

T. Shane Martin
 Green Run Baptist Church
 May 14, 2006
 Mother's Day / Baby Dedication

MOTHERS WHO HONOR THE WORD OF GOD
 TITUS 2:3-5

INTRODUCTION

Titus had proven himself to be a faithful minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Most likely, he was converted under Paul's ministry and his maturity in the faith was evident. Perhaps this is why Paul chose Titus as a partner in the ministry. One place where Paul and Titus both served as church planters and church leaders was on the island of Crete. Crete is one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean Sea and Crete was a terribly wicked place. One Cretan had said of his fellow Cretans, "*Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons*" (Titus 1:12). To that assessment, Paul adds his A-men; *This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith* (Titus 1:13). Paul then adds this assessment, *They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed* (1 Timothy 1:16).

Having identified the corruptions within Crete, Paul now calls on Titus to establish churches throughout Crete and these churches are to be made up of people who *deny ungodliness and worldly desires and live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age* (Titus 2:12). In other words, these churches are to be distinct from the culture in which they exist.

Now, what is interesting is that when Paul instructed Titus to establish such churches, He begins by describing the various roles that are necessary within a church. A church must have elders (Titus 1:5) who lead well. And beyond those leaders, a church should have older men (Titus 2:1) who demonstrate spiritual maturity in a distinctly masculine way. In addition to these roles, there is a role for the women, both older and younger (Titus 2:3-5). Then the young men have an additional set of responsibilities (Titus 2:6-8). Finally, Paul addresses those with a lower social standing [bondslaves] and he explains how they too must live to honor Christ (Titus 2:9-10).

The point is that God has saved men and women of various ages and social standings and He has instructed us how we are to live within those providential contexts in order that we *adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect* (Titus 2:10). To adorn the gospel is to live in such a way that our lives make the gospel (the doctrine of God) attractive to sinners; to Cretans. We are called to live spiritually distinct lives that are noticeably different from the surrounding culture and those lives will vary based upon our gender, age and social status. To be more specific, there is a way for older women and younger women to live today that will most adorn the gospel. How should older and younger Christian women live to make the gospel most attractive?

1. OLDER WOMEN (2:3-4a)

By using the title "older women", Paul is most likely appealing to those ladies who are past child bearing and child rearing years. If we use 1 Timothy 5:9 as a guideline, perhaps 60 years old is approximately what Paul has in mind. In 1 Timothy, Paul demonstrates the value of such women to God's Church by emphasizing that they must be taken care of if they are widows. They have much to contribute and should be treasured by every local church. Now Paul

instructs Titus regarding the qualities necessary to make an older woman one who is useful to God's Church.

(1.1) Reverent in their behavior

Reverent literally means "like a priest". Older women should be holy. Reverent indicates a woman who knows God and her life reflects this knowledge. Her life is saturated by a sense of God's presence and she is known as one who fears the Lord.

(1.2) Not malicious gossips

Here, Paul says that older women are not to be like Satan, the slanderer. They are not to use their mouths for destroying others. Satan wreaked havoc by lying to Eve, slandering God and using these lies to come between Adam and Eve. Older women are commanded not to follow such an example.

(1.3) Not enslaved to much wine

As in other places in Scripture, here drunkenness is forbidden.

(1.4) Teaching what is good

She is to be a teacher of truth and a living illustration of her own teaching. First and foremost, she would have already taught her own children what is good. Now that her reputation as a Godly woman is established she must broaden her sphere of teaching to include others. The "others" that Paul has in mind are the younger women in the church.

(1.5) Encouraging younger women

One primary reason that older women must strive for spiritual maturity by living reverent lives, avoiding gossip and drunkenness, and by cultivating an ability to teach what is good is so that they can be encouraging examples to younger women. This teaching and encouragement could be formal or informal, but it must happen if the younger women hope to become spiritually mature. There is a constant need within every church for the older, wiser and more spiritually mature to influence the younger generations.

2. YOUNGER WOMEN (2:4b-5)

"Younger women" refers to those who are of such an age that they are likely to bear children and be responsible for those children. It is assumed that these women are married and have children; so much of Paul's instruction addresses family life. There are seven different characteristics here of the woman who honors God's word: (1) she loves her husband (2) she loves her children (3) she is sensible (4) she is pure (5) she is a worker at home (6) she is kind and (7) she is in subjection to her husband. Rather than discuss each of these 7 responsibilities, let's consider the larger picture of a wife and mother who honors God's word. We must understand these commands in light of the entire revelation of Scripture. As we study Scripture, we will encounter 3 specific roles assigned to the wife and mother.

(2.1) 3 biblical roles of the wife

First, the wife exists as a wife to be a helper to her husband. *Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18)*. Every man has been called by God to an honorable vocation. Most men will not be able to fulfill this calling alone,

therefore, God provides a helper in the form of a wife. His success is largely dependent upon the love, sensibility, purity, hard work, kindness and subjection of the wife.

Second, the wife should desire children and if the Lord grants children, she must love and nurture those children. To most married couples, God desires to grant children and He desires that those children be welcomed into the family. God created women with the capacity to conceive children, carry that new life within her, feed the child once he is born and to provide the necessary affection and care needed in the earliest years of life.

Third, the wife should manage the home. To Timothy, Paul writes, *14Therefore, I want younger widows to get married, bear children, keep house, and give the enemy no occasion for reproach; 15for some have already turned aside to follow Satan (1 Timothy 5:13-14)*. In short, she is to manage the affairs of the household. Her focus is going to be the day to day administration of the home (See Proverbs 31:27-30 & Proverbs 14:1).

(2.2) Practical thoughts

First, older ladies, take seriously the need to encourage younger ladies in these matters. There is a reason that older women need to encourage younger women to work hard at home. The reason is because no one else is probably going to do it. Husbands are often fearful of speaking up and they often like the idea of a second paycheck each month. Therefore, older women need to encourage younger women to do this. This encouragement happens in the context of the church (Hebrews 10:24-25).

Second, to singles; ladies, marry well. A husband has to believe this as much as you, or more. He must be an honorable man seeking an honorable profession in order to provide for you so that you can provide for him. The irony of all this is that a lot of men want the second paycheck more than the care-giver for the children and the home.

Third, to men; you are ultimately responsible for setting your heart and your home in order under the Spirit and the Word. These convictions must run deep so that you do not compromise when times are tough.

Fourth, if wives and mothers do not believe this teaching, then they will not only go into sin themselves, but they will encourage their daughters to go into sin as well. If a mother fails to understand her role and becomes a pale reflection of the culture while she scrambles to make herself acceptable to the world, she will encourage her daughter to pursue the same course.

Lastly, Scripture does not forbid a woman from working outside the home, but the home must always be the dominating priority. Just because a woman works outside the home, she is not relieved from the duties we have discussed—so let's not think of the "working woman" as a liberated woman. She has just taken on a second job that probably won't prove very liberating.

CONCLUSION

What is at stake here? The ultimate answer is the glory of God. Marriages are to illustrate the relationship between Christ and His Church. Christ sacrifices, secures and provides for the Church while the Church finds her fulfillment in her obedience to Christ. Our marriages and families must make radical adjustments to illustrate this truth.