

TITUS 2:1-5

THE YOUNGER WOMEN

“As for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”¹

North American churches have trended toward specialised ministries for many years. Often, these ministries have found their genesis in current social trends leading the churches into areas that are impossible to justify with what has been written in the Word. Often, the ministries developed have dramatically altered the concept of the congregation, the novel face of the assembly often rendering as unrecognisable the New Testament church.

One major factor in this descent into irrelevance is a failure of sound instruction from the pulpit. In some measure, this failure has been driven by the demands of unconverted church members who are convinced that the services of the congregation should be adjusted to satisfy their lust for entertainment. Tragically, church goers have become either incapable of thinking deeply or they are now unwilling to confront their own froward attitudes.

ORTHODOXY MUST LEAD TO ORTHOPRAXY — “Teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”

In earlier years, evangelical believers consistently emphasised orthodoxy. The standard has slipped during the past several decades; and with the absence of emphasis on orthodoxy has come a notable dismissal of orthopraxy among the professed people of God. Let me remind you what these two terms mean. Orthodoxy simply means correct doctrine. The term speaks of teaching that measures up to the biblical standard, teaching that is true to what God has given through His Word, instruction that reflects the mind of the True and Living God. Orthopraxy refers to correct actions. When an individual embraces correct doctrine, that person will also endeavour to live in a manner consistent with what is professed.

You may recall a previous message from this pulpit that spoke of the purpose of the law.² Turn back to the text for that message, “The law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted” [**1 TIMOTHY 1:9-11**].

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible, English Standard Version** © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

² Michael Stark, “Misusing the Law,” 5 May, 2013,

<http://newbeginningsbaptist.ca/clientimages/42652/sermonarchive/1%20timothy%201.08-11%20misusing%20the%20law.pdf>

In this passage, we discover a series of actions that are obviously detestable before the Lord are listed as necessitating the Law. Then, in order to include summarily all that displeases the True and Living God, Paul speaks of “whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine.” The passage expresses an obvious relationship between sound doctrine and sound action. Again, bear in mind that the term “sound doctrine” speaks of teaching that is spiritually healthy.

Throughout the Word are a number of passages urging believers to act in a manner consistent with the Faith. These passages are provided with the assumption that those reading them hold to the truths that define the Faith. Think of a few of the passages in question.

Here is the first of several passages that are indicative of God’s demand that we live according to what we profess. “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God” [1 CORINTHIANS 6:9, 10].

Keep in mind that the Apostle is writing “To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints” [1 CORINTHIANS 1:2]. Though the Corinthian congregation may be dysfunctional, these are Christians! They are identified as belonging to God, as declared holy in Christ Jesus and thus identified as God’s peculiar people. However, redemption did not instantly qualify them as living righteous lives. They still needed to be taught. Just so, though a congregation in this present day may be composed of those who are saved, those who are known by God and who are declared holy in His sight, this does not mean that they automatically choose actions and lifestyles that qualify as righteous and godly.

The encyclical we have received as the Letter to the Ephesians, was addressed “To the saints who are ... faithful in Christ Jesus” [EPHESIANS 1:1]. Ancient copies of this letter leave the recipients blank, so that they could be filled in as a copy was delivered to each assembly. In other words, the letter was circulated among churches throughout the Province of Asia Minor. Many of these saints were known to Paul, undoubtedly having been led to faith during his extended ministry in the city of Ephesus [see ACTS 19:1-10]. What is important for our study today is the knowledge that those to whom Paul was writing were identified as saints, and as people who were “faithful in Christ Jesus.” The Apostle assumed that he was writing to believers who had been redeemed by the Risen Son of God. In light of this knowledge, note how he instructs the readers to cast off actions unworthy of God who saved them, embracing a lifestyle worthy of the Son of God.

“Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

“But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light” [EPHESIANS 5:1-14].

The Letter to the Colossians was likely written at the same time the Letter to the Ephesians was written. The two letters are more similar than any other two letters attributed to Paul. Many of the verses of Colossians and Ephesians are strikingly similar, if not identical. Here is one instance of similar material presented.

“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” [COLOSSIANS 3:5-10].

Again, note that the Letter to the Colossian believers was specifically addressed “to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae” [COLOSSIANS 1:2]. Paul is not writing to people in order to get them to clean up their lives so they can be saved; the Apostle is writing to people whom he accepts as saved by the Living Son of God. Though they are redeemed, he recognises the necessity of holding them accountable for the manner in which they lived.

