

Sound Doctrine for Older Men Study of Titus 2

Intro: You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine. (Titus 2:1)

What comes to mind when you hear the words “sound doctrine”? Sometimes we think of it as orthodox views on various subjects debated by brethren or points of difference with the denominational world.

What is “sound doctrine” in the context of Paul’s words? We get a clue in this same chapter!

These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you. (Titus 2:15)

What were the things Paul urged Timothy to preach? Specific instructions to those who made up the church to possess an inward righteousness that adorns the gospel of Christ.

Cretan culture had many gods and its people filled their time with much idle chatter, empty promises, and lies. So how could the Christians’ loyalty to one more god be taken seriously, let alone make any difference in this society. The answer: God’s people must be people of truth and unimpeachable integrity. Through fewer words and more deeds, they could build consistent evidence of a new and credible lifestyle with lasting impact!! We might call it “evidence before information”. People need to see the evidence of Christianity in us before they will hear the information of Christianity from us!

How can we live before people so that they will take us seriously when we talk about Jesus Christ? That is Paul reveals the answer in Titus 2.

Let’s consider sound doctrine for older men:

Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance. (Titus 2:2)

Older men...

The term Paul uses is a relative term. In the context, “older women” are those who are aged enough to contrasted with “younger women” who are married and have children.

So if you have children old enough to be married or you are old enough to have children who are married, you are among the “older men”. Or simply, put if you look around a half the people around you are younger, then you’re it!

Characteristics of Older Men

Temperate

One of the poets of Crete, perhaps Epimenides, characterized the Cretans this way: “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons”. There are three interesting things about that characterization:

Lying had become so commonly accepted among Cretans that one word for lying in Greek is “cretizein”! (i.e. to play the Cretan) And it is interesting to notice that of all the characteristics of God that Paul appealed to he began by describing the Lord as the God “who cannot lie”! Crete was a beautiful island, known for not possessing wild animals. Ironically its only wild beasts were the men who lived there!

Plutarch tells of a phenomenon in Crete called the “andreaia”. It was an association of fiftenn members who comprised the group and donated a bushel of barley, eight gallons of wine, five pounds of figs and 2 ½ pounds of cheese for a dinner gathering. You can well imagine the result with 120 gallons of wine available for consumption. You might say the Cretan men “loved to party” and such parties lent themselves to drunkenness, revelry, and indulgence. Paul’s words to Christian men hit this ungodly culture head on!

Naphalios—not only restraint in the use of wine; thus as we sometimes say “sober”, the associated condition of watchfulness or alertness. It also conveyed the idea of moderation in general.

Worthy of Respect

Semnous—having seriousness of purpose, but not gloominess. It combines the ideas of gravity and dignity, that which inspires reverence and awe or respect, thus NASV “worthy of respect”.

Self-controlled

Sophronas—sober-minded or to be of sound mind, having the ability to think clearly and morally

Sound (hagaino)

Sound is from hagiaino from which we get “hygiene”. It conveys the idea of what is healthy or wholesome

In Faith (pistos)

Older Christian men should have become good students of the word. They know their Bibles and thus their faith is strong through the experience of study and living.

In Love (agape)

Older Christian men should also have become good servants of others. They know people and they have developed a desire to help them and meet their needs.

In Endurance (hupomene)

Older Christian men should also have become good examples of patience in facing life’s trials. They have learned to face hardship and difficulty with strength, determination, and optimism.

Observations

When men reach middle age sometimes the body becomes weaker and mentally there is a longing for younger days—the mid-life crisis. We begin to look old and recoil by trying to resort to younger days. We can become silly, become impatient, and throw caution to the wind. We can resort to the same attitudes and actions of the world about us. Instead Paul challenges older men to set the pace in spirituality and to become spiritual leaders worthy to be respected and followed.

It is interesting to note how that most of these characteristics are also given as qualifications of elders and deacons. Good leaders are the product of a commitment to godly living. A man who seeks to please the Lord from the time of his conversion is on his way to leadership in the church.

Conclusion: Let those of us who are older men set the pace for others in the pursue of a godly life that reflects well on the gospel. Let the women support this as the ideal man and encourage their husbands to be this kind of man.