about other people ask yourself, "Is what I am saying right now necessary? Is the heart behind what I am saying life giving or life destroying? Is what I am saying right now even true?"

Words can build up or destroy and the Christian woman ought to be speaking words of life rather than words of death.

To that he adds, 'Older women...are...not [to be]...slaves to much wine.'

Believers are to be slaves to the Spirit rather than a chemical substance.

*Instead it says this at the end of verse 3 down to verse 5.*

The first thing that jumps out at me is that women are commanded here to 'teach'.

That is important to see because some people might get the impression that since the authoritative preaching and teaching that happens in the gathered church is the responsibility of qualified men, that women have no responsibility in the area of teaching.

That is not true. Every woman of God is called to learn the word of God to the best of her ability.

God most certainly has gifted many women with the ability to teach and right here He is commanding them to exercise that gift.

Just because you are not preaching from a pulpit does not mean you are not a teacher.

Teach what is good! Teach it in a way that honours the Scriptures rather than ignores sections we don't like.

One of the clearest opportunities women have to teach is to teach other women. In this case older teaching the younger.

[The idea here is similar to that of an apprenticeship. In an apprenticeship you have someone who knows a job, who has been doing to job for a while, and is recognized as qualified for the job train someone else how to do the job. That kind of mentorship is what is being encouraged here.]

*His focus here is on married women because the reality of the day was that most if not all the women in these churches would end up married.*

We know from other passages that the bible has a high view of singleness, but here Paul is dealing a high view of marriage because it needed to be addressed.

Women are to train young married women to 'love their husbands and children'

That is more than devotion and nice feelings.

It is devotion and affection that desires the highest good of husbands and children, namely that they would love and glorify God in their lives.

Be 'self-controlled'. Young women you are not at the mercy of DNA and hormones.

As a woman of God you can make willful choices to say no to sinful desires and yes to godliness which is surely what is intended here by the word 'pure.'

*Next older women are to teach younger women to be 'working at home'.*

No doubt some would take this to mean 'only work at home', but that is missing the point.

His point is for young women to see it as their call to work for the good of their home.

I would also point out here that Paul gives no list of specific tasks to be done and neither is he exempting husbands from household chores.

If Jesus took the place of a lowly servant to wash the feet of His disciples then husbands must never see any task as beneath them for the sake of loving their wives.

The point here is not to make a list of tasks but to say that wives and mothers need to be diligent in working for the flourishing of their household.

Listen, it is an enormous task to run a house well and while our culture would demean it as menial or

unimportant, believers should treasure it as something of tremendous worth in the sight of God.

Next he says older women are to teach younger women to be **'kind'** in verse 5.

It is easy to have a sharp tongue and be mean.

It is especially easy to do that to the people we are closest to.

While I think this command certainly means for Christian women to be known for kindness to all people, it does come in the context of the family.

Wives, here is a really hard question to ask yourselves, "Am I kind to my husband? Would he say that I am kind to him? If he was asked that question by a friend or a co-worker what would he say?"

Those are questions worth asking if you are concerned about living for the glory of God.

The Christian woman should be known for looking out for the good of others, she should be known for kindness.

Finally he writes that older women are to teach younger women to "be submissive to their own husbands."

I think it is fair to say that this is a command that is tough to take for a lot of people.

Without a doubt there are a lot of women who would hear this and think, "There is not a chance in the world I am doing that!"

I get that many bad things have happened using the language of 'submission' and I acknowledge those things are wrong, but we also need to remember that evil deeds never erase the good commands of God.

So let's try and hear what this is saying.

Something that is essential to see here is that this command is given to women not to their husbands.

The command is NOT for men to put their wives into submission.

That is abuse and it has no place in the church.

This is a willful choice a wife makes to entrust herself and her wellbeing to the leadership of her husband.

As an aside here, this command should have an enormous impact on young unmarried women.

Set your standards high, don't look past serious fault for the sake of being married.

Make sure any man you consider for a husband loves Jesus in the depths of his heart, so that you can joyfully entrust yourself to him.

It is also important to remember here that we are always to submit first and foremost to the Lordship of Christ, which means a wife must not submit to her husband in sin.

No woman is ever obligated to subject herself or her children to the evil actions of her husband.

The church ought to be a place where people are protected rather than put in harm's way.

We must give no ground evil.

Understanding that, we can then understand that this command is to submit to the leadership of a husband in as much as that leadership is consistent with moral will of God.

Once that ground work is laid we need to ask another question. Why is this command necessary?

It is necessary because when sin entered the world so did marital conflict.

Prior to the fall Eve had no problem enjoying the protection, provision, and leadership of her husband Adam.

When they chose to rebel against the LORD it did more than cause division between them and God it also caused division between themselves.

Eve would no longer naturally enjoy Adam's headship, she would want to fight against it.

That has carried on down through the centuries.

You see the problem, I believe, is not primarily with the word 'submit'.

All of us at some point or another accept the idea of living under some kind of authority.

The struggle women have with this command is who their being asked to submit to.

If this command is a struggle or you find it deeply offensive I just want you to ask yourself why?

Is it because you don't see your husband as worthy or as capable of being entrusted with your wellbeing?

I get that, I really do because no man is perfect.

I think most of the men in this room have felt the weight of that over the last couple of weeks as we have talked about the call that God has placed on our lives to pursue godliness.

It is an easy thing to focus on all his shortcomings and justify skipping past this command.

The consequence of doing that though is significant.

Look with me at the end of **verse 5** where Paul gives his reason for telling Titus to teach these things to the churches on Crete.

The word translated 'reviled' here is most literally translated as blasphemed.



Blasphemy is when people fail to attribute to God what is rightly His or they attribute something to God that is untrue.

When husbands fail to serve, protect, and provide for their wives they are saying God's design is not worth living out.

When wives fail to entrust themselves to their husbands they are saying God's design is not good.

When the world sees that we don't think much of God's designs they will conclude the same or worse.

Wives ask yourselves a hard question, "Am I working to encourage my husband to be a godly man or am I tearing him down in his failures?"

This command is not about being a doormat, it is about seeing marriage as a team effort to be glory to God.

This is not about having a perfect husband or a perfect wife, this is about having a perfect God and trusting in His plans and purposes.

That is what it means to live out faith in the gospel of Christ.

It looks like men consistently thinking, behaving, believing, and loving rightly; and it looks like women modeling and teaching the goodness of God's designs.

May God in His mercy give us all a greater desire for these things for His glory and our joy.