I’ve invested this time to emphasise a vital point that must not be neglected among the faithful in this day—**ORTHOPRAXY DOES NOT NECESSARILY LEAD TO ORTHODOXY, BUT ORTHODOXY IS EXPRESSED THROUGH ORTHOPRAXY**. Rephrasing this truth so that no one need be confused, we can say—**LIVING RIGHT DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU WILL BELIEVE WHAT IS TRUE, BUT BELIEVING WHAT IS TRUE MUST LEAD TO LIVING AS A RIGHTEOUS INDIVIDUAL**.

Paul warned that a dissipated lifestyle was indicative of the unredeemed. “This I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. But that is not the way you learned Christ!—assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” [EPHESIANS 4:17-24].

Paul’s cautionary statements anticipate that which was drafted by Peter. “The time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead” [1 PETER 4:3-5].

Peter also wrote of a day when the professed churches of our Lord would be led astray by “false teachers.” “There will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed” [2 PETER 2:1, 2]. Peter foresaw that professed followers of Christ would begin to live in a manner inconsistent with what they claimed to believe, bring censure even from the watching world. This time of which Peter spoke mirrored, and perhaps even exaggerated, the ridicule Jewish worshippers experienced because of their own inconsistencies. Paul warned, “You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. For, as it is written, ‘The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you’” [ROMANS 2:23, 24].

Here, then, is the take-home thought that each believer must seize: **SAVED PEOPLE ARE RESPONSIBLE TO LIVE CONSISTENTLY WITH WHAT THEY PROFESS**.

We are now ready to give particular attention to the text before us. Paul insists that Titus must “teach what accords with sound doctrine.” The preacher is responsible to present healthy teaching, and he is to expect that those accepting the healthy doctrine will reveal the reality of what is professed through a righteous life. A saying that was heard among the Puritans of old warned, “Say not thou hast royal blood running in thy veins, and art begotten of God, except thou canst prove thy pedigree by this heroic spirit, to dare to be holy in spite of men and devils.”³ Paul was clearly of that persuasion; and he makes plain his expectation that those who confess Christ will reveal the reality of their confession through the manner in which they live.

The first group whom the Apostle addresses are the “older men.” I dare not say what particular age is in view—we tend to demand precision rather than exercising judgement in our day. I will suggest, however, that in general we are able to recognise that some individuals qualify as belonging to this particular category. Moreover, we believe that all men should aspire to move toward this particular characterisation. The Apostle is quite clear in his assertion that **OLDER MEN AMONG THE SAINTS ARE EXPECTED TO MEET STANDARDS REFLECTING GODLINESS.**

The lives of older men should be marked by temperance, dignity, self-control, soundness in faith, love and endurance. Consequently, temperance, sober-mindedness or restraint, is, or should be, a characteristic both of elders and of the wives of deacons [see **1 TIMOTHY 3:2, 11**].

Likewise, the older men within the congregation are to be worthy of respect, living in such a manner that they are counted as honourable. As stated for the previous characteristic, this particular characteristic is to be witnessed in elders and deacons’ wives [see **1 TIMOTHY 3:2, 11**].

Older men are to be self-controlled or moderate, a characteristic that is expected of elders [**1 TIMOTHY 3:2; TITUS 1:8**]. They are to possess a healthy faith [literal meaning of the Greek]. And just as they are to be marked by faith that is healthy, so love and steadfastness are likewise to be healthy in the older men. This triumvirate of virtuous characterisations is also witnessed in another letter that the Apostle wrote. It will be instructive to look at this particular instance. “We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” [**1 THESSALONIANS 1:2, 3**].

I want to slip down to the sixth verse, rather than taking the admonitions in the order in which they are written. **YOUNGER MEN ARE TO STRIVE TO THINK CLEARLY.** Specifically, Paul say, “Urge the younger men to be self-controlled” [**TITUS 2:6**]. The infinitive conveys a slightly different meaning from the adjective that was used for the older men. It speaks of being able to think straight. Youth tend to be idealistic, and their idealism can lead them into grave danger. Therefore, Paul instructs the pastor to urge younger men to strive for intellectual soundness. Acquire all the knowledge you can, but endeavour to employ wisely what you learn.

