

HOW YOUR LIFE CAN MODEL THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

Teaching Through Titus Verse by Verse - Part seven

Sunday, October 23rd, 2011, a.m. - Teaching #1510

HOW OLDER AND YOUNGER WOMEN WORK TOGETHER TO BRING HONOR TO GOD'S WORD (continued)

Titus 2:1-5 - "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."

Just by way of review, we are continuing our unpacking of the second point from last week's teaching. *It was very important, in the mind of the apostle, that the older women continue to be in touch with the younger.* The generations *need* each other in the body of Christ. True, they will obviously have different tastes and styles. And that's fine. But there must still be a fundamental *connectedness* between the older and the younger. What unites these generations is greater than what divides them. And that truth will probably be overlooked more by the younger than the older.

Another key point. Godliness doesn't just happen. It is *learned* from generation to generation. Please note this important distinction. The *desire* to be godly comes supernaturally, through genuine rebirth and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. But the *design* for godliness - the *pattern* for how it's shaped and lived out - this is *observed* and *learned* and *applied* and *practiced*. The implications of this truth are massive. It means if you're a young professing Christian woman but spend more time watching Real Housewives of Atlanta, or wherever, than learning the pattern of God's Word from a godly woman mentor, sooner or later your marriage *will* fall apart. And you're probably going to wonder how it all went so wrong. Godliness doesn't just magically *settle* on your mind and heart. It's *learned*.

Then we began looking quite specifically at exactly *what* Paul said the older women were to teach the younger. What was the *content* of their example and teaching?

Titus 2:4-5 - "...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."

- a) **Older women must teach the younger women to love their husbands (4).** This is where we wrapped up last week.
- b) **Older women must teach the younger women to love their children (4).**

I find the *order* of these two instructions interesting. First, love your husband. Second, love your children. I notice a certain pattern unfolding among the popular stars of this world. You can't watch television at all without hearing little "news" snippets about the relationships of the actors, actresses and sports heroes of the day.

Marriages are considered to be both *optional* and *disposable* entities in the family picture. Partners come and go. They may marry for a while. They may never bother. And then the children come. Frequently there are children from two or three previous relationships, as well of some from the dissolving marriage. Inevitably, the subject of the children is discussed. I'm amazed that all these people give the same testimony as to the incredible relationships they have with all these children. They want to make sure they are perceived as great *parents*. They aren't concerned at all about being great *spouses*. Just great *parents*. It's as though, as long as the children are fine, nothing else is really important.

And all of these famous people will cross any ocean, they'll take their kids with them on any job assignment or movie set in order to have all that quality time with them. They'll invest any money in their child's best interest and happiness.

But they won't spend one more minute with that child's father or mother in the marriage relationship. These people will quickly write off four or five marriages in a heartbeat. They'll move heaven and earth for the children. But the marriages are disposable.

So here's the obvious message. Our world values *parenthood* far more than it values *marriage*. And that's a terrible travesty against God's perfect will and plan. The Bible says the best thing you can do for your children is cherish your marriage and your spouse.

One year, when we were coming home from L.A. they showed a safety video on the plane. We were told what to do if the plane's cabin became depressurized. I wasn't sure what that meant, but I didn't like the sound of it. Oxygen masks would drop down from the compartment above our heads. We were to *remain calm* (that seemed a bit of a stretch) and fasten the mask

around our face, and then breathe normally.

Then another fact was underscored. If we were traveling with children, we were to make sure we fastened **our own** mask first, **before** we helped our children with **theirs**.

The reason for this was obvious. If anything happened to the parent, the child would never handle the situation on his own. In other words, the **only** hope for the child was the health of the parent. It was simply in the **child's** best interest for the parent to look after his or her own mask first.

I think that's what Paul is saying about children in these words of instruction to the women in the church. The best thing young women could do for their children was to learn to love their husbands in spiritual, Scriptural strength. If the children were placed in priority above the husband, the children would be the ones to suffer most.

The best thing any mother can do for her family is learn to be a great, godly, loving wife. You will be the best blessing possible to your **children** as you learn to love your **husband**.

c) **Older women must teach the younger to be 'self-controlled, pure, working at home' (5).**

I know these verses are frequently stuffed down women's throats quite lovelessly, almost insisting that if you have any aspirations of a career outside the home, you are less than godly. And I don't think that was the Spirit's blanket intent.

But I also know there is growing a very common cavalier attitude that instantly relegates any annoying passages of Scripture to a very distant time and culture from our own. We can quickly delete anything in God's Word that doesn't fit with our own agenda.

This is one of those passages. It will rarely, if ever, be read in today's church. Feminists will hate it. And they have incredible success in intimidating Christian women. But just what part of that sentence in **verses 3-5** should we cut out?

Are we going to delete the need for **purity**? That's the word right before the instruction about being workers at home (5). What about the need for being **self-controlled**? That's the word right before the instruction about purity (5). And what about the instruction about **loving your children**? That comes in the very same sentence as being workers at home (4). And so it gets very easy to pick your way through the Scriptures like you pick your way through a boney piece of trout.