Paul’s position that women be trained in righteousness would have appeared exceptional. A girl became a woman at age fourteen, though by age twelve, girls were commonly married. This will help understand who qualified as “older women.” The term could have referred to women no older than their mid-twenties. In Roman society, women enjoyed a measure of independence, though they had no identity of their own, taking on the identity of their father.⁴

³ William Gurnall, **The Christian in Complete Armour, or, A Treatise of the Saints’ War Against the Devil, Wherein a Discovery is Made of The Grand Enemy of God and His People, in His policies, Power, Seat of His Empire, Wickedness, and Chief Design He Hath Against the Saints** (<http://archive.org/details/christianincompl00gurnuoft>, accessed 9 May 2013) 28

⁴ <http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/women.html>; <http://www.moyak.com/papers/roman-women.html>; each accessed 9 May 2013

It is at this point that I finally focus on older women. Bear in mind that older women at the time Paul was writing were not necessarily what we might consider old. They were possibly no more than twenty or twenty-five years of age. Life expectancy at birth for women was between twenty and thirty years, and that of men a bit higher. Slaves, as you might expect, lived shorter lives still.⁵ When an average lifespan was approximately thirty-five years, life moved considerably more quickly in that day. It is likely that in applying Paul's writings to this present day, we should focus more on those who are mature than focusing on those who are elderly according to contemporary standards.

OLDER WOMEN ARE TO BE REVERENT. This is the preliminary and primary stipulation for instructing the older women of the assembly. In the most positive manner, Paul was urging that these women be trained to live consistent with the expectations of women who were religious. He did append two negatives; however, I suggest they flow out of the former rather than standing alone. Reverent women are neither slanderers nor are they enslaved by excessive drinking. There is also a positive character trait that should be witnessed in older women, and that is that they are to teach what is good. We'll look at this more carefully momentarily.

It may be instructive to note that the term translated "slanderers," is the feminine form of the word used for the devil. I do not want you to take away the thought that women are exclusively focused in the caution against being slanderous or in becoming gossips. Paul uses the masculine form of the same word when warning of conditions marking the last days in his second letter to Timothy. "Understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people" [2 TIMOTHY 3:1-5]. When you read in the third verse that people in the last days will be "slanderous," the term is masculine, indicating that this situation will be characteristic of both males and females.

Similarly, the older women should be marked by moderation in their conduct. The specific statement is that they are to avoid being enslaved by excessive drinking. The Apostle has already said that the older men are to be taught to be "sober-minded" (temperate), just as are the elders [see 1 TIMOTHY 3:2]. There is no absolute prohibition in this verse, but abstinence may be the wiser course for many people. Paul's overarching view of those things in life that are capable of enslaving the believer is given in the Letter to Corinthian believers. "'All things are lawful for me,' but not all things are helpful. 'All things are lawful for me,' but I will not be dominated by anything" [1 CORINTHIANS 6:12]. In fact, he calls all believers to refuse to be under any controlling influence other than the Holy Spirit. "Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit" [EPHESIANS 5:18].

It is at this point that the Apostle turns to a singular admonition for the older women: "They are to teach what is good." So that no one will be confused by what the Apostle intends to be taught or who is to be instructed, he expands the meaning in the fourth and fifth verses, writing, through such efforts, "train[ing] the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled" [TITUS 2:4, 5].

⁵ Linda Gigante, "Death and Disease in Ancient Rome," <http://www.innominatesociety.com/Articles/Death%20and%20Disease%20in%20Ancient%20Rome.htm>, accessed 9 May 2013

By example and by word, older women are called to be invested in the lives of younger women. When Paul says they are to “train the young women,” he uses a word related to the word “self-control” in verse five. Focus on verses three and four: Older women “are to teach what is good, and so train the younger women.” The verb, *sōphronizō*, denotes teaching in the sense of bringing people to their senses, showing what sound teaching is.⁶ In classical Greek, the word meant to bring a person to his or her senses. By the time Paul wrote this letter, the word had come to mean “to give good advice” or “to encourage.”

What is important for us to note that it is not the job of the elders to provide such training. Though an elder is to be able to teach, and though he is responsible to provide healthy teaching (sound doctrine), the training of young women is primarily entrusted to the older women. Good teaching leads to good teaching! When the pulpit provides sound teaching, every member of the assembly will be equipped to provide sound teaching. The obverse of this dictum is that when unsound teaching comes from the pulpit, it should not be expected that sound teaching will be found within the congregation.

There is no question but that Paul is communicating a definite responsibility to the older women. In communicating such responsibility, he places a constraint on the teaching by elders. Elders can teach older women, knowing that they will be used by God to train younger women. Mature women have a critical position within the assembly of the Lord. Older women are to model godliness for younger women. In doing so, they communicate values and lifestyles that honour God and that become foundational for leading many people to faith in the Son of God.

Paul’s instruction affirms the importance of the contributions of mature Christians within the Community of Faith. Older men are to model godliness, so that others may emulate their walk with the Lord. Older women are to avoid hoarding knowledge; rather, they should ensure that their virtue and righteousness is passed on to younger women. Thus the entire community of faith benefits as the labour of teaching is shared in this practical manner.

Before pushing on, I must note that among the ancient churches, godly older women were a rich spiritual resource—and they can be to this day. These mature women served within the churches by teaching and encouraging younger women. They served the churches through ministering to each other and to women in the church whatever their age or marital status. Mature women were noted for visiting the sick and those in prison; and they were especially noted for providing hospitality to Christian travellers, especially those who were engaged in some form of ministry that compelled them to travel.

Among the pagans, abandonment of newborn children was distressingly common. Christian women were noted for going through the streets, searching for these abandoned infants before they either could be eaten by stray dogs or taken by cruel people who would abuse them for their own nefarious purposes. Little boys would be raised to be slaves or gladiators; little girls would be raised to be prostitutes. Christian women who rescued these infants would bring them into the church community, adopting the children to church families to be raised. Similarly, mature women today can provide ministries that wisely advance the Kingdom of God.

I want to step aside from the immediate text to make a critical observation about what Paul has written in this text as it relates to the training of younger women. Timothy, and hence all elders by extrapolation, are enjoined to avoid intimate training for younger women, especially those to whom he is not related. In part, this is to avoid giving the appearance of evil, just as it is to avoid opening oneself to sexual temptation. No pastor should ever become casual about such matters, but rather he must always be cautious in relationships with those of the opposite sex.

⁶ NET Bible, First Edition (Biblical Studies Press, 2006)

There is another reason for women training women that may be overlooked. In the First Corinthian Letter, Paul writes, “If there is anything [that wives] desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home” [1 CORINTHIANS 14:35]. One of the great failings of contemporary churches is the failure of men to be spiritual leaders in their own home. Men have been trained to be silent, refusing participation in the spiritual life of the congregation. Consequently, women often do not see their husbands as spiritual leaders. Nevertheless, if we will please God, we must encourage men to assume responsibility to provide sound instruction in their own home. Similarly, both by what is taught from the pulpit and what is communicated by older women, younger women are to be trained to see their own husbands as the male who is her primary spiritual instructor.

Husbands, before God, you bear the awesome responsibility to equip yourselves to provide sound teaching in the truths of God for your own family. You are not expected to have the answer to every question, but you are to be approachable. If your wife or children bring you a specific question concerning the Faith for which you do not have the answer, ask the elders of the church. It is the responsibility of elders to ensure that you understand what the Word teaches so that you can, in turn, teach your own family. The men of this congregation must assume primary responsibility for teaching their wives and their children. And wives are responsible before God to cultivate a submissive attitude to their own husbands, encouraging them to accept this responsibility and showing them respect as those who bear such responsibility before God.

OLDER WOMEN ARE TO TEACH YOUNGER WOMEN — “Older women ... are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”

Younger women are to be trained to exhibit godly demeanors. Underscore in your mind that the good things which are to be taught relate to matters of marital and family life. We have previously noted that the older women are to teach what is good, implying that there are aspects of life which are pleasing to God. By implication, those expressions that depreciate the particular characteristics that are good must be considered displeasing before the Lord. It is significant that the Apostle says nothing about teaching the unmarried—the focus is on the conduct of married women and on mothers. And who is better prepared to provide such training than women who have been married and who have raised families?

It seems fair to say that no biblical standard is more viciously attacked than the God-appointed role of women in society. Consequently, the verses under study today are frequently dismissed and ridiculed, even by professed followers of the Son of God! Tragically, the influences of this fallen world are brought into the life of the churches, usually with disastrous consequences. One observation that is borne out by observation is that among those churches which have imported and implemented feminist ideas, the spiritual health of the assembly has declined markedly—in many instances being essentially extinguished!