I think there's a better way. I think Paul would have women who are young mothers to understand that their **primary sense of calling before the Lord is to their home**. That calling may shift as children age and circumstances change. But while the children are young, nothing should be allowed to preempt their primary calling to be homemakers. I believe that.

This is precisely where older Christian women are to come into the picture. The spirit of this age, primarily through the media, will constantly demean that calling in the minds of young Christian women. Many won't have the courage or the good sense to see the lies they are swallowing from the counsel of the ungodly. They need older, wiser Christian women to constantly point them back to the path of their Creator. They don't have to point them back to the 50's, of course. But they should keep them pointed towards God's Word.

We live in an age where young Christian mothers are constantly being told they should seek **personal fulfillment on their own terms**. They're being told that they should **reject the confinement of God's call on their lives as homemakers**. They're being convinced that this is a **sociological** issue only, rather than a **scriptural** issue. And, as always, they're forfeiting something precious that they will never be able to get back farther on down the road. They will need the guidance of older Christian women to keep their lives on track.

d) **Older women are to teach the younger to be 'kind and submissive to their own husbands' (5).**

I think one of the factors that makes these words so hard for many Christian wives to embrace is the poor understanding their husbands have of their meaning. There are just so many poorly taught men who see the Scriptural concept of the headship of the husband in the home in a totally **unscriptural** way.

Most men see their headship in terms of sheer **authority** and **dominance** rather than headship under the terms defined by the New Testament.

Here is headship properly defined by the Scriptures: **Ephesians 5:24-25** - "Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. [25] Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...."

Both sides of the coin are presented in such perfect beauty and symmetry. **Wives** are to submit to their husbands just as the

Church submits to Jesus. **Husbands** are to love their wives just as Jesus loved His Church.

I take that to mean the **husbands set the pace**. They are the **initiators** in the relationship (or at least they **should** be). I didn't initiate my relationship with Jesus. The Bible says Jesus came and died while I was still His enemy. If the headship of the husband in the home means anything at all, it means the husband bears the primary responsibility to show sacrificial love, even if he doesn't think his wife **deserves** it at some point. He **lays down his life** for his wife.

And wives **respond** to that kind of love. They always do. This is the pattern of Creation. Paul says they respond to that kind of supreme, self-giving love just as the Church responds in submission to Jesus. **Why do you love Jesus?** Because He **died** for you.

I have never met a wife who had a hard time with the concept of submission when it was presented on true, New Testament terms.

But, unfortunately, Christian wives don't always get husbands like that. Husbands don't always initiate with sacrificial love. Sometimes they're selfish, petty, bossy and immature. They can be brilliant at the office and morons when it comes to following Jesus at home.

So it's no accident these wives will need to learn a great deal of **kindness (5)**. If they **respond** to their husbands with the same kind of selfishness they may receive, nothing of God's grace will be able to penetrate those marriages.

So Paul calls for older Christian women to encourage the younger wives. They need patience. They need prayer. They need a listening ear. They need advice. And interestingly, Paul doesn't tell Titus to deal with these young women directly. He tells him to get the older women to teach and encourage the younger.

4) THE GREATEST MOTIVE IN EVERYTHING WE DO

Titus 2:5 - **"....to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled."**

Those words really are a surprise ending to these thoughts. You would think Paul would say, **"Do all these things so you will have a happy marriage!"** That would make perfect sense.

But think about it. Paul is writing to these **churches**. He's writing to Titus with instruction for **Christian** people. **Everybody** wants a happy marriage. Not just Christians. Atheists want happy marriages. The real question becomes **why** do we want the things we want? What motives are big enough to **keep people following the Lord even when they don't seem to be getting immediate personal fulfillment and gratification?**

Paul says Christians do everything they do, not for **themselves** at all, but for the **glory of God**. They do what they do, sometimes at great personal cost, for the **joy - the happiness - of God**.

You see, this is pretty gritty truth. This kind of living will separate you from the approval of most of the world around you. This isn't something you can get at an altar, or a retreat, or a convention. This is truth that will challenge you every day when you get out of bed.

The only people who will stick with this kind of truth are those who are clearly living for another world over and above this one. The only people who can really **do** this on a daily basis are those who love God's glory more than they love their own convenience.

But then, just at that challenging point, there comes a stunning discovery. You don't discover this truth on the first few steps of obedience. You really only encounter it after long periods of consistent self-denial and consistent loyalty to God's Word. But, like a huge deposit of gold way down under the surface of this crowded, noisy life, you will find out what Jesus meant when He said, **"For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it"** (Matthew 16:25).

Paul tells Titus we do what we do so that **"the Word of God will not be dishonored."** John MacArthur has a wonderful paragraph on these words: **"For a person to be convinced that God can save him from sin, he needs to be shown someone who has been saved from sin and who, as far as possible, lives a life separated from sin. For a person to be convinced of God's hope, he must be shown someone who has hope where there was once only despair. For a person to be convinced that God can miraculously provide us with love, peace and happiness, he needs to be shown someone who now radiates those blessings."**

People don't see your **theology**. They see your **life** - **1 Peter 2:9** - **"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."**