You may be somewhat mystified that the Apostle begins his catalog of truths that must be taught by stating that young women must “love their husbands and children.” There is an underlying principle that is mostly ignored in our rush to romanticise the ideal of love in this day. **MATURE LOVE IS NOT AN EMOTION THAT WELLS UP, BUT A DISCIPLINE THAT IS WORKED UP.** If the observation of contemporary life is any indication, love for one’s husband and love for one’s children is not a discipline that is encouraged in this day. In the day in which Paul wrote, most marriages were arranged and love was acquired through self-discipline. This is no less true in this day when dating and romance lead up to marriage.

It does not require a doctoral degree in sociology to recognise that natural marriage and family life are under attack in this day. In fact, these institutions are threatened to such an extent that one must question whether they can long survive. They have been attacked as archaic, sexist (whatever that term may mean), outrageous, unfair and even unnecessary. Tragically, the churches, compromised in great measure by a rush during the previous several decades to embrace feminist thought, are incapable of mounting a defence either of marriage or of family.

The settled discipline of marital love is a deeper and more advance form of love that does not arise naturally among us. Love such as is in view must be acquired from the Living God. John writes a great truth that is too often ignored in the context of modern concepts of romance. “We love because he first loved us” [1 JOHN 4:19]. Before you react with choler to that statement, consider that this biblical statement is predicated upon yet another statement John has provided. “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” [1 JOHN 4:10].

There is yet another line of biblical thought related to the need to teach younger women to love their husbands and their children. As this present age approximates a disastrous conclusion, the Apostle describes the characteristics that will begin to predominate. In order to examine these dark characterisations, look at a later letter that Paul wrote. “Understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth” [2 TIMOTHY 3:1-7].

Focus on two of the characteristics of “the last days.” Perhaps the primary characterisation of those living in the last days is that “people will be lovers of self.” Self-love precludes love for others, including love for one’s husband and even love for one’s children. There is such a thing as natural affection that should be expected from any human toward his or her offspring. However, the Christian parenting Paul anticipates among the members of the churches must be produced by the Spirit of God living within the individual; and such parenting must be encouraged through the fellowship of believers. As the age rushes toward a dark conclusion, opportunities and pressure to be “lovers of self” will only increase.

The word translated “heartless” in the third verse, was translated “without natural affection” in the venerable King James Version. In order to convey the sense of the word, it has been variously translated in more recent translations by a variety of English expressions, including, “unloving,”⁷ “unfeeling,”⁸ “inhuman,”⁹ “lack[ing] normal affection for their families”¹⁰ and “dog-eat-dog.”¹¹ Consequently, in order to realise the truth of the Apostle’s admonition, one need but read the daily news to witness the consequence of the modern emphasis on self and the drive to acquire whatever one desires regardless of the cost.

⁷ **The NET Bible First Edition** (Biblical Studies Press 1996-2006); **Holman Christian Standard Bible** (Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN 2009); **New American Standard Bible** (The Lockman Foundation, 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995)

⁸ **International Standard Version** (The Learning Foundation, Yorba Linda, CA 2000)

⁹ **New Revised Standard Version** (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN 1989)

¹⁰ **God’s Word Translation** (Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, MI 1995)

¹¹ **The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language** (NavPress, Colorado Spring, CO 2005)

Latchkey children and youth who are unrestrained by parental training is one dreadful situation arising from parental emphasis on the self. Whilst I grieve for any mother who must work, sometimes at multiple jobs, in order to provide for her children, we understand that in no small measure and for the most part it is the natural result of yielding to one's own desires without regard for the costs of such actions.

The knowledge that the last days will be marked by those who are "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" leads me to the next observation concerning the need for the older women to train the younger women. Love of anything, or of anyone, superseding love for the True and Living God ensures that we will be unable to live out the Master's call to love one another [JOHN 13:34, 35; 15:12, 17; ROMANS 12:10; 13:8]. Therefore, the call for young wives to be trained to love their children ensures that those within the churches do not begin to accommodate the dreadful attitudes of this dying world.

Permit me to make one further observation on what is to be taught to the younger women concerning marriage and family before we consider the remainder of the training that is mandated by the Apostle. Shove aside any tendency to imagine that Paul is speaking of sexual attraction or of romantic affection. The word used (*philandros*) speaks of committed love for one's husband. It is godly love that a wife chooses to exercise toward her husband. This love is not based on the husband's worthiness (though husbands should strive to be worthy of their wives' love); but this love is based on a wife's obedience to the Master who has redeemed her. Wives must choose to love their husbands, rather than merely responding to the circumstances. The instruction for wives to love their husbands balances the more dominant instruction that wives are to be submissive to their husbands [see EPHESIANS 5:22, 33; COLOSSIANS 3:18; 1 PETER 3:1].

Younger women are to be trained, both through modelling the lives of older women and through verbal instruction, to be "self-controlled" and pure. They are to be encouraged to be sensible, to be circumspect, which conveys the concept of self-control. You will recall that this characteristic was to be witnessed in the lives of elders [see TITUS 1:8] and also in all older men [TITUS 2:2]; in fact, all believers are to demonstrate lives marked by "self-control" [TITUS 2:11, 12]. Younger women are also to be chaste. The connotation of the word used speaks both of fidelity to their husbands and to their relationship to the Master. Nevertheless, the primary connotation speaks of sexual purity, of marital faithfulness.

Younger women are to be trained to be homemakers. This does not mean that a woman may not work outside of the home; it does mean that there will always be plenty of work when she comes home. Thus, she must balance outside labours, ensuring that her home and her family are priorities. This is in keeping with that which the Apostle writes in his first letter to Timothy. "I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander" [1 TIMOTHY 5:14].

Again, older women are to model kindness and to teach kindness to the younger women. The concept is readily understood. What may not be so readily understood is that kindness expresses an attribute of God Himself. "Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil" [LUKE 6:35]. I should not leave the impression that younger women alone are enjoined to be kind—kindness is expected to mark the lives of all believers. "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" [EPHESIANS 4:32]. A sensitive heart will not become so caught up in the routines of life that compassion for her husband's needs or for her children's needs becomes lost. The godly younger woman will not permit the world to shape her worth because she is a homemaker.

Finally, Paul cautions younger women to be submissive to their own husbands. No woman should ever be expected to be subject to all men simply because they are males. However, because she is a Christian, she must voluntarily choose a submissive attitude toward her own husband. This is not a situation in which a husband can demand obedience. I have often noted that it is a woman's right to graciously offer her submission to her own husband. Neither should Paul's teaching be construed to imply that a wife must suppress her intelligence, her talents or her gifts in the home. Rather, she should be encouraged to employ these gifts in support of her husband as the spiritual leader in her home. This is how a church honours Christ. Just as a church arranges the expression of her gifts to give maximum support to Christ's purpose, so a Christian wife is to be encouraged to honour the spiritual purposes of her husband.

All that Paul has said concerning younger women has this particular goal that must not be neglected: "that the Word of God may not be reviled" [TITUS 2:5]. This presents a principle that is repeated in verses eight and ten. The elders are to be circumspect and godly "so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us" [TITUS 2:8]. Similarly, slaves, of whom a decided majority comprised the churches in that ancient day, were enjoined to cultivate a submissive attitude "so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour" [TITUS 2:10]. In short, the wise Christian will endeavour to win others to Christ, knowing that our standards of morality and ethics should be at least as high as those of outsiders.

The take-home lessons from the message are related to our relationships to one another. We bear responsibility to one another as a congregation. Each of us is to strive to excel in righteousness and holiness, knowing that our conduct reflects on Christ and on our fellow believers. Above all else, each of us must assume responsibility for our own conduct, and we must accept responsibility to admonish one another in love. As we mature in the Faith, we should be seeking out those who are younger in the Faith to encourage them toward godliness and toward righteousness.

Of course, all this talk about godliness is so much blather if there is no vital relationship to the True and Living God. God is the author of life; He alone gives life eternal. This life is in His Son, Jesus Christ. You know quite well that Jesus, the Son of God, was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life before presenting Himself as a sacrifice because of our helpless condition. The Good News is that He did not remain in the grave. He was raised from the dead; and after forty days, He ascended into the heavens on a cloud. Now, God promises all who are willing to receive it, "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is my Master,' believing in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be set free. It is with the heart that one believes and is made right with the Father, and with the mouth that one confesses and is set free." The Apostle concludes his statement of the divine promise by quoting the Prophet Joel, "Everyone who calls on the Name of the Master will be set free" [free translation of ROMANS 10:9, 10, 13].

I pray you now have this freedom from guilt and freedom from fear and freedom from condemnation. I pray you have freedom to come boldly into the presence of the Living God. You do have such freedom if you are born from above by faith in Jesus, who is the Son of God. Amen.